

2015

## 2015 List of Cream of the Crop for Children's and Young Adult Literature

Southern Maine Library District Book Review Group.

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**Maine Regional Library System**  
**26<sup>th</sup> Annual Reading Round Up of Children's and Young Adult Literature**  
**Augusta Civic Center**  
**April 9, 2015**

**Cream of the Crop**  
**Total books: 100**

**KEY**

L	Library binding	[GN]	Graphic Novel
P	Paperback	[M]	Maine Author, Illustrator, Setting
R	Reinforced trade binding		
T	Trade binding		

**PICTURE BOOK NON-FICTION (total books in this category: 10)**

Fern, Tracey. *Dare the Wind. The Record-Breaking Voyage of Eleanor Prentiss and the Flying Cloud*. Farrar Straus Giroux. 978-0-374-31699-0, R \$17.99 (Grade 3-5). Eleanor Prentiss, said to have been born with saltwater in her veins, learned to sail and navigate from her ship-captain father. She goes on to navigate *The Flying Cloud*, with its passengers bound for the 1851 California Gold Rush, on a record-breaking, fastest journey from New York, around Cape Horn, and into San Francisco. Illustrations bring this sea voyage to life, while the author's note provides historic background detail.

Huey, Lois Miner. *Ick! Yuck! Eew!: Our Gross American History*. Millbrook Press. 978-0-7613-9091-6, L \$29.27 (Grade 4-8). Huey, an archaeologist, brings the reader back in time to early America in all of its stinky, itchy, unsanitary glory. She vividly describes the streets, insects, homes, infections and gross treatments, and uncomfortable clothing. An author's note explains that most of this history dealt with upper and middle classes as they were the recorders of daily life at that time. The text is well-written and the illustrations are perfectly placed to illustrate Huey's point. This book is engaging and enlightening; it would be helpful for research and will also attract browsers, although not everyone will appreciate its grossness. The book includes suggestions for further reading, a list of places to visit, useful web sites, and an index.

Jackson, Ellen. *Tooling Around: Crafty Creatures and the Tools They Use*. Charlesbridge. 978-1-58089-564-4, R \$17.95 (PreK-Grade 3). The practice of animals using tools is presented through double-page spreads with a simple rhyme on one page and detailed information on the facing page. The colorful illustrations of 11 different animals clearly portray the wide variety of animals in the act of tool use. This introduction to animal behavior can be used at story hour for the very young by just reading the rhyming text. The informational text and extensive back matter expands the appeal to a slightly older reader.

Jenkins, Steve and Page, Robin. *Creature Features: Twenty-Five Animals Explain Why They Look the Way They Do*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-23351-5, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 3). Distinctive Steve Jenkins illustrated animals answer questions about their unique facial features. The 25 animals explain the reasons for these unusual features with wit and a bit of attitude. Informative and entertaining in equal measure.

O'Connell, Caitlin. *A Baby Elephant in the Wild*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-149441, T \$16.99 (Grade K-4). Caitlin O'Connell is a leading expert in the study of elephants. In this picture book, she allows the reader to go with her into the field as she follows Lisa, a new-born, from her first breaths, her introduction to the family group, and her life in the scrub desert. The large and detailed photographs support the text which is informative and age-appropriate. An author's note and added information in the back make this an excellent choice for introducing a young reader to this fascinating animal. Check out, *The Elephant Scientist*, the story of Caitlin O'Connell, which was a Sibert Honor book.

Price, Jane. *Underworld: Exploring the Secret World Beneath Your Feet*. Kids Can Press. 978-1-89478-689-8, T \$18.95 (Grade K-6). Covering such topics as volcanoes, underground animals, buried treasure, and underground living, the book uses a mix of facts, photographs, and cartoon-like illustrations to provide the reader with a window into the worlds under our feet. Young readers will pour over the myriad tidbits and facts on each page. The pages are busy, but there are helpful tips on how to read the information. An extremely engaging book that could be used during a nonfiction unit to support readers as they learn to navigate how to read nonfiction. Readers of *Guinness Book of World Records* will enjoy getting lost in this book.

Rabinowitz, Alan. *A Boy and a Jaguar*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-547-87507-1, T \$16.99 (Grade K-5). The story of the author as a young boy and his struggles with stuttering and the isolation it causes. His ability to speak clearly to animals and his empathy toward one lonely jaguar lead to a promise and ultimately his lifelong work. Rabinowitz becomes a fluent stutterer and fulfills his promise (i.e., to be a voice for animals and keep them from harm) by dedicating his life to wildlife conservation. (Schneider Family Book Award)

Rosenstock, Barb. *The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art*. Random House Children's Books. 978-0-307-97848-6, T \$17.99 (Grade K-4). This colorful introduction to abstract artist, Vasily Kandinsky, is told with rich vocabulary and lush, energetic illustrations. The reader follows along as Kandinsky discovers his ability to hear colors and see music, a condition called synesthesia. This story will be useful in any art appreciation exercise, as it helps to shift thinking away from "What is it?" to "How does it make you feel?" (Caldecott Honor)

Roy, Katherine. *Neighborhood Sharks. Hunting with the Great Whites of California's Farallon Islands*. David Macaulay Studio. 978-1-559643-874-3, R \$17.99 (Grade 2-6). Stunning watercolor illustrations portray both good science and the dramatic action of this shark/seal, predator/prey relationship. In recounting the act of one shark hunting one seal, the author covers the science of the shark's vision, teeth, body design and social interactions. All critical to the shark's success. Even the biology of the perfect meal, and an elephant seal, is covered. Well researched, written and illustrated, this will satisfy all shark enthusiasts. (Robert F. Sibert Honor)

Sidman, Joyce. *Winter Bees and Other Poems of the Cold*. Houghton Mifflin. 978-0-5479-06508-8, R \$17.99 (Grade 1-4). A wonderful mix of science and art. Newbery Honor winner Sidman writes with rich language of the animals and birds of winter and pairs her poems with scientific information on her chosen subject. Tying them together are Rick Allen's stunning illustrations of wood carvings, water colors and linoleum cuts. A great choice for your STE (A) M collection

### **PICTURE BOOK FICTION (total books in this category: 20)**

Applegate, Katherine. *Ivan: the Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla*. Clarion Books. 978-0-544-25230-1, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 2). Applegate first told the story of Ivan in her prose-poem novel *The One and Only Ivan* and this picture book gives more detail about how Ivan came to live in the shopping mall in Tacoma, WA, and what happened to him after he was "rescued" from that mall. With charcoal and watercolor illustrations by G. Brian Karas to accompany her words, Applegate simply tells Ivan's story and the result is lovely. This book can be used as a read aloud (children will cheer as Ivan is released back into a world with green grass and other gorillas) or as a conversation starter about how animals shape our lives and how humans can treat them with dignity and kindness.

Bottner, Barbara. *Miss Brooks' Story Nook (Where Tales are Told and Ogres are Welcome!)*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-449-81328-7, T \$16.99 (Grade K-3). Miss Brooks handles a power outage during Story Nook by leading the listeners in a storytelling session. Her endless patience and pointed questions help Missy, who "Mainly likes to read stories, not tell them," craft a tale involving bullies, ogres, boa constrictors, and eventually, the perfect ending. Useful on many levels, this works as a "how to" book for writing stories. It also provides an example for dealing with bullies and it is a good read-aloud with wonderful, rich vocabulary.

Brown-Wood, JaNay. *Imani's Moon*. Mackinac Island Press. 978-1-934133-57-6, R [M] \$17.99 (Grade K-4). Imani is a small Masai girl whose bedtime stories are the tales of her culture told to her by a loving mother. She wants to do something great, like touch the moon! Though determined, she is taunted and teased by the other children of her village. How will one small girl accomplish her deepest wish? This story of love, determination and self-confidence will speak to that reader who has dreamed of doing something wonderful. Hazel Mitchell's illustrations are magical. Her watercolor paintings are clear and vibrant. This is a story not to be missed.

Campbell, K.G. *The Mermaid and the Shoe*. Kids Can Press. 978-1-55453-771-6, T \$16.95 (PreK-Grade 3). Most of Neptune's fifty daughters are remarkable, all except Minnow, the youngest. She has no particular talent, nothing at which she is exceptional. But Minnow asks questions. A lot of questions. One day a curious object floats down to her and, in her need for answers, she combs the ocean looking for an explanation. Her explorations lead her to the shore, to a lighthouse, to a girl wearing one of these odd objects (a shoe), and to the answers to many of her questions. She returns to the pod and regales the merfolk with her adventures and her experiences. King Neptune is delighted with his curious, tenacious daughter and the reader will be too. This book is wonderful for a STEAM curriculum and is a lovely read-aloud. The illustrations move with the sway of the ocean and the touches of red and coral are just right. A new "Little Mermaid" tale for the 21st-century sensibility.

Chin, Jason. *Gravity*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-59643-717-3, R \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 3). Using few words, Chin explains the concept of gravity. He chooses a few items that start on the beach with one little boy, drift up to space where there is no gravity, and then fall back to Earth, where gravity resumes, onto the front yard of some very surprised little girls. The illustrations are sumptuous and you can feel the movement of each item. There is a double-page explanation of gravity in the back of the book and a bibliography of additional titles for further study. This is a lovely book to use with students learning about gravity or those readers interested in science. And for younger readers, the pictures are mesmerizing enough just to flip through.

Daly, Cathleen. *Emily's Blue Period*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-59643-469-1, T \$17.99 (Grade K-4). Emily loves art and when she learns about Picasso, she is struck by his work as she is also "going through a blue period." Her world is fractured now that her father has moved out of the family's home. Using art to explain and examine a tough family situation will resonate with young readers who often use art to channel difficult-to-express feelings. The color palette is muted and the pictures work perfectly with the text. A great picture book for upper elementary readers and a non-didactic entryway for a parent looking to start a conversation about divorce.

Davies, Benji. *Storm Whale*. Henry Holt. 978-0-8050-9967-6, R \$16.99 (Grade K-3). There once was a boy who lived with his father and six cats by the sea. After a storm, the boy finds a small whale in need of his help. This is a simple, quiet story of love and friendship. The text is minimal and the illustrations are soft, uncomplicated, and have the feeling of the sea.

Donofrio, Beverly and Barbara McClintock. *Where's Mommy?* Schwartz & Wade, 978-0-37584-423-2, T \$17.99 (PreK-Grade 2). This book is sparingly told and gorgeously illustrated. Maria and Mouse Mouse are friends who think that they have to keep their friendship a secret; both are looking for their mothers. As they run through their respective houses, the reader is taken through each home with split panels, human above and mice below. Finally, both girls find their mothers, together, having a cozy tea, and realize that they are not the only ones who have formed a friendship. Charming in its simplicity, the real story is in the pictures and that's what sets this book apart.

Harper, Charise Mericle. *Go! Go! Go! Stop!* Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-375-86924-2, T \$16.99 (PreK-K). Little Green rolls into town and says the one word that he knows, "GO!" - this word gets all of the construction vehicles moving as they work to build a bridge. But soon there is too much, "go!" and Little Green doesn't know what to do. Enter Little Red. He knows just what to do, "STOP!", and all of the vehicles do. The two have some bumps trying to work together, but they figure it out and the bridge gets built. Bright, fun illustrations mixed with images of real dirt and gravel work perfectly in this great read-aloud about cooperation. Vehicle-loving readers will delight in this story, and they will pump their fist in the air when Little Yellow shows up to truly even everything out.

Haughton, Chris. *Shh! We Have a Plan*. Candlewick. 978-0-7636-7293-5, R \$15.99 (Grade K-2). This is the perfect balance between text and art. They come together to form a picture book that will engage and delight our smallest readers. Simple in style and color- blue and black with only a hint of red, this is the story of four silly hunters out to capture a bird. Three of them make plan upon plan only to be outsmarted by the bird, while the smallest of them shows them a simpler solution. The reader is taken along and sees that it is not the hunters who have the plan. It is a delight to read and a delight to hear.

Javaherbin, Mina. *Soccer Star*. Candlewick. 978-0-7636-6056-7, T \$16.99 (Grade 2-4). Not only is soccer an international sport, for many boys and girls it is a way to change their lives, to defeat another opponent – poverty. So it is in this story set in Brazil. Paolo and his teammates love the sport and hope one day to become soccer stars and live a better life. Until then, they all work their daily jobs, and practice to become great! The text is uplifting and full of promise. The illustrations are large and take the reader to Paolo's village, with their colors and texture. They, with the text, allow the reader to see what life is like now and express the hope of what life could be. Pair this with *Goal*, another of Javaherbin's stories and biographies of Pele, Garrincha, both Brazilian soccer stars.

Lewis, J. Patrick and Douglas Florian. *Poem Mobiles: Crazy Car Poems*. Schwartz & Wade Books. 978-0-375-86690-6, T \$17.99 (Grade K-3). Poems centering around imaginative, silly cars/vehicles. The rhymes are fun, easy to understand, and appeal to the silliness of childhood. The illustrations by Jeremy Holmes can be studied - they have depth and great movement. The colors are appealing and the cars are given character (in a better-than-Disney way). Great as a read-aloud, but can also be given to a child who would pour over the pictures, or for use with older elementary students studying poetry.

Lloyd-Jones, Sally. *Poor Doreen: A Fishy Tale*. Schwartz & Wade Books. 978-0-375-86918-1, T \$17.99. (PreK-Grade 2). The most delightful picture book of the year! Doreen is pure joy and this story is perfection. It has twists and turns, it has wonderful vocabulary words, it has onomatopoeia and alliteration, it has fantastic dialogue, it has humor, it has gleeful illustrations, it has an amazing cadence for reading out loud, and it all wraps up with a satisfying ending. For every library.

Mora, Pat and Libby Martinez. *I Pledge Allegiance*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-307-93181-8, T \$16.99 (Grade K-3). Mother/daughter co-authors have written a gentle, intergenerational story to introduce the Pledge of Allegiance and what it means. Great Aunt Lobo, an immigrant from Mexico, and her young niece, Libby, practice the Pledge and talk about what it means to them. The story culminates with Great Aunt Lobo's naturalization ceremony and the new citizens' inspiring recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Useful for discussions of immigration and citizenship.

Nolan, Dennis. *Hunters of the Great Forest*. Neal Porter. 978-1-59643-896-5, R \$17.99 (Grade K-3). Take a group of quirky, somewhat-goofy-looking explorers, put them on the trail of a treasure, and you have what Horn Book calls "imaginative storytelling and stunning art." This enchanting wordless book encourages the reader to come along on the hunt and share in the treasure.

Peet, Mal and Graham, Elspeth. *Night Sky Dragons*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6144-1, T \$15.99 (Grade 1-4). Set in the "snow-smothered mountains" along the Silk Road, young Yazul spends time building kites with his grandfather and avoiding his lonely, stern father as everyone waits for spring. Yazul's mischief lands him in the han kitchens where he is hard at work when bandits lay siege to the walled town. Engaging storytelling with rich language and a Trickster ending. This original story has the feel of a folktale and would pair nicely with the authors' earlier book, *Cloud Tea Monkeys*.

Pham, LeUyen. *A Piece of Cake*. Balzer + Bray. 978-0-06-199264-3, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 1). A cause-and-effect style picture book: Mouse has a cake for Bird's birthday, but along the way to Bird's house, he trades pieces of cake for seemingly useless

objects. By the time he arrives at Bird's, he is out of cake, but Bird is undaunted. She explains that they can trade the objects back for the ingredients needed to make another cake. And so they do, but none of the trades are the obvious items to solve the problems faced by each animal. A clever, keep-them-guessing book with bright, cartoon-like illustrations that is sure to delight listeners. Can also be used to discuss plot development and problem-solution narratives.

Ramstein, Anne-Margot and Matthias Aregui. *Before After*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-7621-6, R \$19.99 (PreK-Grade3). This co-author/illustrator team has included an abundance of ways to measure the passage of time in this wordless book. Coupled images provide the opportunity to tell many stories. Some images are simple with straightforward connections while others require some puzzling out and deeper thought. Share this artful book one on one or in small groups to spark discussion.

Ruzzier, Sergio. *A Letter For Leo*. Clarion Books. 978-0-544-22360-8, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 1). Leo is the letter carrier in his little town and the one thing that he wants more than anything is to receive a letter himself. Because of a newfound friendship, he does get what he has always wanted. This is a sweet story of friendship and simple gestures. The illustrations are lovely and fit the sweetness of the story. A wonderful read-aloud. Cheep!

Walker, Anna. *Peggy*. Clarion Books. 978-0-544-25900-3, T \$16.99 (PreK-Grade 2). As so many elementary schools study the life cycle of the chicken, a good chicken picture book is worth its weight in gold, and *Peggy* does not disappoint. Peggy enjoys her life in the yard until, one day, a wind picks her up and carries her to the city. There she has many new experiences and, just as the city starts to overwhelm, Peggy finds some old friends who show her the way home. A sweet story to talk about what it's like to be out of our element, and about how everyone, even a chicken named Peggy, could use a little adventure once in a while. Beautiful, detailed illustrations enhance this fun addition to the chicken picture book canon.

#### **NON-FICTION (total books in this category: 26)**

Brimmer, Larry Dane. *Strike: The Farm Workers' Fight for Their Rights*. Calkins Creek. 978-1-59078-997-1, T \$16.95 (Grade 6-12). This is a dynamic work of narrative nonfiction by a passionate author, teacher and Civil Rights advocate. It tells the interconnected stories of the 1965 Delano grape strike, the work of activist Cesar Chavez and the formation of the United Farm Workers of America. Brimmer's successful page layouts complement the text. They include full-page black and white photographs and artwork alongside text in both Spanish and English. This well-researched work includes FBI files, personal diaries, letters and newspaper articles. It will incite lively discussions of present day workers' rights, unions, the federal minimum wage, civil rights and immigration reform. Timeline, further informational sources, source notes, index and picture credits appended.

Brown, Don. *He Has Shot the President! April 14, 1865: The Day John Wilkes Booth Killed President Lincoln*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-5964-3224-6, R \$12.66 (Grade 3-6). In this fifth installment of his series, "Actual Times," Don Brown takes the reader back to April 14, a day Lincoln plans to enjoy with a carriage ride and evening at the theatre while John Wilkes Booth plans to kill him! We become acquainted with the characters and politics of the time. His signature illustrations carry the seriousness of what is to happen and the sure, stable text make this volume ideal for those interested in this piece of history. Pair this with a number of Lincoln books including *Killing Lincoln* by Bill O'Reilly.

Burns, Loree Griffin, *Beetle Busters: A Rogue Insect and the People Who Track It*. Houghton Mifflin. 978-0-5477-9267-5, T \$18.99 (Grade 4-6). What is an Asian beetle from China doing in our Northeast forests and why are scientists so concerned? In this edition of the *Scientists in the Field* series, Burns gives the reader the: who, what, where, why and how, of this invasive insect that can destroy the forests as close to Maine as Worcester, Massachusetts. Photos, maps and diagrams back up scientific data and make this middle school narrative a must-read.

Castaldo, Nancy. *Sniffer Dogs: How Dogs (and Their Noses) Save the World*. Houghton Mifflin. 978-0-5440-8893-1, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). Dogs have been part of our lives for hundreds of years but they truly are "man's best friend." Nancy Castaldo introduces the reader to "detection dogs." These dogs are trained to use their amazing noses to search for literally anything we need them to find, including humans – living or deceased, explosives, chemical changes in our bodies, animal poop and Asian beetles! Their work gives us closure and keeps us healthy and safe. Photos, personal essays, and scientific data complete the text. Pair this with any number of dog stories including *Duke* by Kirby Larson, *Dog Diaries-Barry* by Kate Klimo and the *Dog Hero* series which covers eco – dogs, medical detection dogs, ground zero dogs, and soldier dogs.

Cooper, Michael L. *Fighting Fire! Ten of The Deadliest Fires in American History and How We Fought Them*. Henry Holt. 978-08050-97146, T \$19.99 (Grade 4-6). Man has had a history with fire since he discovered how to create it. Author Cooper has gone back into American history and chosen 10 of the worst city fires including those of Boston, Baltimore and Chicago. Cooper looks at the devastation that came from those fires but also explains how each fire brought with it new techniques to fight such fires. Also included in the book, some of the worst fire disasters including the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, the Coconut Grove nightclub fire and the horror of 9/11. Though this chronicles fire at its worst, it honors those volunteer and professional men and women throughout history who choose to put themselves in harm's way to keep our cities, communities, and nation safe. Cooper has a fast-paced text and has added historical images to make this an exciting read. Pair this with *I Survived series –Great*

Downer, Ann. *Wild Animal Neighbors: Sharing our Urban World*. Twenty-First Century Books. 978-0-7613-9021-3, R \$29.95 (Grade 5-8). This volume examines seven species, touching on how they move into urban settings, how they survive, and the problems they often cause and encounter. The diverse conflicts and sometimes surprising solutions to protecting and co-existing with these animals is presented through clear, concise text and engaging photographs. Up-to-date information on a currently high interest topic.

Finkelstein, Norman H. *Schools of Hope: How Julius Rosenwald Helped Change African American Education*. Calkins Creek. 978-1-59078-841-7, T \$16.95 (Grade 5-9). Finkelstein's uplifting work of narrative nonfiction introduces Julius Rosenwald, a philanthropist ahead of his time. Rosenwald was generous in his commitment to community service. He had a firm belief that access to a quality education would allow African-Americans to advance economically and socially. The black and white photographs depict the Rosenwald school buildings, the historical events and figures that inspired the work and legacy of Julius Rosenwald.

Fleischman, Paul. *Eyes Wide Open: Going behind the Environmental Headlines*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-7102-0, R \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). In this attractive, well-researched and easy-to-follow guide to the various environmental issues, Fleischman informs and challenges readers to identify and understand the various hidden forces behind current media headlines and political decisions. Readers are empowered to "weigh the information." The layout includes eye-catching text boxes, quick facts and graphics for both browser and researcher. Back matter includes sources notes, websites bibliography, glossary and index. Recommended for a curriculum focused on environmental studies, sociology, economics and journalism.

Fleming, Candace. *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion & the Fall of Imperial Russia*. Schwartz & Wade. 978-0-375-86782-8, T \$18.99 (Grade 7-12). This is an intriguing account of the mysteries surrounding the Romanov family murder. Multi-layered historical perspectives provide readers with insight into the privileged Tsar's non-existent leadership that resulted in the poverty and bloodshed of thousands. This comprehensive account includes photographs of the family, peasants, Lenin, Rasputin, and WWI conditions. Fleming includes primary sources, general sources, websites, chapter notes and index. (Robert F. Sibert Honor)

Freedman, Russell. *Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights That Changed America*. Holiday House. 978-0-8234-2921-9, R \$20.00 (Grade 6-9). Freedman uses his award-winning style to present the important work that went into achieving voting rights for African Americans in the 1960s. This protest march was broadcast across the world. The full-page black and white photographs illustrate this struggle and pull readers into the action. A timeline, bibliography, photo credits, source notes and index appended.

Goldsmith, Connie. *Bombs Over Bikini: The World's First Nuclear Disaster*. Twenty-First Century Books. 978-1-4677-1612-3, R \$29.00 (Grade 5-9). This extensively-researched work of nonfiction sheds light on the testing of the first nuclear bombs in the Marshall Islands of the Pacific Ocean. This is a little-known subject in United States history that took place in the early days of the Cold War, 1946-1958. Goldsmith offers a compelling story told from many different perspectives including the U.S. Government, the scientists involved and the local Marshall Islanders. This work encourages discussions of social responsibility and the advancement of science. Source notes, glossary, selected bibliography, further informational sources and index appended.

Jackson, Donna M. and Carol Kinsey Goman. *Every Body's Talking: What We Say Without Words*. Twenty-First Century Books. 978-1-4677-0858-6, RT \$22.50 (Grade 5-9). We all speak volumes through our non-verbal body language. This book interprets a wide variety of gestures, expressions and stances and includes practical advice on how to use this knowledge. Photographs of diverse, mostly-young people are used to illustrate various messages that our body language sends. Accessible text effortlessly defines new terms in this book of broad interest.

Jarrow, Gail. *Red Madness: How a Medical Mystery Changed What We Eat*. Calkins Creek. 978-1-59078-732-8, T \$16.95 (Grade 6-12). Jarrow writes with an urgency about the early twentieth century Pellagra epidemic in the southern United States. The layout includes haunting black and white photographs of the victims as well as frightening newspaper headlines. This work will provoke discussions of heroic doctors and scientists and the parallels between Pellagra and the present day Ebola epidemic. Glossary, timeline, further informational sources, author's note, source notes, bibliography, index, picture credits appended.

Kanefield, Teri. *Guilty? Crime, Punishment, and the Changing Face of Justice*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-14896-3, T \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). Kanefield, a lawyer who handles Constitutional appeals, introduces readers to the mutable nature of crime, effective and ineffective punishment, Constitutional protections, and legal analysis: how to "think like a lawyer." An excellent adjunct text for sociology, history, and civics classes.

Kuklin, Susan. *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-5611-9, T \$22.99 (Grade 6-12). Kuklin's thought-provoking work of narrative nonfiction reveals first-hand accounts of transgender teens. The author interviewed youth from wide-ranging ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic groups. The participants chose whether or not to include their names and photographs. Their stories will encourage discussions of sexuality, gender identity, alienation, difference and compassion. Author's note, questions and answers from the Director of the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center, an

introduction to Proud Theater, an LGBT organization, glossary and extensive resources appended. (Stonewall Book Award Honor)

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Lehmann, Devra. *Spinoza: The Outcast Thinker*. Namelos. 978-1-60898-181-6, P \$14.95 (Grade 7-12). Spinoza is one of the great thinkers of Western philosophy, but that might not be a great selling point to students. Lehmann, herself a teacher, brings Spinoza and his world to life. In doing so, she introduces his ideas of good and evil and the existence or non-existence of a divine creator in terms that are both understandable and challenging. Excellently sourced and sure to provoke discussion.

Lewis, J. Patrick and George Ella Lyon. *Voices from the March on Washington*. Wordsong. 978-1-62091-785-5, T \$15.95 (Grade 5-12). This accessible and engaging collection of poems paints a personal-yet-fictionalized, perspective from a variety of voices as people from various geographic, racial and age groups prepare for and participate in, the 1963 March on Washington. The dreams, fears, music, sacrifices and small steps of courage that culminated in Dr. King's speech will be experienced. Back matter includes a guide to the voices presented, bibliography, websites and index.

Liu-Perkins, Christine. *At Home In Her Tomb: Lady Dai and the Ancient Chinese Treasures of Mawangdui*. Charlesbridge Publishing. 978-1-58089-370-1, R \$19.95 (Grade 5-9). The archeological discovery of Lady Dai's tomb in China 1972 was a cultural treasure chest. Liu-Perkins's well-researched work tells the story of the cultural practices during the Han dynasty. The drawings, photographs, maps and timelines support the text and allow readers to feel as if they are at the dig site unearthing these incredible artifacts. A bibliography, glossary and index appended.

Marrin, Albert. *A Volcano Beneath the Snow: John Brown's War Against Slavery*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-307-98152-3, T \$19.99 (Grade 6-12). Award-winning author Marrin brings to life the slave rebellions of the nineteenth century and the events that inevitably brought about the start of the American Civil War. John Brown was a leader who would not apologize for his violent acts to stand up against slavery. The layout is complemented by black and white photographs, sketches, and primary documents. The text reads like newspaper columns. Classes will enjoy the challenge of debating John Brown's character: leader, hero, liar or terrorist. Notes, further reading, image credits and index appended.

McCully, Emily Arnold. *Ida M. Tarbell: The Woman Who Challenged Big Business and Won!* Clarion Books. 978-0-547-29092-8, T \$18.99 (Grade 6-12). This biography is the work of an award-winning author, McCully, who shows a passion for her subject. Tarbell, born 1857, was an investigative journalist ahead of her time. It was Tarbell's greatest lifetime achievement to write articles challenging the corrupt business practices of her time. Her persuasive, controversial topics would change public policies and decisions made at the highest levels of government by President Roosevelt. A terrific source for discussions on journalism, women's history and women's rights. Author's note, source notes, bibliography, photo credits, index appended.

Montgomery, Sy. *Chasing Cheetahs: The Race to Save Africa's Fastest Cat*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-547-81549-7, T \$18.99 (Grade 4-7). Accomplished author Montgomery again teams up with photographer Nic Bishop to transport readers to the Namibian Savannah to meet Laurie Marker, founder of the Cheetah Conservation Fund, and to learn all about these fast cats. Dr. Marker's strategy for protecting the declining wild cheetah population involves dogs, goats and education, all explained with clear, lively writing. The book ends on an upbeat note with encouragement for young potential scientists. Another high quality volume in the *Scientists in the Field Series*.

Prins, Marcel and Peter Henk Steenhuis. Translated from the Dutch by Laura Watkinson. *Hidden Like Anne Frank*. Arthur E. Levine Books. 978-0-545-54362-0, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-12). This is a riveting compilation of 14 first-person accounts of children who hid from the Nazis in the Netherlands. The courage and determination of these children, their families, and those who protected them are evident in each story, but each story is very different. Photographs and maps draw the reader into each account. The volume includes a glossary and photographs of the survivors in their old age. A website accompanies the book, where one can see animated clips, additional photographs and the oral interactions with the compiler ([www.hiddenlikeannefrank.com](http://www.hiddenlikeannefrank.com)). An excellent choice for Holocaust studies.

Reef, Catherine. *Frida & Diego: Art, Love, Life*. Clarion Books. 978-0-547-82184-9, R \$18.99 (Grade 9-12). An insightful dual biography, this book illuminates the volatile marriage of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Though there was love, their marriage was tumultuous and filled with pain, betrayal and passion—and art that reflected the revolutionary times in which they lived. Included are archival photos, full-color reproductions, endnotes, bibliography and timeline.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *Freedom Summer: The 1964 Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*. Holiday House. 978-0-8234-2920-2, T \$18.95 (Grade 6-12). Goldman's narrative account of the shocking events that took place during the Freedom Summer of 1964 reads like a suspenseful thriller. The layout is accented by black and white maps and photographs. The chapter headings are the dates that count down to the deaths of the student volunteers and the aftermath. Further reading, timeline, photos of primary documents, source notes, bibliography, picture credits, and index appended.

Sheinkin, Steve. *The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight For Civil Rights*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-59643-796-8, T \$19.99 (Grade 6-12). This work of narrative nonfiction by award-winning author, Sheinkin, presents the moving story of a group of young black sailors who stood up to the U.S. Navy. There was racial prejudice and strict segregation in the U.S. Navy in 1944 until an explosion rocked military history and the lives of these 50 men. Sheinkin skillfully outlines the historical events

that led up to the explosion using military documents, black and white photographs, court documents, and the personal accounts of those sailors alive today. This work will generate discussions of early Civil Rights heroes. Source notes, works cited, picture credits and index appended.

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Tougas, Michael J. and Casey Sherman. *The Finest Hours: The True Story of a Heroic Sea Rescue*. Henry Holt and Company. 978-0-8050-9764-1, T \$17.99 (Grade 4-9). An adaptation of an adult nonfiction work, this book captures the near-impossible odds of saving thirty sailors from two sinking oil tankers, miles apart. The action takes place in the midst of a historic nor'easter with seas throwing waves as high as 60 feet at one of the 36 foot Coast Guard rescue vessels. Rescue was successful. Epilogue and bibliography included.

#### **FICTION (total books in this category: 44)**

Angus, Sam. *A Horse Called Hero*. Feiwel and Friends. 978-1-250-04508-9, T \$16.99 (Grade 5-7). Angus's work of historical fiction is a jewel! Wolfie and Dodo are sent to the English countryside, like so many orphans during World War II. They find hope and a purpose to their lives when they rescue an orphaned foal. The lyrical writing, personal correspondence and well-drawn characters bring World War II to life in this thought-provoking story. Issues of mine workers' rights and war opposition will likely generate discussion.

Bachmann, Stefan, et al. *The Cabinet of Curiosities: 36 Tales Brief and Sinister*. Greenwillow Books. 978-0-06-233105-2, T \$16.99 (Grade 6-12). This large collection of deliciously dark and gruesome stories for the middle-to-high school reader is cleverly laid out as a cabinet. The four authors take on different character curators of the cabinet. The scary stories are organized in drawers and rooms with similar sinister themes and very few happy endings materialize. Alexander Jansson's black and white pen illustrations extend the dark tone with a focus on one character or event within the text.

Berry, Julie. *The Scandalous Sisterhood of Prickwillow Place*. Roaring Brook Press. 978-1-59643-956-6, T \$15.99 (Grade 6-10). Berry dishes up a dark and comical, Victorian-era melodrama featuring seven female boarding students who try to stay together after watching their headmistress and her cruel brother die at Sunday dinner after eating poisoned veal. This is a complete package of hilarity and the book jacket art by Bruno brilliantly sets the stage. Berry's writing style is spot-on in terms of dramatic farce and timing. Older fans of Lemony Snicket will be drawn to this farcical mix of clues, devious suspects and budding romances.

Carleson, J.C. *The Tyrant's Daughter*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-449-80997-6, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). Laila has been moved to Washington, DC from an unnamed Middle East country where her dictator father has just been assassinated. Holed up in an apartment without future financial sustainability, she must navigate the cultural divide between her strict, veil-wearing homeland and the American high school, friends, interested boys, and homecoming dance. Tensions run high throughout as she becomes aware that her loving father was a dictator who bombed civilian villages, and she comes face to face with the victims and their need for revenge. The richness created by the layer of poignant realism, backed up by creditable present-day atrocities, makes this a must read.

Christopher, Lucy. *The Killing Woods*. Chicken House. 978-0-545-46100-9, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). The "woods" are where Emily played as a child, where Damon played kinky sex games, and where Ashlee Parker was killed. Emily's father, a vet with PTSD, found Ashlee's body and carried it to his kitchen table. Now he is accused of her murder, and Emily must discover the truth. Told in the alternating voices of Emily and Damon, *The Killing Woods* is edgy and dark and a great read.

Crowe, Chris. *Death Coming Up the Hill*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 978-0-544-30215-0, T \$16.99 (Grade 10-12). This is a tribute by Crowe to all the soldiers who died during the Vietnam War in 1968. Seventeen -year -old Ashe catalogs his losses during that devastating year. His loss of family security, respect and innocence play out against a backdrop of the numbers of soldiers killed every week taken from real newspaper headlines. This story is written completely in haiku, which adds a creative and unique dimension to this coming-of-age story. Useful for educators to supplement units on the Vietnam War, social studies, research, creative writing and poetry.

Dauvillier, Loic. *Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust*. First Second. 978-1-596-43873-6, T [GN] \$16.99 (Grade 3 & up). An accessible, beautifully-crafted graphic novel that uses flashback to tell a story of the Holocaust. A young girl notices that her grandmother is sad (the color palette is warm and sepia-toned in these scenes). The grandmother proceeds to unfold the story of her own childhood, hiding from the Nazis, changing her name, and leaving her home. The colors are darker and then lighter as she escapes. The framing of the ending with a picture of grandmother with her parents as a girl and her as an old woman with her son and granddaughter may move the reader to tears. Useful in the classroom as well as readable for the graphic novel or history lover. (Mildred L. Batchelder Honor)

Davies, Nicola. *The Lion Who Stole My Arm*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6620-0, R \$14.99 (Grade 4-7). Beginning with the lion attack on page 5, to the satisfying epilogue 80 pages later, this action-packed story is the perfect choice for animal lovers and reluctant readers. Young Pedro goes from being the lion's victim, to would be hunter, to research and conservation champion in the short span of this well-paced book. Non-Fiction back matter fills in the details of lion conservation projects in Africa today.

De Fombelle, Timothée. *Vango: Between Sky and Earth*. Candlewick. 978-0-7636-7196-9, R \$17.99 (Grade 4-9). This old-fashioned adventure story, complete with zeppelins, Nazis, Soviet assassins, and a boy of mysterious origins, evokes Hergé and Kenneth Oppel. Great characters, fully realized-- including strong women. *Vango* is an absolutely first-rate yarn.

Ehrlich, Esther. *Nest*. Wendy Lamb Books. 978-0-385-38607-4, T \$16.99 (Grade 5-8). In 1972 Cape Cod, eleven-year-old Chirp is the heroine in this emotionally intense coming-of-age story. She is a passionate bird-watcher and dancer who displays an innocence true to her age. Chirp is trying to make sense of her mother's long-term illness and the unsettling changes that this brings to her young life. Ehrlich explores themes of depression, suicide and abuse all told with tenderness and respect.

Erlings, Fredrik. *Boy On The Edge*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6680-4, T \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). Set in Iceland, Henry's feelings parallel those created by the isolated, craggy lava fields where he is sent to live in the Home for Lesser Brethren: desperation, isolation, rage, and yearning. Henry, the main character, is sent to this home after cruelly lashing out at his mother. Born with a club foot and suffering a severe stutter, Henry is subjected to bullying. He finds solace when caring for the cows at the Home, but people still cause a great deal of pain. Themes explored are cruelty, hopelessness, friendship, remorse, and kindness.

Frank, Lucy. *Two Girls Staring at the Ceiling*. Schwartz & Wade Books. 978-0-307-97974-2, T \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). Written in emotionally plunging prose, this 257 page novel takes place in a hospital room. The patients are Chessie and Shannon, two young adults who are different in psychological make-up, family situation and social group, but who share the same diagnosis of Crohn's disease. Through the girls' clear voices, readers quickly learn not only what Crohn's disease is, but the different ways it affects each girl and her larger social network. Each page of this heart-wrenching novel is laid out as a semi-private hospital room. When a line appears down the page of prose then the privacy curtain is closed. The left side represents newly diagnosed Chessie and on the right, Shannon, a veteran to the pain and risks associated with the disease. A refreshing, yet serious read.

Gale, Eric Khan. *The Zoo at the Edge of the World*. Balzar and Bray. 978-0-06-212516-3, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). Marlin Rackham, the younger son of a world-famous explorer, stutters so badly that he can't communicate with those who work and visit the zoo his father has built on a pyramid in the jungle. He is looked upon as a weak and cowardly boy and is harassed by both his brother and the zoo workers. Marlin has no trouble talking to the animals that inhabit the zoo and when his father brings in a black jaguar everything changes, the animals talk back! This gift brings with it the power to prove his worth- if only he has the courage. Gale's powerful story invites the reader into this social commentary on animal rights and what it takes to do what is right. Pair this with *A Boy and a Jaguar* by Alan Rabinowitz and *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate.

Gebhart, Ryan. *There Will Be Bears*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6521-0, R \$16.99 (Grade 5-8). Thirteen-year-old Tyson must become flexible when his grandpa, Gene, not only moves into a nursing home, thus canceling the long awaited hunting trip in the Grand Tetons, but also reveals that he is not really Tyson's grandfather. While juggling his changing friendship with his friend and exploring his first possible crush, Tyson figures out his dreams. Gebhart's light-hearted touch with serious topics and explicit instructions in elk-hunting and field-dressing makes this a standout. Just the right size and very satisfying for future hunters, first crushes, and middle school friendships.

Gephart, Donna. *Death by Toilet Paper*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-385-74399-0, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-8). A poignant story about Benjamin, who has lost his adored father and now obsessively enters contests in an effort to win a big prize and help out his overburdened mother. Well-developed characters, realistic dialogues and situations, and quirky humor make this book a winner. Readers will cheer for Benjamin and his mother throughout the story and will be satisfied with the ending. Don't let your readers judge this book by its cover.

Giles, Gail. *Girls Like Us*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6267-7, R \$16.99 (Grade 10-12). Bidy and Quincy have just graduated from high school and have become roommates. They each have their struggles because they are "Speddies" (in the special-ed class) and they begin to learn to understand each other and assimilate into a world without school structure. Narrated through the voices of Bidy and Quincy, stereotypes are challenged. Through clear voices, sometimes humorous, sometimes painful, they both deal with the rape/violence that they have experienced. Written with unflinching realism, *Girls Like Us* will have readers questioning their own perceptions long after the novel ends. (Schneider Family Book Award-Teen)

Gownley, Jimmy. *The Dumbest Idea Ever!* Scholastic. 978-0-545-45347-9, P [GN] \$11.99 (Grade 4-6). *New York Times* bestselling author has written his own life story in graphic novel form. This is the story of a middle school kid who is good at everything – sports, school, making friends, and then high school! High school is complicated and harder to navigate. One thing remains constant for Jim- his love of comic books. Jimmy Gownley decides to write his own comics. He isn't successful at first, but with hard work, and friends to support him, he succeeds. The message is one for anyone – to succeed is hard, it has setbacks, but not giving up and with friends to support you, success is yours. The text works with the illustrations as both keep the story light, upbeat and inspiring.

Hiaasen, Carl. *Skink No Surrender*. Knopf. 978-0-375-87051-4, R \$18.99 (Grade 10-12). Skink, an eccentric seventy-two-year-old ex-governor of Florida who lives off the grid (and is a character from Hiaasen's adult fiction), pairs up with Richard, a

fourteen-year-old boy, to save Richard's cousin who has been kidnapped after meeting an older man on the Internet. Action-packed mystery filled with alligators, snakes, storms, "swamp justice," humor and a goodly amount of advice on conservation themes.

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Hodge, Rosamund. *Cruel Beauty*. Balzer + Bray. 978-0-06-222473-6, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). From birth, Nyx has been trained in all the Hermetic methods and betrothed to the evil "Gentle Lord" in order to kill him and save her world. Unfortunately, as she understands both sides of him, she falls in love and is propelled forward to bring down larger forces than his power. Hodge weaves a dark, passionate tale that entwines tenets of "Beauty and the Beast" with a world dominated by the gods of the ancient world. Romance, dark secrets and flip-flopping betrayals keep readers on the edge of their seats.

Johnson, Jaleigh. *The Mark of the Dragonfly*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-385-37615-0, T \$16.99 (Grade 6-9). On Piper's planet, meteor showers bring strange items from another world. Piper rescues a young girl after a meteor shower destroys her caravan thereby altering both of their futures. A world divided into warring kingdoms, a train impervious to those who would rob it, a boy who can transform into a flying bug, and a mysterious dragonfly tattoo all converge into this fast-paced, well-crafted sci-fi novel. There is a satisfying resolution that leaves open the possibility of a sequel. For fans of *The Hunger Games* or the Westerfield trilogies.

Johnson, Varian. *The Great Greene Heist*. Arthur A. Levine Books. 978-0-545-52552-7, T \$16.99 (Grade 5-8). Jackson Greene is famous, at least at Maplewood Middle School. Well, he's actually infamous. He's the mastermind behind the Blitz and he's about to work his magic again to help Gabriela de la Cruz win the class presidency. Jackson is such a great character that you forgive his adult-like clarity of thinking and uncanny ability to read people and situations. The plot is fun, the other characters are fantastic (and multi-cultural!), and the conclusion satisfying. The story jumps right in as if you already knew Jackson (like from a previous book about the Blitz, which there is not), and this was a clever choice by Johnson as it keeps the intrigue about Jackson Greene high and the plot backstory filler low. Put this in the hands of middle grade readers (and adults who appreciate a well-crafted MG book).

Johnston, E.K. *The Story of Owen: Dragon Slayer of Trondheim*. Carolrhoda Books. 978-1-4677-1066-4, T \$17.95 (Grade 7-12). This is a refreshing modern-day fantasy with comic wit and world building. Johnston has given Siobhan McQuick the clear, comic voice that narrates this "song" to show how Owen the Dragon Slayer of Trondheim came into his legacy. In this world, everything is like ours except that there are dragons that indiscriminately eat humans and animals, crunch cars and burn down buildings. Due to the dragons' love of carbon emissions, the state of Michigan is now deserted. There is no magic involved. Also refreshing is that Siobhan becomes Owen's companion in dragon slaying and not his romantic lover.

Kaufman, Sashi. *The Other Way Around*. Carolrhoda Books. 978-1-4677-0262-1, T [M] \$17.95 (Grade 9-12). This coming-of-age novel is a remarkable debut for Maine author Kaufman. Sixteen-year-old Andrew is running away and finds himself embarking on a journey of self-discovery with a quirky cast of characters. The spot-on witty dialog and rich characters make this a thought-provoking read for a high school audience to enjoy.

Kerr, Philip. *The Winter Horses*. Alfred A. Knopf. 978-0-385-7543-6, R \$16.99 (Grade 6-9). Kalinka has witnessed the killing of her family and village by the Nazis; she is alone on the Russian Steppe. Max is the caretaker of the State Steppe Nature Reserve of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and is ordered to kill all the animals so the Germans cannot eat them and gain strength. He cannot follow the order—especially since the preserve contains the ancient Przewalski Horse, perhaps the last of these ancient horses. The wild horses befriend Kalinka and show her the way to Max. Together they save the horses from extinction.

Knudsen, Michelle. *Evil Librarian*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6038-3, R \$16.99 (Grade 9-12). What librarian could resist this title? The hot, young librarian, Mr. Gabriel, is also a demon who has put a spell on the students and staff of Central High. All except for Cyn, who is resistant to his charm. Can Cyn prevent the takeover of her school, rescue her best friend, and create the best barber's chair for the school's production of "Sweeney Todd?" Maybe, but she'll have to make a deal with a demon to do it.

Kuderick, Madeleine. *Kiss of Broken Glass*. HarperTeen. 978-0-06-230656-2, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). In this edgy work of realistic fiction, Kuderick presents high school-student Kenna, a self-mutilation addict in treatment. This novel in verse is told in flashbacks about the 72 hours Kenna spends in a psychiatric hospital. This is a thought-provoking work that will spark discussion for a high school audience.

Lendler, Ian and Zack Giallongo. *Stratford Zoo Midnight Review Presents Macbeth*. First Second. 978-1-59643-9153, P [GN] \$12.99 (Grade 3-6). How does one introduce the classics to a young reader? You make the setting of one of Shakespeare's most famous plays the zoo, the actors the animal residents and you package it in a graphic novel! The cast includes the lion as Macbeth who eats his foe with lots of ketchup, the leopard as his vain wife and an assortment of other zoo residents, who fill out the cast and act as the audience. Violence is hinted at and the deeds are done off stage for the younger audience. The text is supported by bright cartoonish illustrations which will engage those graphic novel junkies. This blend of culture and cartoon promises to be a hit.

Levy, Dana Alison. *The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-385-37652-5, T \$15.99 (Grade 3-6). The Fletchers have four boys and two dads, and all are realistic and lovable. The family has normal issues and the way that the issues are handled feels true-to-life. Levy captures a bustling, rambunctious household in a middle grade family story featuring gay parents and interracial families and yet the book is about neither. Fast-paced and fun-loving story. Fans of Beverly Cleary, Judy Blume or Jeanne Birdsall will delight in this book and clamor for more.

Lloyd, Natalie. *A Snicker of Magic*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-55270-7, T \$16.99, (Grade 4-6). Felicity Pickle and her sister have never lived in one place for too long, so they are surprised and confused when their mom takes them to Midnight Gulch, her hometown. Once known for its magic, Felicity is hoping that some of that magic can still be found so that this time they might put down roots and stay. With the help of a new friend, Jonah, Felicity seeks to find out what made the magic leave and how to get it back. Lloyd's way with words and her quirky characters make this a story of facing fears, trusting in the good of others and seeing the magic in everything. It is a read that makes you feel good and hope the magic never ends.

Magoon, Kekla. *How It Went Down*. Henry Holt. 978-0-8050-9869-3, T \$17.99 (Grade 8-12). Magoon's contemporary work of realistic fiction is a suspenseful whodunit. Sixteen-year-old Tariq is black, and is shot to death by Jack, who is white. No two versions of what happened in this community agree. The chapters are cleverly told from different perspectives, shedding light on the events leading up to the death and the larger issues of authority, racism and civil rights. What really happened that day? It is a question that makes this a page-turner with a rewarding ending. This will spark discussion of the present day controversial police shootings in the news. (Coretta Scott King Author Honor)

Martin, Ann M. *Rain Reign*. Feiwel and Friends. 978-0-312-64300-3, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-8). Rose, the narrator of this story, is a fifth-grade girl with Asperger's Syndrome. She lives with her single father, who struggles to understand Rose and is often out drinking too much with his friends. Rose has many eccentricities, including a love of homonyms and rules. Because the story is told from Rose's point of view, the reader has an understanding of what a child with Asperger's sees and feels in many situations. There is a real innocence to this straightforward story of a girl and her dog, Rain. (Schneider Family Book Award-Middle)

McGovern, Cammie. *Say What You Will*. HarperTeen. 978-0-06-227110-5, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). In this heart-felt and empathy-inspiring novel, Amy, who has cerebral palsy, pushes past the confines of other people's perceptions, even family, to get what she needs to develop her own voice and her own relationships. The true and mutually dependent relationship she develops with Matt, who battles OCD, unfolds through IMs, emails, conversations among designated peer helpers, and the large font of Amy's Voice through a computerized communication device. Senior year, first romance, prom and the challenges of teen pregnancy take the focus off disability and invoke empathy in this satisfying read.

Ringwald, Whitaker. *The Secret Box*. Katherine Tegan Books. 978-0-062-21614-4, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). A mysterious birthday gift arrives for twelve-year-old Jax from a previously unknown relative, Great Aunt Jasper. Jax's mom forbids her to open the gift and plans to send it back. This sets off a road trip adventure involving Jax, her cousins Ethan and Tyler, and a host of adversaries. Told in short chapters, alternating between the voices of strong-willed Jax and painfully shy but capable Ethan, the action, humor, and suspense carries these engaging characters to the solution of a family mystery and a satisfying ending. This is the first in a planned trilogy.

Rocco, John and Jay Primiano. *Swim That Rock*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6905-8, R \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). Jake Cole, son of a quahogger in Rhode Island, struggles to believe that his father is dead. His first line in the book is, "Presumed dead does not mean dead. They didn't find his body." But the loss of his father means the loss of income and he and his mother are in danger of losing the family diner. Jake confronts loan sharks, a hurricane, and his own personal demons to save the family diner and stay in Rhode Island. An excellent coming-of-age story containing many details of what it is like to be a quahogger in Rhode Island. The appendix contains illustrations of the Tools of a Quahogger.

Salerni, Dianne K. *The Eighth Day*. Harper Collins Publishers. 978-0-06-227215-7, T \$16.99 (Grade 5-7). Set in the present day, this fantasy features characters whose family ties link all the way back to King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. The titled Eighth Day was created by the Wizard Merlin to contain power hungry rivals by trapping them in a day that falls between Wednesday and Thursday. The hero of the story, Jax, his guardian, and loyal followers have the ability to live in all eight days and are caught up in the centuries old rivalries and intrigue. Fast-paced with impressive characters, plenty of plot twists and secrets revealed. A satisfying next read for Rick Riordan fans.

Salisbury, Graham. *Hunt for the Bamboo Rat*. Wendy Lamb Books. 978-0-375-84266-5, T \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). Based on a true story, and the latest in the *Prisoners of the Empire* series, *Hunt* is the story of Zenji Watanabe. Zenji is an American-born Japanese recruited by US military intelligence when he is just 17. His mission is vague, but his exploits, capture, and survival are harrowing and exciting. The novel includes a glossary, bibliography, and map, and is a great choice for WWII units in school.

Sarn, Amélie. *I Love I Hate I Miss My Sister*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-385-74376-1, T \$15.99 (Grade 7-12). Two French sisters of Algerian descent pursue opposite paths in reaction to their family's Muslim faith. Both choices have enormous consequences: in one case, death; in the other, loss of faith. A beautiful novel based on real events, *I Love* brings into focus the effects of intolerance on teens who just want to be themselves. Includes a glossary of Arabic words and phrases.

Schrefer, Eliot. *Threatened*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-55143-4, T \$17.99 (Grade 7-12). An engaging adventure story set in Gabon, Africa of a recently orphaned boy, Luc, who works off the debt his mother ran up at the hospital by staying with a “Fagan”-type guardian. When Luc escapes with a researcher to the jungle to study chimpanzees, his life and focus shift to jungle survival and protecting the chimps. The chimps become his family with his full understanding of how violent they can be. So engaging. Fans of Paulsen’s *Hatchet* will want to read this one.

Searles, Rachel. *The Lost Planet*. Feiwel and Friends. 978-1-250-03879-1, T \$15.99 (Grade 7-9). This is a clearly drawn, action-packed space thriller. REAL sci-fi!! Chase wakes up on an unknown planet and throughout the book he tries to find out who he is. When he takes a quick trip to another planet with his new friend Parker, the planet they leave explodes. Now on the run, harboring a wanted fugitive and learning about his own strengths and special abilities, Chase and company go from one planet and problem to another. Give to *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* aficionados and lovers of action thrillers.

Segel, Jason and Kirsten Miller. *Nightmares!* Delacorte Press. 978-0-385-74425-6, T \$16.99 (Grade 4-6). Charlie has lost his beloved mother to cancer and now has a new stepmother whom he believes is a witch. As Charlie is overtaken by his darkness, he is increasingly susceptible to nightmares. Then his nightmare-laden sleep opens a portal to the Netherworld. As Charlie is drawn into the nightmare world, he realizes that his closest friends have also been affected by the nightmares. He must help them face their greatest fears so that they can wake up at the same time as he battles a threat that wishes to keep the waking world in fear forever. The book was a page-turner, gripping, poignant, dark, imaginative, and funny. Segel taps into a common experience and he holds nothing back, trusting his readers to understand that one of the most powerful actions in life is to look your fear in the face.

Stevens, Courtney C. *Faking Normal*. HarperTeen. 978-0-06-224538-0, T \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). Over the summer, Alexi is sexually assaulted. This story revolves around her fight to keep it a secret. When she is placed in the circumstances of supporting a fellow teen who witnesses his mother’s murder by his abusive father, her resolve is chiseled away and she is able to take steps to report the truth. Stevens provides an author note that gives directions for teens in similar abusive situations.

Walrath, Dana. *Like Water on Stone*. Delacorte Press. 978-0-385-74397-6, T \$16.99 (Grade 7-12). An exquisite verse novel on the Armenian Genocide, *Like Water on Stone* brings an almost-ignored historical event to life. Told through the words of three siblings and an eagle who is both observer and guardian, this verse novel makes excellent use of its form. A glossary with pronunciation guide and recommendations for further reading are included.

Walton, Leslye. *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender*. Candlewick Press. 978-0-7636-6566-1, R \$17.99 (Grade 10-12). Walton’s writing pulls readers into this brutal, yet whimsical story of three generations of mothers and daughters who love and endure pain. Although the narrator is Ava, a sixteen-year-old born with wings, the far-reaching past with its compilation of the peculiarities and deep scars that each member of Ava’s multigenerational family endures are explored in a way that will resonate with mature readers. Their sorrows and the unconventional ways that they cope with neglect, loneliness and being different are interwoven into the present and future of Ava, who survives a stalker’s violent attack. Ava’s ability to break out of the walls that her family has built around their lives places her in physical danger, yet provides her freedom.

Wiles, Deborah. *Revolution*. Scholastic Press. 978-0-545-10607-8, L \$19.99 (Grade 7-12). A 2014 National Book Award Finalist, *Revolution* combines fiction with nonfiction. A compelling story set in 1964 Greenwood, Mississippi, during the Freedom Summer, this book alternates the point of view between Sunny, a young white teen, and Raymond Bullis, a young black teen. They each illuminate the changes in their respective communities and eventually their lives become entwined. Interspersed throughout are pictures, quotes, short bios, songs, posters, letters and other primary sources—all well documented in the Works Cited section of the Bibliography.

## **SPECIAL THANKS TO THE CREAM OF THE CROP COMMITTEE**

**Sheila Dube**, Youth Services Librarian, Springvale Public Library

**Kathy George**, Children’s Services Librarian, Gray Public Library

**Lauren Isele**, Youth Services Librarian, Prince Memorial Library, Cumberland

**Shirley LaBranche**, Literacy Specialist, Maplestone School, Acton

**Jill O’Connor**, Librarian, North Yarmouth Academy

**Nina Sachs**, MLIS, Portland

### 2015 National Award Winners

Award books listed here may or may not be included in the "Cream of the Crop" list.

\* indicates a title that may appear in more than one category.

**Caldecott Medal** – Awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

Winner: Santat, Dan. *The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend*

Honors: Castillo, Lauren. *Nana in the City*

Rosenstock, Barb. *The Noisy Paint Box*

Barnett, Mac. *Sam & Dave Dig a Hole*

Morales, Yuyi. *Viva Frida\**

Bryant, Jen. *The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus\**

Tamaki, Mariko. *This One Summer\**

**Charlotte Zolotow Award** – Awarded to the best picture book text published in the United States.

Winner: Offil, Jenny. *Sparky!*

Honors: Applegate, Katherine. *Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla*

Bluemle, Elizabeth. *Tap Tap Boom Boom*

Bolden, Tonya. *Beautiful Moon: A Child's Prayer*

Mora, Pat. *Water Rolls, Water Rises: El agua rueda, el agua sube*

Salzberg, Barney. *Chengu Could Not, Would Not Fall Asleep*

**Coretta Scott King Award** – Recognizes outstanding books for young adults and children by African American authors and illustrators that reflect the African American experience.

#### CSK Author Award

Winner: Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming\**

Honors: Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover\**

Magoon, Kekla. *How It Went Down*

Nelson, Marilyn. *How I Discovered Poetry*

#### CSK Illustrator Award

Winner: Myers, Christopher (Misty Copeland). *Firebird*

Honor: Robinson, Christian (Patricia Hruby). *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker\**

Morrison, Frank (Katheryn Russell-Brown). *Little Melba and Her Big Trombone*

#### Coretta Scot King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award:

Reynolds, Jason. *When I Was the Greatest*

#### Coretta Scott King/ Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement

Deborah D. Taylor

**Katahdin Award** – A lifetime achievement award given by the Youth Services Section of the Maine Library Association to recognize an outstanding body of work of children's literature in Maine by one author or illustrator. The award may be given annually but may not necessarily be given each year.

Chris Van Dusen

**Laura Ingalls Wilder Award** – Honors an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children. Awarded every other year.

Donald Crews

**Lupine Award** – Presented annually by the Youth Services Section of the Maine Library Association, to recognize an outstanding contribution to children's literature in Maine.

#### Picture Book

Winner: Bryant, Jen. *The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus*. Illustrated by Melissa Sweet \*

Honor: Potter, Alicia. *Jubilee! One Man's Big, Bold and Very, Very Loud Celebration of Peace*. Illustrated by Matt Tavares

#### J/YA

Winner: Philbrick, Rodman. *Zane and the Hurricane*

Honor: Lord, Cynthia. *Half a Chance*

**Margaret A. Edwards Award** – Recognizes an author and his/her body of work for outstanding contribution to young adult literature.  
Sharon D. Draper. More than 20 books including *Tears of a Tiger*, *Darkness Before Dawn*, *Battle of Jericho* and *Out of My Mind*.

**Mildred L. Batchelder Award** – Awarded to an American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a foreign language in a foreign country and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States.

Winner: Tak, Bibi Dumon. *Mikis and the Donkey*. Translated by Philip Hopman, Published by Eerdmans's Books  
Honors: Dauvillier, Loic. *Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust*. Translated by Alexis Siegel, Published by First Second  
Lindelauf, Benny. *Nine Open Arms*. Translated by John Nieuwenhuizen, Published by Enchanted Lion Books

**Newbery Medal** – The most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

Winner: Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover*\*  
Honors: Bell, Cece. *El Deafo*  
Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*\*

**Printz (Michael L.) Award** – Awarded for a book that exemplifies literary excellence in young adult literature.

Winner: Nelson, Jandy. *I'll Give You the Sun*\*  
Honors: Foley, Jessie Ann. *The Carnival at Bray*  
Hubbard, Jenny. *And We Stay*  
Smith, Andrew. *Grasshopper Jungle*  
Tamaki, Mariko. *This One Summer*\*

**Pura Belpre** – Presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.

**Author Award**

Winner: Agosin, Marjorie. *I Lived on Butterfly Hill*.  
Honors: Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Portraits of Hispanic American Heroes*

**Illustrator Award**

Winner: Morales, Yuyi. *Viva Frida*\*  
Honors: Guevara, Susan (Susan Middleton Elya). *Little Roja Riding Hood*  
Parra, John (Thong, Roseanne Greenfield). *Green is a Chile Pepper*  
Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & her Family's Fight for Desegregation*\*

**Robert F. Sibert Medal** – Honors the most distinguished informational book published in English in the preceding year for its significant contribution to children's literature.

Winner: Bryant, Jen. *The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus*\*  
Honors: Fleming, Candace. *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, & the Fall of Imperial Russia*  
Powell, Patricia Hruby. *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker*  
Roy, Katherine. *Neighborhood Sharks: Hunting with the Great Whites of California's Farallon Islands*  
Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*\*  
Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*\*

**Schneider Family Book Award** – Honors an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences.

Children's (birth - age 10): Rabinowitz, Alan. *A Boy and a Jaguar*  
Middle (age 11 -13): Martin, Ann M. *Rain Reign*  
Teen (age 13 -18): Giles, Gail. *Girls Like Us*

**Stonewall Book Award** – Given annually to English language children's and young adult books of exceptional merit relating to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans-gendered experience.

Winner: Pitman, Gayle. *This Day in June*  
Honors: Baldacchino, Christine. *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*  
Kuklin, Susan. *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*  
Nelson, Jandy. *I'll Give You the Sun*\*

**Theodor Seuss Geisel Award** – Honors the author of the most distinguished contribution to the body of American children's literature known as 'beginning reader books' published in the United States during the preceding year.

Winner: Kang, Anna. *You Are (Not) Small*  
Honors: Rylant, Cynthia. *Mr. Putter & Tabby Turn the Page*  
Willems, Mo. *Waiting is Not Easy!*

**William C. Morris Award** – Honors a debut book published by a first-time author writing for teens and celebrating impressive new voices in young adult literature.

Quintero, Isabel. *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*

**YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults** – Honors the best nonfiction book published for young adults ages 12 -18.

Wagenen, Maya Van. *Popular: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek*