

LIBRARY NOTES



**Grand Prairie Independent School District
Grand Prairie, TX 75052**

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Playaway Audio Books –New Technology For Libraries

Belinda Jacks



Playaway Audio books are the latest technological invention for Audio book lovers. The Playaway website press release states the following: Audio books can be every bit as satisfying as their paper counterparts...but not nearly as simple to use. One book can demand a dozen or more CDs or cassettes. And listening requires a separate player, adding to the complexity. To make listening to a good book as simple as reading one, Findaway World has invented Playaway, the first self-playing digital audio book. Not an MP3 or CD and not software, Playaway is the self-contained audio equivalent of a book, small enough to fit in the palm of your hand. Playaway's digital sound allows you to escape into a book whenever and wherever you can. The first product of its kind, Playaway is ready—no downloading required.

“People are ready for a product that finally makes portable digital content available in a simple and immediately usable format that fits into their life,” said Christopher Celeste, Findaway's president. Half the size of a deck of cards, Playaway is perfect for people who enjoy hearing books come to life while traveling, commuting, walking across campus, or enjoying sports and hobbies on the go. Using clearly marked buttons; one can adjust the speed of a narrator's voice and easily move both forward and backward through their audio selection. The unit even automatically bookmarks itself when turned off, so the listener doesn't lose his or her spot.

Playaways have been designed in conjunction with IDEO, one of the industry's leading product design firms, for maximum comfort, ease of use and listener control. “Working with Findaway, we set out to create something that is portable, affordable and easy to use,” said Mike Nuttall, an IDEO founder. “Because Playaway is so technologically simple, anyone will be able to enjoy it and adapt it to their listening needs and desires.”

Findaway currently has agreements with several leading publishers and content owners for Playaway books including HarperCollins Publishers, Simon & Schuster, Penton Overseas, and Brilliance Audio to name a few. The collection includes a wide variety of titles from Stephen King, *Cell* to C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. Each Playaway holds the entire book, regardless of length. Playtime depends on length of content and ranges from a unit that holds six hours of content to versions that hold 40 hours or more. Playaways range from \$29.99 to \$59.99

So what implications does this have for schools and libraries? More and more readers are discovering the delight of audio books for several situations. Listening to audio books or Playaways is a form of reading despite opinions to the contrary. It allows people to enjoy stories anytime they want at any place they want. Lots of people are beginning to listen to audio books on long family car trips but there are a lot more uses than that.

“Tell me a story” used to be the plea of children. It is rapidly becoming the demand of all including adults. In bookstores and libraries across the United States, literature is assuming a different shape. In addition to traditional books, audio books and Playaways are becoming a real option for all. Once upon a time, when life moved more slowly, many people found it possible to read a few hours each day. If you can’t remember the last time you curled up with a good book, you’ll be glad to know that books on tape can be the answer.

Perhaps the most enthusiastic cheerleaders for audio books and Playaways are authors and actors. Actor David Purdham who has recorded over thirty authors says, “You do all the characters. You use different accents. I’ve been Eisenhower to Kruschew. Stephen King says, “Playaway is the wave of the future.” Studies show that contrary to popular belief, most of the most avid audio book fans are voracious readers, not the reluctant readers you might think. They know the power of escaping into a book and the spoken word. Where else can I listen to my favorite character, Amelia Peabody Emerson, speak with a correct British accent? When I read her books, there is a very pronounced Texas drawl. Audio books and Playaways can add great dimensions to a piece of literature, particularly if they were intended for the oral tradition like Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. That can be a challenging read but if it is read to you with the inflection and voice that only the spoken word can bring, it is possible to find new meaning that Chaucer probably originally intended.

Furthermore, children with reading difficulties, because of learning problems or dyslexia, can experience the same pleasure of the story that those of us who read well often take for granted. They are enjoying the story not being restricted by the process of reading. This in turn, in my opinion, has a greater chance to inspire kids to read and experience those adventures on their own.

Where can you get Playaway’s? You can buy them from bookstores, or check them out of the library for free. Many of the school libraries in Grand Prairie have audio books and are beginning to have Playaways for kids to check out. Try them sometimes and encourage your students to try them too. You can check them out at playawaydigital.com.

AUSTIN ELEMENTARY

Kathy Brundrett

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday! We had a Scholastic Book Fair December 7th - 13th and I think there were a lot of people who received books for Christmas. What better way to spend a cold evening than cuddled up with a good book and maybe some hot chocolate. The library took on a holiday look as students brought gently used and new books to put around the Christmas tree. The books were donated to a local charity for others to enjoy. Thanks to all who shared with others during our book drive. How many Texas Bluebonnet Nominee Books have you read? Which is your favorite? The 3rd, 4th, & 5th grade students at Austin will be casting their vote for their favorite during the month of January. We are all anxious to see which book and author will be receiving the Texas Bluebonnet Award. Check the Texas Library Association website to see who wins!

BONHAM ELEMENTARY

Pat Phipps

The fall season got off to a super start with lots of holiday activities! Children's Book Week in November was celebrated as we "Gobbled Up Good Books" with a giant turkey covered with illustrated feathers. We made Thanksgiving acrostics and giant turkeys displaying what we are thankful for. First and second grades did research on Native Americans and then had guest speaker Pam Webb gave a presentation on the Native

American way of life. Intermediate grades did research on harvest festivals. We also had two book parades in which students displayed projects depicting their favorite books. These parades are always well attended by our parents.

In December, author and storyteller, Joe Hayes captivated our students and teachers with his wonderful stories. Students are still drawing pictures and writing letters that we will send to him. Fourth grade Reading Buddies helped their first grade buddies write and illustrate Christmas books then practice reading them. We celebrated Jan Brett stories by making Gingerbread Baby stick puppets and playing the Gingerbread Baby game. Intermediate classes researched various holiday customs and then created thinking maps. Gifted & Talented students came to the library to learn games of strategy including Backgammon and Pente. Our reading clubs have finished some of the Bluebonnet titles and books about the Titanic. We hope that everyone has a safe, happy, and book filled holiday season.

BOWIE ELEMENTARY

Elaine Tricoli

What a great December we had at Bowie!

We started off the month with our Annual Book Parade! This year's floats shared our love of children's books like *Mouse Mess*, *La Llorona*, *Elmer*, *Snow White* (with singing dwarves!), *Nate the Great*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Mrs. McNosh and the Great Big Squash*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Alejandro's Gift*, *Curious George*, *Ron Clark's Essential 55*, *Eric Carle's Animals*, *Animals*, *Ten Hats for Ten Cats*, *Dear Mr. Blueberry*, and *Huevos Verdes Con Jamon!* Our 5th graders did a great job helping our floats make their way through the halls to the cheers and applause of an appreciative crowd of book lovers!

The very next week we continued our love of books with a ½ Price Scholastic Book Fair! Students got great deals on tons of books for their home libraries! Through the generous donations of our Bobcats and their parents, over 80 books were purchased for classroom libraries!

On the heels of our book fair, we celebrated the 2nd Annual *Read Across the Prairie* Drop Everything and Read Day! The only sounds to be heard were the sounds of pages turning and students reading aloud with their reading buddies. I overheard one student singing aloud the words of a wonderful book from this year's book fair, *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town!* There is no sound so wonderful as the sound of children reading with gusto and enthusiasm!

BUSH ELEMENTARY

Mike Broussard

Happy New Year! I hope you had a restful and book-filled holiday! I also hope that 2007 brings you peace, love, happiness, and many books!

Mrs. Neal and Mrs. Garcia hosted a very successful "Pie with the Principal" in the library during December. Parents were invited to come have pie with the principal, Mrs. Neal, and then they were treated to a make and take workshop with items they could use to help their kids learn. In December our fifth graders went to Camp Grady Spruce at Possum Kingdom Lake. I accompanied the fifth graders to camp this year. We learned a lot of things and had a wonderful time. Camp Grady Spruce had a good amount of snow. For some kids this was their first time ever seeing snow so it was enjoyable seeing the excitement on their faces.

During December, Santa stopped in at Bush for a short visit before he had to deliver presents. The kids got to have breakfast with him and they even got to take their picture with Santa. I think the kids and Santa had a great time.

On the day before we got out for our holiday break, second grade used the library for Coffee House Poetry. The kids got to enjoy hot chocolate with marshmallows while sharing poetry they had written. It was fun listening to the poetry that students had created.

Second grade also treated us to a great performance at our December PTA meeting.

Hopefully every day in 2007 will be happy for you! Keep reading!

CROCKETT ELEMENTARY

Lisa Howell

Happy New Year!! The Bulldogs are back at school and ready to start reading for 2007. The month of December brought happiness and joy to the readers at Crockett Elementary! Snuggling up with a good book, as the weather got cooler seemed to be our favorite thing to do! All classes enjoyed listening to *The Polar Express* during story time as well *Snowmen at Christmas*. Crockett second graders entered the world of Native Americans as they researched different Native American groups. The students used the Gale Database as well as books to find their information. It was a great success and the students learned a lot! Way to go second grade! The race to the voting day for the Bluebonnet book of 2006-2007 is on! The Bluebonnet books are always being checked out as the students work towards reading at least five of them! Posters are hanging in each class and the students are tracking their progress. We will let you know who our winner is next month!

DANIELS ELEMENTARY ACADEMY

Gale Albritton

The month of November zoomed by quickly but it seems there was still ample time for stories, research projects and guests that visited the campus. The second grade classes conducted research on Native Americans while the third graders were enthralled with Native American stories told by the Grand Prairie Storytellers and Listening Guild. They also brought wonderful artifacts and clothing from various tribes. Grand Prairie Police Officer Slater utilized the Library and talked with the fourth graders about "bullying." The Library served as hostess honoring Veterans. Many of them shared stories of combat life and how thankful that they were never forgotten.

In December, several students and myself, simulated *The Polar Express*. Our broadcast studio was transformed into a winter wonderland as students rode the train (actually, we used chairs) and read portions of the story over the broadcast. We even served hot chocolate and candy! Santa came to our school and I was so happy to be one of his helpers. My job was to take pictures as students sat on his lap and told him all of the goodies they wanted for Christmas! During the month of December, the fourth graders met with their Reading Buddies from South Grand Prairie High. They were so excited to meet and greet high school students--it seemed like the coolest thing for them.

DICKINSON ELEMENTARY

Melissa Forsythe

December 12 was an exciting day at Dickinson Elementary. Author, Joe Hayes, came to visit with students, share his books, and tell wonderful stories. Each grade level was treated to a different presentation that was tailored especially for them. The children loved his stories and books. Many students purchased Mr. Hayes's books, which he personally autographed for them. Everyone enjoyed his visit, and we are all looking forward to him coming again.

Third, fourth, and fifth grade students are busy reading Bluebonnet Books. Students who have read at least five books from the list will be eligible to vote for their favorite on January 19. *Ghost Fever/Mal de Fantasma*, which was written by Joe Hayes, is on the Bluebonnet list. Will that be the favorite book of Dickinson students or will it be *The SOS Files* or maybe *The Lightning Thief*? We will just have to wait until the votes are tallied to find out.

Once students return from our winter break, they immediately begin preparing for summer by joining the Six Flags Reading Club. Any student that reads for 6 hours just for fun will win a ticket to Six Flags Amusement Park. That's right, it's that easy. Just read for 6 hours, fill out the reading log, and you will receive a free Six Flags pass to use this summer. Wow, I have picked out my books to read already. Happy reading and Happy New Year!

EISENHOWER ELEMENTARY

Mary Hill

Everyone in third, fourth, and fifth grade voted this past December for their favorite Bluebonnet book during our annual straw poll. The top four titles were *Ghost Fever*, *Good Dog*, *So B. It*, and *The Toughest Cowboy*. However, the official vote will come in late January and only those who have heard or read 5 will qualify for a voter's registration card and an "I Voted Today" sticker. January 22-26 will be voter registration week with the 29th planned for the "High 5 Jell-O Jiggler Voting Day."

Those who "read for fun" should really be excited because they'll get to "ride for free" at Six Flags. Starting January 9th (the 8th for those who attend S.O.A.R.) and ending February 13, all students will be challenged to "read for fun" as Eisenhower kicks off the 6 Hour Read to Succeed program. Just 6 hours of recreational reading and in June they'll be "riding for FREE!"

The Science Store joined with the Santa Breakfast to bring in big bucks for 5th grade's Camp Grady Spruce adventure. It's always an interesting time in the library when critters come to camp for a week. Mrs. Hill learned first hand how to rescue a Pac-Man frog, without touching, as it hopped across the library floor. Did you know the Pac-Man frog has a slime coat?

FANNIN ELEMENTARY

Karen McPherson

December was a busy month at Fannin! Joe Hayes brought his gift of storytelling on the 5th to the library.



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Students, teachers and parents were totally entranced by the stories he wove. Silence fell over the school on the 12th when everyone paused for the district DEAR time. It was really difficult to put the books down and get back to work. First and second grade classes were invited to bring their lunch to the library. A different class came each day to share Christmas and other holiday stories. These are just a few of the many activities that filled our library with holiday

FLORENCE HILL ELEMENTARY

Karen Sims

Happy New Year and happy new books! We are excited to have new books in our library to start off 2007. This is a great time of year to curl up with a blanket and a stack of your favorite books or some new books to boot!!

Thanks to all who donated books to our 9th Annual Florence Hill book drive. We are such a giving and caring campus! It sure was fun to hear all the different classes talk about the *Read Across the Prairie* day and how even their teachers were reading for fun! Reading is sure a great way to relax and unwind!

Books are flying off the shelf this New Year. Kindergarten is getting really good at utilizing open checkout everyday! I also enjoy seeing my older students checking out some good books to share with their younger reading buddies.

We are looking forward to a great new year of *Reading Across the Prairie* this year.

GARCIA ELEMENTARY

Michelle Casey

The Garcia Toros are *Reading Across The Prairie*. They had a very busy, and exciting end of the year celebrating Children's Book Week with our first ever Book Parade. It was an awesome time watching forty plus floats, and our character dress-up winners, march down the hallways handing out bookmarks, and other goodies. Everyone is already looking forward to our next parade.

As the holidays approached, our students enjoyed Mrs. Silva, and Mr. Waller reading to them by the Christmas tree. They read the *Polar Express*. Everyone wore their pajamas, and enjoyed cookies during the read-a-loud. It was a special time for everyone.

Now that the New Year has arrived, the Toros are ready to start checking out more books. Even though they loved their time off, they have missed the library. It looks like we will be rockin' and readin' in the New Year.

GARNER ELEMENTARY

Joette Cook

December was a busy month in the Garner library! DEAR Day was a huge success, and three lucky students had their names drawn to read in the library! Students are rushing to finish their Bluebonnet reading before voting time, and our graphic novels are flying off the shelves! Ms. Gwen Brazelton's fourth graders have been working hard on their book reports, and their projects are decorating the library!

Children's Book Week was lots of fun! Storyteller Mel Davenport was a highlight as she entertained us with her favorite tales. Our second annual Rock-a-Thon kept students busy reading and rocking all week long. Students enjoyed "getting caught reading" and our book estimation contest was a huge success! Ms. Hester's fifth graders won an ice cream party for estimating the number of books in the library. They spent lots of time in the library and sharpened their math skills in the process.

Have a wonderful holiday season and a happy 2007!

HOUSTON ELEMENTARY

Marcie Eckhout

Happy New Year to one and all from Houston Elementary. Houston Elementary Hornets ended 2006 with a bang. In mid-December the Hornets welcomed story teller and author Joe Hayes to the library. Mr. Hayes entertained each grade level with one of his wonderful Southwestern stories. He even got the fifth graders wrapped up, and a little jumpy, with his *La Llorona/The Weeping Woman* tale. Ask any Houston Elementary student about Mr. Hayes and I am sure they can retell the story they were told. Since his visit, the Joe Hayes books are flying off the shelves.

Just before our Winter Break the students at Houston Elementary enjoyed a special Polar Express Pajama Day. Teachers incorporated this favorite Christmas story, by Chris Van Allsburg, into all areas of the curriculum for a fun filled educational day.

In the library, students studied the aurora borealis/northern lights.

JOHNSON ELEMENTARY

Monica Dubiski

December was a busy month in our library. In addition to checking books in and out, and other activities, we also had a very successful Scholastic book fair. Students were able to choose books for themselves and for Christmas presents. Following an LBJ tradition, a team of teachers went to the Scholastic warehouse and purchased books for our students. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of our principal to promoting reading, every student received two free books. We hope they enjoyed reading these books over the holidays.

MARSHALL ELEMENTARY

A.J. Tickell

November at Marshall was an outstanding month. We had a super successful book fair and got some great new books. We also celebrated Children's Book Week with dress up and reading activities then topped off the week with our 3rd Annual Storybook Parade. Congratulations to our costume winners and especially the second grade team who dressed as *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. Their picture can be seen on our school's web page.

December brought all kinds of excitement. There was excitement that the holidays were near and realizing that our school year was already halfway done. The Mustangs loved Polar Express Day in our pajamas and gathering around the tree with milk and cookies. In addition to reading about holiday traditions, we mixed in our wonderful Bluebonnet nominees as well. Everyone is enjoying reading their five Bluebonnet books so they can vote in January. The Mustangs hope that everyone had a restful and wonderful holiday break.

MILAM ELEMENTARY

Sara Coolidge



What a busy Holiday season! All grade levels at Milam scrambled to learn as much as they could at school between our Thanksgiving and winter breaks, and this meant lots of class and individual visits to the library. Third graders came in to research the Native American tribes of the Southeast, while our pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes enjoyed listening to stories about the *Gingerbread Man* and learning about how gingerbread cookies are made. Fourth grade students had a blast with Judy Blume's *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* as they compared the book to the movie and play. They quickly determined by overwhelming consensus that they preferred the book -- what a great group of readers!

Hard work deserves a reward; therefore, students were treated to a visit from the Grand Prairie Storytellers and Listeners Guild in November. Our storyteller, Ms. Davenport, enthralled students with her spellbinding Native American tales and use of traditional musical instruments such as a rattle made from a dried gourd. She received hugs from many students as they left the performance, and I received many requests for her to return again next year. Thanks, Ms. Davenport!

Finally, Milam Mavericks continued to display their love for reading by checking out dozens of Holiday-themed books, in addition to their usual favorites. This is proof that, although the Holidays may have come and gone, the gift of becoming a lifelong reader lasts forever!

MOORE ELEMENTARY

Linda Dragg

The year 2006 ended with a flurry of library activities. Our annual Book Character Parade was held during Children's Book Week. Hundreds of students and teachers dressed as favorite book characters and waltzed through the school hallways. It was great fun! We participated in the December district wide *Read Across the Prairie* Day and dropped everything and read some of our favorites together. Third grade classes spent several hours in the library researching Christmas traditions in Germany and Italy, and Hanukkah. However, the most exciting thing to happen was to end our year with the visit of renowned author and storyteller Joe Hayes. Students and teachers alike were awed and amazed by his entertaining stories and powerful storytelling abilities.

As 2007 begins, so does the race to finish reading this year's Bluebonnet Books. Voting takes place this month, and I believe that we will have a record number of students eligible to vote this year for their favorite! The beginning of a new year also means the Six Flags Read to Succeed initiative is just around the corner. Best wishes for a Happy New Year to all!!!

POWELL ELEMENTARY

Nancy Warder

Our November Read-a-thon was a rocking success. The library was filled with a dozen rockers, and students rotated in with their books to read. The students are begging to do it again. Each participant received a *Read Across the Prairie* sticker to wear proudly.

Lunch Bunch continues this year for the girls at Powell. In December twenty-five fourth grade girls joined Mrs. Warder for lunch and a chance to travel back 100 years to Meet Samantha of The American Girls series. Through our reading we learned the meaning of the adage "Actions speak louder than words." Samantha's actions showed she was friendly and compassionate. The girls made cross-stitch samplers of their names and

created paper doll chains to decorate our bulletin board. We all enjoyed singing, reading together, and sharing our love of good books.

“Make new friends, but keep the old;
One is silver and the other gold.”

RAYBURN ELEMENTARY

Diana Lopez

Research! Research! Research! Rayburn students have been hard at work with research. Kindergarteners have been researching South American countries like Argentina, Peru and Brazil, and learning about different landforms along with the animals from these areas. They are also studying about the different foods and customs that go with each country. They will be presenting their information on multicultural night along with the rest of the school.

Fourth graders have been researching weather and the different instruments that are used to measure weather. They have studied about the weatherman and how he does his job. They culminated their study with Ron Jackson, from Channel 4, who came to talk to the students plus answer their questions. It was an exciting week for fourth grade.

Second grade researched parts of a system and how important it is for all the parts to work together. They researched plants, circuits, computers, plants and cars, to name a few. They discovered how important each part was because of its function.

Fifth grade researched different scientists and what they contributed to society. The students studied about their lives and what kind of awards they won. They learned a lot of unusual information about each scientist. I learned a lot from each research project. They all were very interesting and informative. Great Job Rayburn!!

SEGUIN ELEMENTARY

Evelyn Edington

What does a twelve-year-old, half-blood boy have in common with an apprentice blacksmith? Both boys are embroiled in quests; one in search of his true identity and the other searching for his kidnapped father. These two lads are the heroes in Rick Riordan's *The Lightning Thief* and R. L LaFevers' *The Forging of the Blade*. Fourth and fifth graders have enjoyed these high fantasy Bluebonnet selections during Lunch Bunch. To enter Camp Half-Blood, and to discover how a sword is forged, have fun searching these two sites: <http://www.rickriordan.com/children.htm> and <http://suzyred.com/2006forgingoftheblade.html>

Members from the Arlington Story League, Francille Tamplen, Delouris Wages and Robbie Still, came to Seguin to tell stories to the Seguin Storyteller's League and to help get our new club started. These veteran storytellers kept us spellbound with their stories and also offered us storytelling tips. Several of our members were selected to have lunch with Joe Hayes during his visit to our campus. They picked his brain and shared their own stories throughout this cozy and delightful luncheon. Our first big project as storytellers will be to tell Native American tales around the campfire to second graders as a culmination of their research into Native American tribes.

TRAVIS ELEMENTARY

Susie Hall

We hope this newsletter finds you in a Joyous and Happy New Year! At Travis, we ended 2006 with a flurry of activity. Author and prolific storyteller, Joe Hayes, came to visit and inspired many of our students to write their own stories. Mr. Hayes is a Travis favorite and we also enjoy his visits. Next we had our "Season's Readings" week, where we celebrated great books of the holidays. Everyday Travis staff and students would dress to commemorate one of our favorite Christmas books. Special activities in the library were also a part of this seasonal fun.

Our New Year finds us completing our Bluebonnet reading, and beginning our Six Hour Reading Club. January is also the time when our second graders become proficient researchers. It is always a treat when they come to study animals and prepare their PowerPoint report.

Hopefully, all our Travis Lions, as well as our faithful readers, have made a resolution to read more in the coming New Year. I can't think of a better way to find happiness and prosperity than in the wealth of books.

WHITT ELEMENTARY

Lisa Miller

Looking back...The Stallions enjoyed an activity filled "Children's Book Week." Numerous classes came to the library to enjoy Flashlight Reading. With the lights out and kids nestled under tables and between bookshelves, flashlights shone on many different kinds of books. (A few kiddos even tried to scare themselves!) The week also offered a **You Be the Author** activity where students created stories using different icons to inspire them. But the highlight was definitely the Whitt Reader's Café. Third, fourth and fifth grade "employees" donned aprons and served up stories from a variety of menus to their younger Stallion classmates. Diners and employees alike are demanding reservations for the next Café.

By the time this issue goes to press, Whitt library patrons will have enjoyed numerous Christmas stories; third graders will have heard *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*; several first grade classes will have experienced latkes (reading about them AND eating them!); and our fourth graders will have completed the Polar Express Writer's Workshop. Winter is a busy and exciting time in the 'brary. Remember to snuggle up with a good book this holiday season. Happy New Year!!

ZAVALA ELEMENTARY

Linda Laib

It's the most wonderful time of the year. The school and library take on a special glow as children's artwork deck the halls and adorn Christmas trees. Our blustery Texas weather has helped set the mood as we cozy up in the library for some heartwarming stories such as *Good King Wenceslas* by John M. Neale, about a king who truly displayed the spirit of giving.

Books are central to so much of what we teach and experience in school. Our kindergarten students listened to variations of the *Gingerbread Man* and compared and contrasted the elements of the stories, while sampling delicious gingerbread. First grade students have been immersed in traditions from several countries learning how people celebrate special times with their families. All grade levels were invited into the library to share some interactive lessons with Ms. Belcher, our counselor, and I about conflict resolution. *The Band-Aid Chicken* by Becky Henton and *Welcome Comfort* by Patricia Polacco present wonderful lessons on fairness, kindness, and caring. We used stories to get the students thinking about positive ways to interact with each other; skills so necessary in our society.

Rick Riordan's, *The Lightning Thief*, kept 25 fifth graders turning 375 pages! It is a fast paced, fantasy romp that took us all on a high adventure through Greek mythology. The students loved the book and are waiting for the sequel to arrive in our library. Our whole school experienced the magic of "The Polar Express" by Chris Van Allsburg, as we came to school dressed in our pj's. Some sipped hot chocolate while others created projects, and all listened to the story and were reminded to **believe!**

ADAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Beverly Harkness

Happy New Year! The students at Adams Middle School have resolved to read more in 2007. With a new shipment of books waiting to be checked out, our New Year's Resolution will be an easy one to fulfill.

December was a fun time in the library. Ms. Bowers brought her class to the library for a Christmas themed story-time. Students followed up on the story-time with a fun craft; a great time was had by all.

The *Read Across the Prairie* DEAR Day was a big success. Lots of people made comments about how nice it was to read with no strings attached: no questions to answer, no tests to take, no essays to write or projects to finish. Everyone is looking forward to having another DEAR Day in the spring. This is truly the beauty of Read Across the Prairie; all one has to do is just read for the fun of it!

ARNOLD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Kyla Schooling

2006 was a great year in the Arnold library. The book and AV collections grew. Students learned. Staff took advantage of resources and equipment. Speaking of equipment, you might be surprised to learn that the library is home to four purple cows. That's right! Arnold has two "Computers On Wheels" that contain social studies and science curriculum. They are filled with video clips, songs and more that get students hooked on learning! The library has also added several Elmo projectors and data projectors to the collection. These are constantly being checked out and teachers are putting them to all kinds of creative uses.

Mr. Duff, Mrs. Lovell and Mrs. Olsen brought their classes in for fun story times in November and December. November's theme was tangrams. Students learned about tangrams and the seven shapes that a tangram is composed of. Students were then given their own set of tangrams and encouraged to make lions, rabbits, goldfish and more. December's theme was all about Christmas. Students had a fun time and Mrs. Schooling enjoyed reading to them.

In December Mr. Holt's classes researched our founding fathers and Ms. Morales' classes researched the events of the Holocaust. Ms. Harris' art classes have their Picasso-style artwork displayed in the library, as well.

Do you have time to watch a flower grow? Last year Mrs. Schooling grew an Amaryllis plant in the library. The plant received a great deal of attention because of how quickly and dramatically it grew each night. This year Mrs. Schooling is growing another one and charting the growth on a daily record sheet so that student's can observe and follow the rate of growth.

There's never a dull moment in the Arnold library. Stop by and join the fun!

JACKSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Katie Sessler

Thanks to Mrs. Felton for doing a great job in the library while Mrs. Sessler was out. In November and December students went in and out of the library as they checked out books and worked on research projects. Drop Everything and Read was a great success and many students came into the library looking for that special book to read during this special time. We hope that students will continue to find great reading material in our library.

KENNEDY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Marjory McCowen



Exciting things are happening here at Kennedy! January marks the beginning of the hot chocolate bar in the library. This is something that has been very successful at the high schools and ninth grade centers, but keeping in tune with our trend-setting ways, Kennedy is the first middle school to try this. Basically, this will occur during the day when classes come to the library to check out books. After the returning books are checked in and the new books checked out, students will be allowed to buy hot chocolate to drink while they sit and read for a few minutes before going back to their classroom. Hopefully, this will be a very popular item at Kennedy.

So many books - not enough time to read!!! After several of my students asked for *Magyk* by Angie Sage, I decided that I had to keep up and see what all the interest was about. I was so wonderfully surprised. This series is about Septimus Heap who is the seventh son of a seventh son. In the magical world, great powers

are to be expected from a person of this exalted lineage. Unfortunately, shortly after Septimus is born, his parents are told that he has died. They find a girl baby and are urged to tell no one that she is not their own. Around her tenth birthday, she is discovered to be the long-lost queenling (princess), whose mother was assassinated when she was a baby. The same people who killed her mother, still want to kill her and thus the tale begins. This was a book that I really could not put down. *Flyte* (the second book of the series), takes place a year after *Magyk*. In *Flyte*, Septimus is apprenticed to the ExtraOrdinary Wizard as they encounter problems with the Darke Shadow and with Septimus' oldest brother Simon. The third book in the series, *Physik* will be published in March. This book promises to be great.

LEE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Barbara McCaffrey

Thanksgiving and Christmas brought many inquiries into pilgrims, Puritans, the first Thanksgiving, Christmas, world holidays, including traditions, symbols, and literature. Many classes visited the library to enjoy holiday stories both for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Mrs. White's and Mrs. Nolen's classes completed holiday literature projects centered on Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or the season of winter. These projects helped decorate the walls outside the library. Mrs. Hamilton's classes began a multi-phase Christmas project in the library that extended to the lab and culminated in a well-researched essay.

Mr. Harris began the first phase of an in-depth research project on animals and plants. Ms. Radanovic's, Mrs. Sisemore's, Mrs. Dotson's, Mrs. Cohen's, Mrs. Nolen's, Mrs. Betancourt's, and Mrs. Reid's classes used our computers for research and to complete projects.

Mr. Rhein, Mrs. Duncan, Mrs. Taliaferro, Mrs. Berry, Ms. Brown, Ms. Porter, Mr. Lehnis, Mrs. Jackson, and Ms. Keating also used and enjoyed the library during November and December.

Children's Book Week was fun as we emphasized reading for the fun of it! Students delighted in playing Name That Book over the announcements each day, especially since prizes were awarded.

Everyone at Lee participated in *Read Across the Prairie* on December twelfth. Students could be seen wearing their RAP shirts, dog tags and wristbands as they kicked back and took pleasure in what they wanted to read.

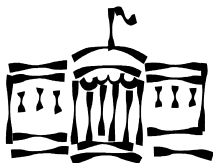
As the New Year begins, we wish all of you health, prosperity and, of course, hours of happy reading and learning adventures!

REAGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Linda Clearman

All new books have been ordered, and students eagerly await their arrival so they can begin checking them out. We are always anxious to see which of the books on the order list are sent.

During December, Mrs. Pettitt's sixth grade social studies classes came to the library to research different countries. After studying about life in their selected country for several weeks, there is not much about each of those places these students do not know. Mrs. Deck's English classes worked in the library to do some research on dogs. Although they wound up with plenty of information about the breed of dog they were researching, it was rather difficult for many of them to stop looking at the cute pictures they found of their chosen breed! Mr. George's eighth grade students researched a more serious topic. They spent time finding specific information about the Holocaust that they did not already know.



Mrs. Clearman was very fortunate to be able to return to the White House again this year during the Christmas season. Although several classes were in the library during the time she was gone, everything was shelved and in place when she returned. A big thank

you goes to Reagan's very capable library helpers who kept everything functioning smoothly.

Happy 2007 to everyone from the Knights at Reagan. We wish you the best in the coming year.

TRUMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Linda Johnson

This past month the library hosted a book fair. In addition to the usual offerings of pens, pencils, whoopee cushions, and various other objects that light-up, squeal or vibrate, many exciting books both familiar and new were available. Ms. Johnson took the opportunity to encourage students to try *Silverfin*, the first offering in a new young James Bond series by Charlie Higson and *Wolf Brother* from the Chronicles of Ancient Darkness series by Michelle Paver. Both authors present tales of impossible quests by unlikely heroes.

It goes without saying that extra copies of *Eragon* had to be ordered to satisfy students' thirst for anything about dragons. The movie's debut on the 15th only served as fuel for the fire.

Ms Johnson has been busy preparing the 300+ books that have arrived in the library courtesy of the \$5,000.00 gifted to us by Central Media. Books should be shelf ready long before Christmas break.

GRAND PRAIRIE HIGH SCHOOL

Carmen Koshnoodi



A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other. --Author Unknown

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL FROM GPHS!!!!

The GPHS library celebrated the Christmas season with displays of books on customs and traditions, craft ideas, cookbooks as well as fiction, poetry and short story collections all relating to the holidays. Our "Christmas Around the World" display was one of the more popular areas. December was a very busy time actually. Not only did we have many research classes; but, our pleasure readers were coming in preparing for December 12th's **DEAR Day** here on campus as well as checking out books for the holiday break.

Many new materials arrived in December and are now ready for use by students and faculty. We are anticipating the arrival of many, many more wonderful books in the next few months. Most of our display cases will be devoted to our new arrivals.

An emphasis on pleasure reading continues thru the *READ ACROSS the PRAIRIE* program. We are hoping to continue this trend into the spring with the help of the English department as they come in to check out books for pleasure reading.

In observance of the Martin Luther King holiday this month, our main display will include books on his life, work, and achievements as, well as his wife, Coretta Scott King, and the Civil Rights movement.

FYI: New book releases:

Cross by James Patterson

Turning Angel by Greg Iles

The Godfather's Revenge by Mark Winegardner

H.R.H. by Danielle Steel

And many, many more of course.....

We hope everyone continues to have a successful school year....

Please stop by and see us in the *GPHS Library*.....check out a book or two...

GRAND PRAIRIE HIGH NINTH GRADE CENTER

Kathy Nichols

The library has been abounding with activities for the past two months. We have continued our Library Lunch Bunch and celebrated December with a pizza party. The library offered crafts each month. November saw a flock of turkeys while December celebrated the creativeness of students in building gingerbread houses. Mrs. Buffalo brought her students to the library to create the houses through the use of math. Our links for both are:

<http://gphs9.gpisd.org/thanksgiving.htm>

<http://gphs9.gpisd.org/library/gingerbreadhouses.htm>

Students have been researching a plethora of topics: world religions, gods and goddesses, Athens and Ancient Greece, health careers, Christmas around the world, various countries, endangered species, political systems, natural disasters, and much more. Ms. Nichols prepared and taught a “works cited” lesson to aid in students learning the MLA format. English classes learned how to cite newspapers, magazines, books, encyclopedias, Internet resources, and databases. Teachers in several subject areas are now using the lesson handout for students to fill in their resources. We would like to thank the teachers for their support in the use of the library.



SOUTH GRAND PRAIRIE HIGH SCHOOL

Martha Jordan

In January of 2007, there are many new things to celebrate at the SGP library! The months of November and December were full of activity and change that is still underway.

Change:

- Several hundred new books arrived and more are due any day!
- A new student copy machine was installed to replace the ‘tired’ one we had.
- A 32-volume 2007 Britannica Encyclopedia is on its way- a title unmatched for scholarly research.
- A new system of checking out magazines is in place – thus making the most of our budgeted funds!

Really New Stuff:

•**eBooks** – get this! We have purchased several terrific reference titles that will not only be on the shelves to use, but also available online 24 hours a day through our Gale online resources! eBooks – the newest thing in reference.

•**Playaways!** What is smaller than an iPod, has different speeds and bookmarks, is fun to listen to, and can improve your vocabulary and reading comprehension? The Playaway – the newest format of digitally recorded audio books – reviewed in *Time Magazine*, *Parade Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and other places as one of the great new ‘gadgets’ of the year. We previewed one in October and hope to have over 100 Playaways ready to check out to students very soon! From classics to best sellers, we will have many choices.

Activity:

·The SGP Book Club had a great turnout in December when we discussed *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafon. Sponsors Sarah Stevens and Martha Jordan were joined by former librarian Verna Bargsley. Background information on the author and setting, plus authentic Spanish treats were provided by teacher Genie Vasilakopl-Smith. The discussion of this gothic novel was lead by the students who all agreed

that it was a book they would highly recommend. Book Club President Brad Barmer announced that the book for the January meeting will be Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil by John Berendt.

·Library circulation continues to increase as new books are added and more students realize the great selection available to meet their research and personal reading needs.

·Classes are already scheduled into January as teachers are planning ahead and saving their spot in the busy library! From Government to Family Development to AP English – our print and online resource are in constant demand by students and teachers.

Recognition:

·Principal Vicki Bridges realizes the fact that the library can impact the success of every student at SGP like no other single program. She strongly supports the library program in her philosophy of open use, but more visibly with extra funding as it has become available. This spending has put much needed resources and equipment directly in the hands of students and teachers – a good place for education funds to be!



SOUTH GRAND PRAIRIE NINTH GRADE CENTER

Belinda Stanley

2006 was a busy year in the library and we are looking forward to a great 2007 as we continue to *Read Across the Prairie*.

A big thanks goes to Ms. Buchanan's art classes for all our lovely displays. The sculptures and prints add a nice touch to the library. We also want to thank Ms. Elliott's English classes for allowing the library to display their poetry folders.

Since the beginning of the new trimester, classes have completed numerous research projects. Students discovered new and interesting information about viral & bacterial diseases, the Russian Revolution, mythology, geographical regions, Spanish cultures, careers, school & parental rules, and much more.

With the cooler weather, our students are enjoying more and more hot chocolate while in the library reading and researching. We are pleased that most students are being courteous and following our coffee bar rules.

BOZE LEARNING CENTER

Velma Alexander

We sang *Silent Night*, *Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer*, *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*, and *Old Saint Nick* brought in his bag of presents for everyone. And then, as quick as a wink we sang *Auld Lang Syne* and rang in the New Year. It is our hope that everyone received most of the things they wanted. Now that most of the remnants of the holiday season are put away, we really must get back to the business of books, pens, calculators, and paper.

The Grand Prairie ISD will observe the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 15, 2007. All schools will be closed and there will be a parade.

We are about halfway through the school year; preparation for TAKs, graduation, and summertime is underway. Good luck to all students in their endeavors. This will be the first long summer that most of the students have ever experienced to be out of school June, July, and most of August.

See you next month.

LAMAR

Velma Alexander

We hope that all enjoyed the holiday season, with lots of turkey, pies, cakes and plenty of Christmas Cheer! Now with all the remnants of the holidays packed safely away for another year, the time has come to get

back to basics: reading, writing and arithmetic. It is our hope that all are rested and ready to return to the educational highway where you will find loads of good books in the library, articles in the newspapers, and quick information on the Internet.

Now that we have gone through half of the school year, let's rev up our engines and speed through the next half learning and preparing for TAKS.

The Grand Prairie ISD will be honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday on January 15, with district-wide closure and there will be a parade through the town.

See you next month!

BOOKMARKS FOR THE INTERNET

Carmen Galindo

<http://flightaware.com>

Flight Aware

Have you ever looked up at the sky at night and wondered where all those planes are going? This website offers free airline flight tracking services for both private and commercial air traffic in the United States.

<http://www.thefrugallife.com>

The Frugal Life

<http://www.rd.com/extraordinaryuses/openLandingPage.do>

RD Living

<http://www.hintsandthings.co.uk/bathroom/unusual.htm>

Hints and Things

These websites offer ideas for extraordinary uses of ordinary everyday items. Ex: Get rid of pesky little ants with baby powder.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/12/061211-top-stories.html>

Top Ten Stories of 2006 From National Geographic News

The most popular stories of 2006.

<http://lii.org/>

Librarian's Internet Index

This site is not new but continues to be a great resource. Topics include current events and issues, holidays and seasons, helpful tools for information users, human interest, and more.