



**Straight***talk*  
News For And About The Libraries Of Northeast Nebraska

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Kathy Ellerton - System Administrator/Editor

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### **Library of the Future**

by Pat Tuohy

When contemplating this library of the future, it is helpful to keep reminding yourself that you may not be alive by the time these predictions come to pass. If you are under 50, however, you have a very good chance of managing library services in the interesting times ahead. I cannot do justice to the articles in this short piece but I urge you to follow this link to read what the future may hold for your library: <http://www.davinciinstitute.com/>

While the vision of the futurists at the DaVinci Institute is certainly interesting, the time horizon for many of the predictions is 20, 30, even 50 years hence. This gives little guidance for what may be around the corner 5, 7, or 10 years out. To make up for this time gap, I have garnered a number of other predictions about the changes that many of the libraries in central Texas may see 5 to 10 years from now.

First of all, your population will be larger in 10 years than it is today. Growth will be uneven across the 30 CTLS counties, but it is very likely that you will have more people living in your service area than you do now. If you do not know what those growth projections are for your city or county, contact the LCRA or your local council of government to find out. LCRA has population and water usage needs up to the year 2100.

Your library collection will become much more media intensive than it is today. You will find many more DVDs, CD's, Games, downloadables and/or whatever the next format will be... and those formats will be much in demand by your patrons. Popular books will hold their own but you will phase out much of your reference materials and slower moving books. Media formats will take up the space formerly occupied by a good portion of your current collection.

Downloadable materials will become a greater percentage of what and how your patrons get materials from the library.

Your library web site will become your front door to an increasingly larger percentage of your library users. Many patrons will only visit you online but they will still claim you as their public library. You will put more and more content on your web site. And... that content will be accessed at midnight by desperate school children looking for authoritative sources for their papers due the next day. That will not change.

You will generate a lot of original content because the library is the archives for your town. Your local



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history collections and materials will become increasingly valuable as the memory of your community. And that responsibility could grow even larger if local newspapers or media outlets close. Your library may be the only place that will take and preserve the back issues, electronic or audio files of the local businesses which may fade away as communications styles evolve. Space inside your library will be reallocated to accommodate new uses. Those uses will increasingly be meeting spaces, quiet spaces, and work areas for the lone entrepreneur.

As you look to expansion or replacement of your library building, flexibility will be your first priority. Flexible buildings will allow you to change with the needs of your public. And the architects of that new building may well be some of the kids using the library right now. You can bet that they will have ideas about what they want to see in a library.

At the core of your future library will be a staff whose primary goal and motivation will be to search out new methods and devices that make citizen access faster, easier and more efficient. By 2019, your library has become the people's R&D department. This research and development arm of the community at large is a vital and necessary part of daily life in the 21st century.

I also predict that in 20, 30, even 50 years from now - We the people will continue to agree that our society needs an agency to make sure that its citizens have access to all the information they need to pursue

Life

Liberty

And Happiness

And most importantly, libraries will make certain that our peculiar form of democratic self-government is fully and comprehensively informed. That is the Mission of the public library today in 2009. It was also the mission in 1909 and I predict that it will continue to be the mission of the public library in 2039, 2049, and 2059.

In the interest of full disclosure, passages from an editorial by John Berry of Library Journal are used above.

(Reprinted with permission from Pat Tuohy, Central Texas Library System)



## Children's Choice Book Award Winners Announced

The CBC is excited to announce the winners of the 2009 Children's Choice Book Awards.

Award winners were determined this year by over 220,000 online votes by kids across the country. Voting was open from March 16 through May 3 on the Children's Book Week website. This year marks the 90th observance of Book Week.

The awards ceremony, hosted by National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Jon Scieszka, included the presentation of the Impact Award to Whoopi Goldberg in recognition of her vast contribution to the promotion of literacy and the love of reading among young people. Last year's Impact Award recipient, Al Roker, presented the award.

This year's Children's Choice Book Award winners are as follows:

Kindergarten to Second Grade Book of the Year

**The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!** written and illustrated by Mo Willems (Hyperion Books for Children/Disney Book Group)

Third Grade to Fourth Grade Book of the Year

**Spooky Cemeteries** by Dinah Williams (Bearport Publishing)

Fifth Grade to Sixth Grade Book of the Year

**Thirteen** by Lauren Myracle (Dutton/Penguin Young Readers Group)

Teen Choice Book of the Year

**Breaking Dawn** by Stephenie Meyer (Little, Brown and Company)

Author of the Year

Stephenie Meyer, for *Breaking Dawn* (Little, Brown and Company)

Illustrator of the Year

Jon J Muth, for *Zen Ties* (Scholastic Press)

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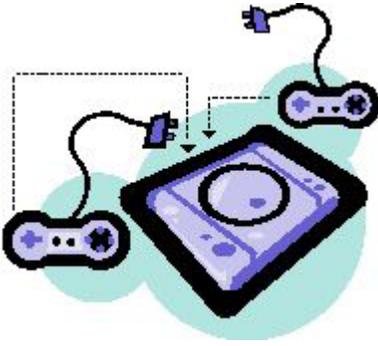
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## Books and Gamers



People of all ages love to play video games, especially young people. Today's video games have well-defined characters, challenging puzzles, and a plot. Gamers use these criteria to select a game, just like the discriminating reader selecting a book. So what type of gamers like what type of books? For you non-gamers, listed below are game types and suggested titles.

**ACTION/SHOOTER GAMES:** for fans of games like Halo 3, Call of Duty 4, and Super Smash Brothers look for books with the following characteristics: Fast-paced, Combat or Competition, Science Fiction, Gadgets/Weapons, Suspense.

Recommended books:

Artemis Fowl series by Eoin Colfer  
Fight Game (Chicken House, 2007) by Kate Wild  
Hunger Games (Scholastic, 2008) by Suzanne Collins  
Stormbreaker (Philomel, 2008) by Anthony Horowitz

**SIMULATION/STRATEGY GAMES:** for fans of games like The Sims, Civilization, and Spore look for books with the following characteristics: Mystery, Puzzles/Riddles, Decision Making, Alternate or Heightened Reality, Rich Details.

Recommended books:

The Name of This Book Is Secret (Little Brown, 2007) by Pseudonymous Bosch  
Nation (HarperCollins, 2008) by Terry Pratchett  
The Seems: The Glitch in Sleep (Bloomsbury, 2008) by John Hulme  
Steel Trap: The Challenge (Disney, 2008) by Ridley Pearson

**ADVENTURE/RPG:** for fans of games like Fallout 3, Oblivion, and Fable, look for books that have the following characteristics: Magic/Supernatural, Journey/Quest, Quirky Characters, Fantasy/Science Fiction. Character Development.

Recommended books:

Horns and Wrinkles (Houghton Mifflin, 2006) by Joseph Helgerson  
Mortal Engines (HarperTeen, 2003) by Philip Reeve  
Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan  
The Septimus Heap series by Annie Sage

The following books have gaming plots/gaming elements and are perfect for recommending to gamers:

Brainboy and the Deathmaster (HarperCollins, 2003) by Tor Seidler  
Cathy's Book (2006) and Cathy's Key (2008, Running Press Kids) by Sean Stewart and Jordan Wiseman  
Discordia: The Eleventh Dimension (Hyperion, 2009) by Dena K. Salmon  
Epic (2007) and Saga (2008, both Viking) by Conor Kostick  
Heir Apparent (Harcourt, 2002) by Vivian Vande Velde  
The Worldweavers series by Alma Alexander



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### Golden Sower Award Winners

The Golden Sower Committee is pleased to announce the 2009 award winners and honor books!

Primary Winner:

If I Built a Car by Chris Van Dusen

Primary Honor Books:

Fancy Nancy by Jane O'Connor, illus. by Robin Preiss Glasser

Library Lion by Michelle Knudsen, illus. by Kevin Hawkes

Intermediate Winner:

Satch and Me by Dan Gutman

Intermediate Honor Books:

Room One: A Mystery or Two by Andrew Clements

Rules by Cynthia Lord

Young Adult Winner:

Twilight by Stephenie Meyer

Young Adult Honor Books:

Heat by Mike Lupica

Life as We Knew It by Susan Beth Pfeffer

Unfortunately, none of the winning authors will be able to attend the fall NLA/NEMA Conference in October. However, we plan to attempt "virtual visits" with Chris Van Dusen and Dan Gutman during the Golden Sower Award session on Friday, October 30, if all the details can be worked out.

### New Book Club Kits Available

The Northeast Library System office is happy to announce the addition of two new titles available for book clubs. They are:

**Red Glass by Laura Resau** (15 copies)

Pedro, the only survivor from a Mexican border crossing, comes to live with Sophie, her parents, and Sophie's Aunt Dika, a refugee of the war in Bosnia. A year later, Pedro's surviving family in Mexico makes contact, and Sophie, Dika, Dika's new boyfriend, and his son must travel with Pedro to his hometown.

**Diamonds in the Shadow by Caroline B Cooney** (15 copies)

This YA novel is filled with suspense and action mixing in the current event topic of the African refugee situation, and the struggle of Americans to understand and help those in need.



**Happy Memorial Day!**



### 43 Tips to Improve Your Library's Usability



Libraries are getting more complicated these days, and it's harder to make sure that everyone is happy. You have to stay on top of online collections, new library programs, websites, and more. Check the list below and see if you can make these and other components of your library better, and make life easier for yourself and the people that visit your library.

Library Environment: Make your library an easier place to learn and work.

1. Manage noise: Create quiet learning areas so that patrons aren't disturbed by talking, cell phones, and other distractions.
2. Use signs to make areas clear: Use large signs to tell people when they're in the childrens' section, or a no cell phone zone.
3. Handle conflict between patrons: Be sure that your patrons aren't driving each other out of the library.
4. Be positive: Make sure that your signs do not give off a negative or limiting feeling. Tell patrons what they can do, instead of what they can't.
5. Offer lots of power outlets: Encourage users with laptops to come into the library by offering them an easy way to stay powered.
6. Make your signs readable: Use a large enough size and clear font to get the point across.
7. Create stations: Devote an area to reading magazines, another to doing research, yet another to individual studying, and so on.
8. Offer individual and group spaces: Create areas where individuals and groups can devote their time to study and discussion separate from the main library area.
9. Create a clean presentation: Don't leave books cluttered on carts and on tabletops—put them where they belong.
10. Use signs to announce tools: If you have a self checkout machine, make it easy for people to find it with a sign.
11. Consider acoustics: If you're undergoing new construction or a renovation of your library, ask your architect or contractor to design with sound in mind.
12. Create a bookstore-like layout: Make your library look like an inviting bookstore to encourage reading and visitors.
13. Make use of windows: Make the library a more comfortable place by using large windows for natural light.

Interaction: Improve communication in your library with these tips.

14. Ask staff to wear name tags: If patrons need help, make it easy to find someone by an identifying name tag.
15. Offer tours: Familiarize users with your library by giving regular tours.
16. Have an active email address: Be available through email, and you'll be able to help more patrons.
17. Ask users what they want and need: Get to the root of what your patrons are looking for by simply asking them.
18. Blog: Keep patrons updated on what's going on with the library by maintaining a regular blog.
19. Create exciting events: Get your library's visitors to come in for more than just books by hosting fun and interesting events.
21. Make use of social networks: Open up interaction on social networks like Facebook.
22. Use IM: Make your library available for assistance via instant message, so you can be helpful in a



quick and easy manner.

23. Encourage user-generated content: Make it easy for your patrons to be involved in the creation of content.

24. Hold training classes: Not every visitor to the library will intuitively understand how to use it, even if you've designed an incredibly usable library. Hold training sessions to make it easier for people to navigate your stacks.

25. Offer RSS feeds: Make it easy for users to stay updated on new additions to the collection, library news, and more by implementing RSS feeds anywhere they fit.

26. Reach out to visitors: Ask your staff to always be on an active lookout for patrons who seem like they need assistance.

27. Improve service to remote visitors: Make your library's availability from outside of the library easier and more effective for patrons to take advantage of.

28. Improve staff's demeanor: Explain and encourage appropriate body language, voice tone, dress, observation, and listening in your staff.

29. Train regularly: Keep your staff's skills fresh with regular training sessions.

Computers: Follow these tips, and you'll make your library's computers even more useful.

30. Install Firefox: With Firefox you can set up a custom experience, including the ability to put links to your library's catalog on book names.

31. Designate catalog and Internet computers: Make it easy for users to know which computers are for browsing the catalog, and which can be used for the Internet.

32. More laptops: Users want to use laptops, so be sure to have enough to give them what they want.

33. Allow patrons to use the tools they want: Make instant messaging, YouTube, gaming, and other resources available on your library's computers.

34. Offer Wi-Fi: If you aren't already, make free Wi-Fi available in your library.

Equipment: Make your library's tools more useful with these tips.

35. Be available for troubleshooting: Have a prominent help desk, and offer a sticker with directions on your equipment.

36. Check out mp3 players: Make listening to podcasts and ebooks easy with mp3 player checkouts.

37. Offer a simple checkout system: Don't put a lot of restrictions on how and when patrons can use equipment unless it's entirely necessary.

38. Offer CD and DVD players: If you're going to offer CDs and DVDs in your collection, make sure your library has players available for patrons to use.

39. Stay on top of maintenance and repairs: Always make sure that the equipment available to patrons is in good working order.

40. Lend tools: If you're going to offer how-to books for checkout, make your library a one stop shop and offer tools to do the job as well.

Kid Friendly: Make children feel welcome and encouraged in your library by implementing these ideas.

41. Provide child-centric visual design: Offer animation and sound effects to get their attention.

42. Use multimedia for navigation: Show children images to suggest where they should go next.

43. Create reading nooks: Kids want a comfortable place to sit and read, so devote a few corners to comfortable bean bags and other implements that encourage curling up with a good book.



**CHECK YOUR CALENDAR**

May 15 - **C&U Spring Meeting** - Librarians as Transformers at UNK.

May 20 - **NCompass Live:** How to Lead a Book Group for Adults or Kids at 10am.

May 25 - **Memorial Day.** Office closed.

June 5-6 - **Author Kathleen Norris** speaking at the St Benedictine Center near Schuyler.

June 25 - **Farewell to NE-BASE** at Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln. Details TBA.

June 26 - **State Advisory Council on Libraries** Meeting in Elmwood.

July 4 - **Independence Day.** Office closed.

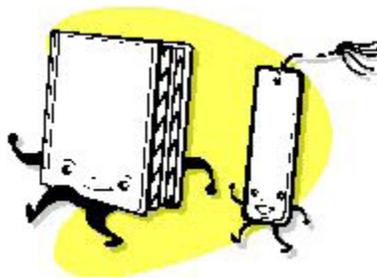
July 9-14 . **ALA Annual Conference** in Chicago.

July 17 - **Nebraska Library Commission Meeting** at NLC from 9:30am-12 noon.

July 20 - **NLS Board Meeting** at 10 am. Location TBA.

July 20-24 - **Nebraska Library Leadership Institute** at St. Benedictine Center.

July 25 - **Norfolk Public Library's Literature Festival** at Lifelong Learning Center, NECC.



**NEW @ NLS**

**Going Green: Creating an Environmentally Friendly Library,** Library Video Network, 2008. 27 min.

Not every library has the ability to build new "green" buildings, but every library has the ability to create an environmentally-friendly library. This program will show you simple, everyday tips that you can use to help your library and community improve the environment. You'll be shown programming ideas, recycling ideas, and way as other libraries are working to create a healthier planet.

**Wikis, Podcasts and Blogs, oh My!: Web Tools for Your Library,** Library Video Network, 2008. 30 min.

**Wikis, Podcasts, and Blogs, Oh My!** highlights blogs, wikis,

podcasts, RSS feeds, social networking websites, and video sharing websites. It also shows how libraries across the country are using these technologies to reach out to new customers and improve their services. Helene Blowers, Director of Digital Services for Columbus Metropolitan Library, is interviewed in the program and she discusses why libraries need to become familiar with and use these new technologies.

The program also shows — a library that is using MySpace to reach out to teens, ways to use wikis to improve your staff's productivity, how to create an effective podcast, and many other uses of Web 2.0 technologies.

**"Batting 100"** by John Peters and Marilyn Taniguchi, School Library Journal, Curriculum Connections, Spring 2009, pp. 10-13.

Do your middle school and high school students love to read about sports. Authors Peters and Taniguchi review the cream of the crop for sports stories that are hard to resist.





## NORTHEAST NEWS

The **Tilden Library Foundation** is now hosting the "New Beginnings" traveling art show from Prairie Winds Art Center of Grand Island, NE, through the end of June. This unique art show is made up of pieces that are uniformly sized (7"x7"), but reflect a wide variety of media such as oil, watercolor, acrylic, collage, textiles, pastels and ceramic.

During the week of May 11-16, the **Hruska Memorial Public Library** celebrated '500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins' by Dr. Seuss. Patrons are asked to bring in a decorated hat which were displayed during Children's Book Week.

**Central City Public Library** was recently named in Library Hotline for its focus on Information Technology. Congratulations!

Michael Caldararo has accepted the position of director of the **Norfolk Public Library**. Welcome to the Northeast Library System!



**Schuyler Public Library** celebrated 100 years of library service in the community beginning on April 13th with a "Chalk the Walk" activity for youth, a Board Game challenge, and Anniversary Cake reception. Other activities held that week included Story Hour, computer class, Teen "After Hours" and One Book/ One Nebraska Discussion group.



### NLS Equipment Available for Checkout

The Northeast Library System has equipment that are available for checkout. Give the system office a call at 1-800-578-1014 and we'll get the equipment to you.

Wii Gaming Console plus games (Dance Dance Revolution and dance pads, Monkey Ball Banana Blitz, Sonic & Mario at the Olympics, Wii Sports)

Accucut Dies

Digital Projector

Laptop



## Creative Commons Text, Video, Audio & Images Sites

Sometimes it feels like searching for the proverbial needle in the haystack when searching for free media files. The following listing contains sites that have Creative Commons files you can use for your media project.

Creative Commons media files are files you can use in the creation of web sites and other media, free of charge. However, there are different degrees of the license, and some of them are for private use only, or they may require that you include an attribution to the original creator. Make sure to read and understand the various licenses, and which one each file you discover uses.

### AUDIO

ArtistServer.com: Over 7,000 free audio files as of this writing, all well categorized and easy to navigate. It also mixes in some social networking allowing to you have friends lists, run a blog and more.

ccMixter.org: ccMixter offers up thousands of Creative Commons licensed remixed songs in just about every genre available. Make sure to read each tracks info page to see just which version of the license it follows.

Free-Loops.com: Free-Loops offers up thousands of sound effects, vocal loops, drum loops and a whole lot more and all for, just as the name implies, free.

Freesound.org: There is no music at Freesound.org, just tens of thousands of various sound samples for use in sampling, all of them licensed under the Creative Commons Sampling Plus License.

Jamendo.com: This site is filled with nothing but Creative Commons licensed albums that take advantage of all the various versions of the license. When using a file, make sure you understand which version the album is using.

TribeOfNoise.com: A social networking site built around independent artists uploading their music under a Creative Commons 3.0 by-share alike license.

### GENERAL SEARCHES

Archive.org: Most people only think of Archive.org for the Wayback Machine, but it also offers up a huge selection of audio, video and text documents under the Creative Commons license.

CreativeCommons.org Search: The search at CreativeCommons.org allows you to choose which type of license you want to search for, and then you can search on Blip.tv, Flickr, Google, OWL, SpicXpress and Yahoo all from one easy interface.

Freebase.com: Freebase can search for all types of things as it is a community powered search engine, and that includes looking for CC licensed media for you to use.

Google Advanced Search: The advanced search options in Google allow you to restrict it to CC licensed items.

SpinXpress Get Media Search: The SpinXpress lets you define the type of media you are looking for, what license you want and you can restrict what source or search all of them to find the file you need.



Wikimedia Commons: The Creative Commons arm of Wikipedia allows you to search through all of the files they use.

Yahoo Creative Commons Search: A version of Yahoo search that allows you to search only for Creative Commons items.

## **IMAGES**

AnimalPhotos.info: Thousands of free to use animals photos divided up in to easy to browse categories.

CarPictures.cc: This site contains thousands of Creative Commons licensed photos of cars, easily divided up by manufacturer so you can find exactly what you are looking for.

Creativity103.com: An archive of over a thousand abstract backgrounds you can use for free.

Geograph.org.uk: This is an attempt to photograph the entirety of the British Isles, and the photos are released under Creative Commons.

OpenClipArt.org: This archive of free-to-use clipart numbering around 11,000 pieces.

PhotoEverywhere.co.uk: A photo archive filled with travel and location photos from all over the world.

wikiHow.com: Besides tutorials, wikiHow has a photograph collection, and they are under CC licenses.

## **TEXTS**

IntraText.com: The IntraText library contains over 12 millions texts dating back as far as 900 B.C., and as recent as the 21st century. Many of them are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License, but check each one individually before using it.

TravellersPoint.com: TravellersPoint features over 1500 CC licensed texts about destinations from all over the world.

UnearthTravel.com: Over 1 million travel guides and photos from all over the planet that are licensed under Creative Commons.

WisdomCommons.org: A collection of over 3,000 poems, fables, essays and more.

## **VIDEOS**

Blip.tv: Video uploaders are allowed to assign multiple types of licenses to their content, including various Creative Commons styles.

OurMedia.org: OurMedia is a media resource for people to upload and share their works that is run by the Internet Archive. Seeing as Archive.org is all about Creative Commons licensed works, they have carried that over to this project.

Revver.com: Revver is a lesser known video sharing site that automatically defaults all new videos to the Creative Commons license.

**THE REVIEWER'S CHAIR****Spy!**

By Anna Myers

This novel is inspired by the famous last words of a heroic patriot, Nathan Hale, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." The reader learns of the struggle in the early colonies as friends, neighbors and relatives had to decide if they would support King George or the American patriots. Nathan Hale, a graduate of Yale, who taught both boys and girls in school and was a person of great athletic ability influencing those he came in contact with his knowledge and compassion.

The story involves a fictitious poor, orphaned boy named Jonah Hawkins who made a promise to his dying father to remain loyal to the King, but as events unfold it becomes a difficult promise to keep. As the country goes to arms and blood is spilled Jonah begins of understanding the price of freedom. Author Myers did extensive research for her book and has included as many historical facts as possible as she has woven an exciting story of the birth of our nation for readers from 6th grade and up. This book would be a great addition to any library with special interest for

the reluctant male reader.  
-Pat Thompon, WSC

**Baby Brains and Robomom**

By Simon James

Throughout her pregnancy Mrs. Brain's did everything she could to stimulate her developing baby's intellectual growth. The result was a baby genius who invents various labor saving devices. Finally to help out his exhausted parents, Baby Brains invents Robomom. Robomom not only does household chores but begins to take over parental duties to Baby Brains dismay before exploding.

This is a fun book to read. The idea that a baby can be so smart and innovative is delightful to young children. I would recommend this book for pre-K to second grade for school and public libraries.  
-Laticia Olson, Randolph Public School

**Hugging Hour**

By Aileen Leijten

Drool has her first sleep over at her eccentric grandmother's house. This book has an interesting storyline and nice illustrations. It is a good purchase choice for both school and public libraries. Recommended for preschool through third grade.  
-Sharon Kinnan

**The Year the Swallows Came Early**

By Kathryn Fitzmaurice.

Groovy (given name Eleanor) is devastated when her father is arrested right in front of her. What could be worse than that? Her mom called the police on her dad. . . .for stealing Groovy's \$25,000 inheritance and gambling it away! Eleanor's passion is cooking and the money was to pay for cooking school. Betrayed by her dad, and struggling to come to terms with the fact that the money for school is gone, Groovy has to heal. Despite the best efforts of friends and family, Groovy has to find her own way through this situation. Can she find it in her heart to forgive her dad's mistakes? How does she deal with the loss of her dream?

This would be a great addition to any public or school library for middle school readers. Parents often make mistakes that kids have to deal with. Groovy's story is a great example of coming to terms with this mistake and finding her own voice in an appropriate manner.  
-Charissa Loftis, WSC

**Pirate Treasure**

By Loretta Krupinski

This is the story a two mice that have to run ashore to fix their ship and in the meantime learn the treasure of friendship. The story has many interesting nautical words and phrases but the illustrations are absolutely beautiful...full of detail and



color. Kids could look at this book for hours and still find new things. It would be fun for preschoolers but probably best for early elementary kids since the story is more complex. It could be part of any library collection.

-Heather Reid, home school parent/teacher, Omaha, NE

**Daniel Boone’s Great Escape**

By Michael P. Spradlin and illustrated by Ard Hoyt

Daniel Boone’s Great Escape is a wonderfully illustrated story of Daniel Boone’s capture by the Shawnee. While out hunting for meat, four Shawnee warriors come upon Boone and take him captive. As the Shawnee’s captive Boone must run the gauntlet – a double row of warrior’s intent on wounding him and designed to show his bravery. Boone successfully ran the gauntlet and won the respect of the Shawnee.

Boone lived peacefully with the Shawnee during the winter, making friends with them and even repairing their rifles. However, he was still a prisoner longing for home and family. Early one morning in June, Boone managed to leave the village and started running for home – 160 miles away. Four days later, after pursuit and almost no food, Boone made it to Boonesborough to warn the settlers there that the Shawnee were going to attack. This is a good historical account of Boone’s courageous act and is suitable for upper elementary

ages.

-Samantha Bye, home school parent

**Violet Raines Almost Got Struck by Lightning**

By Danette Haworth

Melissa, a new big-city girl arrives in Violet’s sleepy Florida town and Violet fears she will steal away her best friend Lottie. Violet does not treat Melissa very well and this leads to trials for eleven-year-old Violet and lessons she must learn about herself and how to treat others.

This would be a good read for any ten – twelve year-olds, especially girls. Violet does not treat the new girl very nicely as she feels she is making her best friend Lottie change and Violet does not like sharing her friend. And we can probably all commiserate on how we may have harshly treated a new person in school or somewhere in our life. This is a great story of how someone new does not have to make us change who we are or fear a little change if it does happen. This book would be good for gradess 3-6 and in any type of library.

-Deb Daehnke, WSC

**Five Children and It**

By E. Nesbit

Puffin Books has re-issued this 1902 classic.

The story starts out with a family going to the country on vacation. Father gets called away for business and Mother

goes to take care of ailing Grandmother. Their five children, Cyril, Anthea, Jane, Robert and the baby, who is called Lam, are left in the care of their nursemaid, Martha.

The children go exploring and find a sand-fairy known as Psammead. This fairy can grant them one wish each day that lasts until sunset. The children’s wishes for items like wings, so that they can fly, and to live in a castle that is under siege, lands them into several scrapes. These experiences help the children to learn some good life lessons.

This story may be a fun read aloud for second through fourth graders.

-Claudette Wielechowski, North Platte

**The Summer Sherman Loved Me**

By Jane St. Anthony

When Sherman (the boy next door) tells 12-year-old Margaret that he loves her she’s not sure how she should react. To compound her problem she can’t let her mom know because she doesn’t seem to approve of anything Margaret does and this would just make matters worse. When one of her three-year-old twin sisters finds out that Margaret and Sherman are hanging out Margaret has to find a way to keep her from telling mom. Margaret’s troubles seem to just keep getting worse when her brother catches Sherman kissing her. How can she deal with all this when she’s not even sure she knows how she really feels



about Sherman and love?  
Reading level: 4th through 5th grade.

This is a fun book that reflects the trials and tribulations of almost-teens everywhere. A good choice for your accelerated reader collection.  
-Diane Limoges, Eastern Township Library

**My Most Excellent Year**  
By Steve Kluger

T.C. Keller, Angie Hwong and Alejandra Perez are juniors at a Boston High School. When they are assigned to write an essay entitled "My Most Excellent Year", they all write about their freshman year of high school; the year that Alejandra, the daughter of a former Mexican ambassador, entered public school and met the flamboyant, Broadway-musical loving Angie and his best friend TC. Alternating points of view, the characters communicate with each other through email, IM and chat transcript and write letters to their dead heroes in which they reveal their (often hilarious) intimate feelings and dreams.

This book has the same cinematic quality of the Traveling Pants series.  
This book has warm, generous characters. It is heartwarming, poignant, and wonderfully comic. It was a joy to read. A word of caution: this is a very liberal book with liberal politics and liberal social attitudes. It could be seen as a threat by those who are less tolerant.

I would recommend this book for school and public libraries for 9-12th grades.  
-Holly Troup, Clearwater Public Library

**Boy Heaven**  
By Laura Kasischke

Imagine this: you sneak out of cheerleading camp and you're in your amazing red convertible, top down, hair blowing in the wind; a loving life sorta thing. Then you see some hicks and they start following you. Spooky? Yes, for them because the three main characters in this book think two boys are watching them. Follow this mysterious adventure that'll keep you turning the page.

I really enjoyed this book and read it in less than a day. It was so good!  
I would recommend this book for 14 years old on up.  
-Felicia Keiser, Wayne High School

**When Owen's Mom Breathed Fire**  
By Pija Lindenbaum

This book is an absolute hoot! Imagine getting up one morning and your mother has turned into a dragon. Owen's mom breathes fire, licks dishes, stomps on her cell phone and eats bugs. Give me a break, this is your mother! The kids will love it. The pictures are cool except for small children. I didn't think that they needed to portray his mother without clothes and with breasts. They could have left the breasts out

for that age.  
Grade level: 2-3rd  
-Carol Tramp, Wynot Public School

**Bloodhound**  
By Tamora Pierce

This is the second book in the Beka Cooper series by Tamora Pierce. Beka is a Dog, a cop, in the pseudo-Medieval fantasy kingdom of Tortall. She's 17, it's her second year on the force, and someone is flooding the country's coinage with counterfeiters. Beka and her partner, Clary Goodwin, are sent off to Port Caynn to find the culprits.

My favourite addition to the cast is Achoo, a scent hound whom Beka adopts when she is mistreated by her previous handler. One of the things I appreciate about Tammy's books is that morality is rarely black-and-white; thieves live by their own code, and can often become friends or lovers of Dogs without anyone batting an eye.

I found Bloodhound to be a refreshing read full of grimy Dog (aka police) work and a fast paced plot. Though the beginning was a bit slow, once it picked up I found that I could not put it down. I stayed up late to finish it even when I knew I had to get up early the next morning; I could not sleep without knowing what was going to happen to Beka and the other characters next. I am always a fan of a medieval theme or something similar and Pierce, as usual, hit the mark. Recommended for ages 12 and up.  
~~Kathy Ellerton, NLS



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-- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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