

LIBRARY NOTES

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

**V.12, No.1
October 1, 2007**

Reading – Because It’s Fun

Belinda Jacks

Do you love to read? For avid readers, parents often had to say things like “Don’t read at the dinner table,” “Don’t read under the covers with a flashlight after bedtime,” and “Don’t read riding through the mountains on vacation.” For those of us who truly fell in love with reading, it became almost an adventure. To avid readers, characters in books sometimes become almost real, more real than some people they know. My all time favorite character is a Victorian Egyptologist named “Amelia Peabody Emerson.” *Crocodile on the Sandbank*, by Elizabeth Peters is the first of seventeen novels involving her character. She is so real to me it seems to me she must have existed somewhere in time.

Whatever the reason, avid readers escape to books to enrich their lives, or travel to exotic locations in their minds. As a child, I remember reading a book so scary, I had to put my back to the wall while reading parts of it, so no one could sneak up behind me. Experiencing this terror through a book is certainly better than living it in person. It is better to live through the experience of being in a tornado by reading than it is to experience it in real life. Furthermore, I’ll never know what it might have been like to be a Victorian Egyptologist in the 1880’s except through Amelia’s eyes.



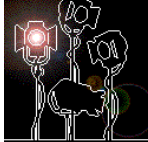

Oftentimes, we as readers want to impose our tastes and love of a particular kind of reading on everyone, making a cookie cutter formula for what a person who reads for pleasure is. Not all people want to read fiction. Other reading is just as valuable, and children and adults should be given credit for whatever it is they like to read.

Research shows that boys read more nonfiction than girls. The older a person gets, the more nonfiction he or she reads. For high school students, 80% of their reading for pleasure is non-fiction. Often, libraries and teachers cater to traditional fiction reading. Reading magazines, newspapers, and joke books is reading for pleasure. People have even been known to read cereal boxes and labels while eating their breakfast. I used to read our set of encyclopedias at home. My favorite volume was D for Dogs. *Auto Trader* and *Seventeen* are some of the most popular reading in high schools. The latest craze for students is Manga which is a Japanese comic book. These books have extraordinarily beautiful artwork. Yes, that is reading. Graphic novels are equally popular and old favorites like *Archie* and *Jughead* are making a comeback. Then there are the game code books and magazines. There is a lot of technical and detailed information in those books. Kids should get credit for that. It really is reading for information. And as much as traditional reading enthusiasts might not like to admit it, in today’s technological world, reading information on the Internet is reading for fun.

So what is the point of all this for teachers? In order to help children find the unconscious delight that some of us have found in reading, kids have to read for fun. They should be able to read virtually whatever they want. Any kind of reading is okay, not just novels. Kids should be able to read a book for pleasure knowing they won’t be tested over it or have any kind of assignment. Their reading doesn’t have to be good literature. The Nancy Drew series many of us read

never won the Pulitzer. This is the reason that *Read Across the Prairie* was born. So sign that pledge card and encourage your students to read anything for fun. The outside benefit is their test scores will be better and studies show that kids who read outside of school are far more likely to succeed than those who don't.

Stephen Krashen, a highly acclaimed linguist and educational researcher has written about some of his findings about reading and literacy. In 2004, he wrote, "We know that the more children read, the better their literacy development. There is now overwhelming research showing that free voluntary reading is the primary source of our reading ability, our writing style, much of our vocabulary and spelling knowledge, and our ability to handle complex grammatical constructions. It has also been confirmed that those who read more know more: They know more about history, literature, and even have more "practical knowledge" (research reviewed in Krashen, 2004)." To read more, go to www.sdkrashen.com.

<h1 style="color: #76b82a;">"Mane" Attractions</h1> <h2 style="color: #000080;">"Mane" Attractions</h2>		
 <p style="text-align: center;">Our New Superintendent Reads Across the Prairie!</p>	 <p>Third Year in a Row! <i>Read Across the Prairie</i> Resolution unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees, Grand Prairie Independent School District on September 13, 2007!</p>	 <p>District Wide Kick-Off September 17th The GPISD community of readers is out of the starting gate! Students, staff, and community members are pledging to read every day "just for the fun of it" by signing <i>Read Across the Prairie</i> pledge cards. In return, they receive a membership card allowing discounts at local businesses and carabiners (really cool key chains!).</p>

SPOTLIGHTING:

Tell me a Story!!!

By Marjory McCowen



Telling stories is one of the favorite things people do for conversation, for sleepovers, for campfires, or for long trips in the car. Almost anytime you have people gathering, you will find someone telling a story. It may be a story or anecdote of something that happened to them or a friend or someone in their family. Ancient peoples used storytelling as a way to preserve and pass down their history and educate their children.

Kyla Schooling, the librarian at Arnold Middle School, is in the process of ordering a stage and story cards for a Kamishibai Theatre. This Japanese storytelling art form consisted of a man on a bicycle who rode around the neighborhoods to sell candy. To gather a crowd of customers, he would have sets of storytelling cards. He would use the beautifully illustrated cards to tell a story. After the children had been entertained, he would sell his candy.

At Kennedy, every Halloween, Mrs. McCowen takes the opportunity to invite the seventh graders in to the library in their history class, to tell a ghost story. Her favorite is the true story of Josiah Wilbarger. Josiah was one of the Old Three Hundred who settled in Texas in the early 1830's. While out hunting with some friends, Josiah was scalped by

Comanche Indians. He lived for another eight years after his scalping. The story of his rescue has elements of ghosts, visions of dead people and other unexplained happenings.

During February, Fannin's entire student body is treated to a dramatic performance of Sojourner Truth by teacher, Kathy Hopkins-Davis. Karen McPherson, Fannin's librarian reports that the students are transported back in time and that the whole experience brings history to life. This is a presentation that students will not forget.

The Seguin Storytellers Club consists of fifth graders who work with their librarian, Evelyn Edington, to learn various storytelling techniques and practice telling stories to classes on their campus. Occasions for their appearances have been for Indian stories, Black History stories in February, Easter stories and Trickster tales. The highlight of the year for the club was eating lunch with Joe Hayes when he came last year on a school visit.

What other kind of school is there?

Kathy Brundrett-Austin Elementary

The students at Austin were very surprised to see a different kind of school had been added to the library. It was a school of fish. The PTA purchased a large aquarium with a dozen fish for the students to enjoy while they visit the library. It is located in the reading corner. We have sharks, kissing fish and several other kinds of fish. Stop by sometime and see our school of fish!

When's the last time you visited a Book Fair? Well, that's too long! The Austin library looked different during the week of September 17th - 21st. The tables were rearranged, chairs disappeared and books were everywhere (in metal cases, that is)! It was the first Scholastic Book Fair at Austin. The students visited the book fair daily as well as continued to check out library books. We were also open Tuesday night before PTA so all parents had a chance to purchase books for their children, family members, and even themselves. There were even those who did some early Christmas shopping! (Less than 100 days til Christmas!) Just one way to help the students and teachers of Austin *Read Across the Prairie!*

Kindergarten, Here We Are!

Christine Rayl-Bowie Elementary

A new group of kindergartners is here and with them they have brought smiles, laughter and great excitement that they can check out a book. Students enjoyed their lessons of how A Book is Like a Baby, answering seemingly silly questions such as, "Would you step on a baby?" "Would you write all over a baby with a marker?" etc. After recording their answers on a large chart and giggling over the silliness of some of the questions and answers, we then applied the same questions to a book! Imagine their surprise that, in most cases, students found that what you do or would not do to a baby applies to books...except for diapers and food! Students still call their books their babies when they come into the library and have been so careful. Kindergartners have now graduated from

checking out of the cart to actually using their shelf markers and selecting books from the shelves! They are proud, they are excited, and I must say, they are doing a great job. Three cheers to the great Kindergarten students and teachers at Bowie Elementary.

(It was so successful that I did a more in-depth lesson for Grades 1-3 and they too have done a great job.)

Success is Imminent!

Lisa Howell-Crockett Elementary

Student success is imminent at Crockett Elementary School! Team Crockett is committed to student success through promoting higher order thinking skills. We are offering students the opportunity to display their learning. This will be accomplished through various research projects, integrated technology as well as good 'ole classroom teaching through utilization of twenty-first century learning tools and traditional text. As an introduction to their pending projects, the library has been hopping with excitement since the first day of orientation! Students and teachers have enjoyed checking out their first set of books as well as learning their way around the library. We look forward to a wonderful school year with loads of learning! Go Bulldogs!

Dickinson Cowboys Are Wild About the Library

Melissa Forsythe-Dickinson Elementary

Dickinson Cowboys were eager to start the new school year and couldn't wait to return to the library to check out stacks of books. We started off our first sessions by reading a wonderful story called *Wild About Books* by Judy Sierra. We decided that we would be wild about books this year but not wild with our books. After quick reminders about book care, students were off to the shelves and making their first choices. In addition to borrowing books, students were able to purchase books at our Scholastic Book Fair. Our book fair was held in conjunction with PTA/Meet the Teacher Night on September 11. Parents had the

opportunity to visit our library, meet our friendly staff, and have a delicious spaghetti dinner, too. What a fun night we had! We are looking forward to a fantastic year ahead in the library. Upcoming events include our Read Across the Prairie Kick-Off, Lunch Bunch Reading Clubs, Reading Restaurant, Camp Read A Lot, Reading Rock A Thon, and much more.

Springtime in September

Karen McPherson-Fannin Elementary

Bluebonnets are sprouting up all over Fannin's library...Bluebonnet Award nominees, that is. Identification labels have been attached and the books have filled a shelf marked by the famous bluebonnet boot. The books were standing at attention in eager anticipation of anxious third, fourth, and fifth graders. When third grade learned they were now old enough to participate, they could hardly wait to be the first pick to a bunch. The more seasoned veterans in fourth and fifth grade were a bit more direct with questions like: Do we still get to eat lunch in the library after we vote? Are the books ready for check out? How many can we get at a time? A new feature this year was learning how to navigate the *Teaching Books* website. Students logged on to *teachingbooks.net* and were able to read a short summary about each nominee. Not only could they find out about an individual title but they could also read about the author, find a list of other titles written by him/her and the best part, they could rate the book according to how much they enjoyed it. Once Fannin readers gathered background information, they were ready to plunge into the Bluebonnet fields to find that perfect flower. Will students go for the whole bouquet of 20 books or settle for a nosegay of 5? Only time will tell on this excursion across the prairie.

Is There a Doctor in the House?

Michelle Casey-Garcia Elementary



Doctor Savia Book was in the Garcia House early in September to teach 70 Pre-K students about care for their library books. They discovered that they knew a lot about how to make sure books stay healthy. Scribbling, drawing, dirty hands, and water bottles in their backpacks with the books are considered a no-no. They learned how "sick" books are mended, and who does the repairs. Garcia Pre-K students were so excited to check out their first books of the year. They

were eager to practice all the healthy book habits they learned.

At Garcia Elementary all the Toros are rocking and reading and keeping our books safe.

The Houston Library Buzz

Marcie Eckhout-Houston Library

The Houston Library has been buzzing with research. Mrs. King's fifth grade students have been buzzing into the library to find the answer to the weekly Sam Houston Trivia Contest questions that Mrs. Nunez announces each week. They quickly found out there were not enough books about Sam Houston in the library for everyone to check out. These first students were curious to see if the computer could help them find the answers and were shown how to use the GPISD Gale Databases. Now these students are teaching each other how to use the Gale Databases to find the answer to the current week's trivia question. They are also telling friends in other classes that the Gale Databases have the answers to the trivia questions. Teachers are also requesting information as to how to access the databases. The students' curiosity about how to find these answers has led them down the road to explore a life-long learning skill; how to research for information that will help them in their daily quest for knowledge.



"Building Relationships"

AJ Tickell-Marshall Library

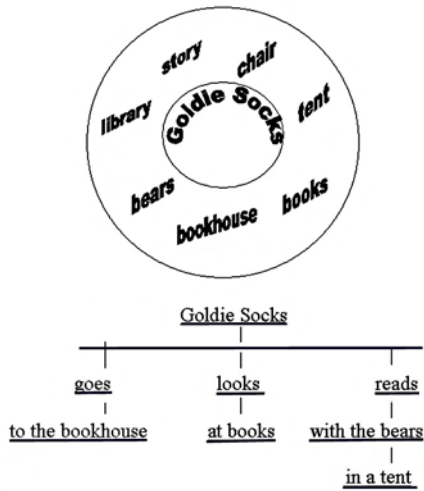
Library activities are back in full swing and that includes reconnection with parent volunteers from the previous year and building relationships with new comers. Having these relationships helps in so many ways. On the surface, their presence can be seen helping to keep the library running smoothly and staffing book fairs, but it goes much deeper than that. Through their efforts, whether it is shelving books or reading to their child at home, that is one more person who understands the value of the library.

Meet the Teacher Night proved to be an excellent opportunity for the library to meet many new parents and potential volunteers. The outpouring of support and excitement for the library was wonderful and many new library accounts for parents were opened. Several visitors shared their fond memories of visiting the library when they were in school and hoped their child would have those same warm fuzzy feelings.

Musketeer First Graders “Write...(Book Reviews) from the Beginning”

Linda Dragg-Moore Elementary

Have you ever heard of “Goldie Socks?” Mrs. Flores’ first grade class was the first to get to hear the new book *Goldie Socks and the Three Libearians*. The students discovered that they know a lot more about how to use the library correctly than Goldie Socks, that any place is a great place to read, and that librarians love to read books with students, even if they’re bears! After reading the book, the first graders wrote a great book review to share with other students using the “Write...from the Beginning” model. We’d like to share our writing process and book review with you. We think you’ll want to read this fun book, too!



Goldie Socks and the Three Libearians Book Review

Goldie Socks goes to the bookhouse.
 Goldie Socks looks at books.
 Goldie Socks reads with the bears in a tent.
 We liked the book.

Powell Library Captures Kids Hearts!

Denise Wallace-Powell Elementary

Exemplary changes are happening at Powell and we will be Capturing Kids Hearts in the library! Palomino staff and administration are working hard to promote a positive and friendly environment throughout the school as we work together to generate the best learning environment possible. Our parents and PTA joined in our enthusiasm as was demonstrated with an exceptional turnout for our PTA’s annual “Meet the Teacher Night on September 11!” Powell welcomed

520 students back-to-school and our students were greeted in the library with a PowerPoint presentation, a thumbprint station for our “We’re Thumb-body Special” display, and an introduction to upcoming events. Library patrons will continue participating in Read-Across-the-Prairie, Accelerated Reader, Bluebonnet Books, Scholastic Book Fairs, Camp-Read-A-lot, and upcoming author visits. Fifth grade library helpers are eager to get started by helping me with circulation and shelving books, creating a “book review” binder, assisting younger patrons, and various other tasks. I look forward to their assistance and offering them an opportunity to work on their library skills!

If all of this sounds exciting and you would be interested in further information, please visit our website (<http://powell.gpisd.org/>), or better yet, drop in for a visit and share your favorite read with us! We would be glad to show you some of our “Palomino pride” and you can tell us about your most current read!

The Scoop on C-Scope

Evelyn Edington-Seguín Elementary

Teachers, are you concerned about finding all of the new reading materials listed in C-Scope? Well, don’t despair because help is only a librarian away. Our GPISD librarians are 40 strong and are working diligently to support your classroom needs. Each librarian chose a curriculum area and grade level. We are checking C-Scope and listing materials and discussing alternate options for you.

For instance, we know that First Grade will be covering alliteration during the second six-week period. It was mentioned at a meeting and several books were suggested in a matter of minutes. And, we are all a chatter about the Fifth Grade fairytale research unit coming up. Need help? Just ask your friendly librarian. We are ready to serve.

Everything!

Beverly Harkness-Adams Middle School

What is your favorite thing about visiting the library? This was the question that was asked to several students from Adams Middle School. The answers seemed to vary, but everyone seemed to agree that the large variety of books was their favorite thing about the library. Another answer that seemed to be common among students was that they enjoyed checking out magazines with tips and codes for video games. Of course, the *Guinness Book of World Records* was also a top favorite. One student described how he liked the

atmosphere of the library. He liked that the library is quiet and noted that the temperature is always "just right." Another student commented on the library as a good place to relax and have some down time from the classroom. Of course my favorite answer came from a very wise student that exclaimed, "My favorite thing about the library is the librarian!" I promise I did not pay him to give that answer. Finally, one student put it best by saying that her favorite thing about the library is "Everything!"

The Library of Congress

Katie Sessler-Jackson Middle School



The highlight of my summer vacation was a visit to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. It was established in 1800 and expanded when Thomas Jefferson donated his personal library, books he had collected for over 50 years. Today it is the largest library collection in the world and has millions of books, recordings, photographs, maps and manuscripts. You can learn more about the Library of Congress at their website: <http://www.loc.gov>. It is an unbelievably beautiful building full of treasures and it has a wonderful gift shop, too. My favorite souvenirs contain a quote from Thomas Jefferson, "I cannot live without books." I feel the same way and in the beginning of each school year, as I spend so much time on the clerical "little things" needed to organize the library, I wonder how I will ever get it all done so I can get back to the important things, like reading, reading, reading and books, books, books.

Student IDs are made; Horizon records are updated and 52 English/Language Arts classes learned the basics about our library. Sixth graders are amazed at how big the library is and they are thrilled to be able to check out five books. *Read Across the Prairie* is off to a big start with students signing the new pledge cards and proudly displaying their carabiner key chains.

Trojans Prepare to Saddle Up!

Linda Johnson-Truman Middle School

The beginning of the year procedures have finally been put to bed and the dust has begun to settle from the making of ID's and the changing of schedules. Even library orientation has been completed, but the Trojans can't get too relaxed. It's time to begin preparing for another long trail ride towards becoming life long readers, and Truman students are eager for the journey.

Acting trail boss, Ms. Johnson, has begun the roundup by launching the annual *Read Across the Prairie* program. With the raising of the program's flag, the challenge has been issued, and our goal has been clearly established. We will encourage everyone we encounter along the trail to become a lifelong reader, reading just for the fun of it!

Just as any successful trail drive required careful planning and supplies, the journey towards lifelong readers has been well thought out and involves the cooperation of a skilled, dedicated team made of the Truman Faculty and staff. Historically, trail drives followed a detailed map; we will as well. We will follow the path established by author, Reid Daily in his soon to be released book *The Legend of Ross the Reader* (rumored to be ghost written by several Grand Prairie librarians!).

As a sign of commitment, students taking the journey will sign pledge cards that will be kept in the library for all to see. Once pledges are made, Team members will be given supplies which include a carabiner for personal use and a second card listing the names of various local businesses along the trail that have pledged to support our team with discounts and other incentives.

Shortly after this month's board meeting, the call to action will ring throughout Truman's halls. Saddle up. We're going on a trail ride...

Simply Irresistible

Carmen Koshnoodi-GPHS

GPHS library opened its doors this year to a wildly appreciative group of Gophers. Interest was high among the senior English teachers lead by Mr. Sean O'Donnell who continued his 3rd year tradition of encouraging seniors to read for pleasure by giving an animated and enjoyable book talk on several of his favorite young adult novels. His students, as well as those of other classes, found his dramatics *simply irresistible*. Meet the Teacher night was one of our busiest in several years. Hallways were crowded with

parents and students and the library was buzzing with crowds of parents attending the PTA meeting as well as the Senior Parent meeting. All of our new arrivals, but especially our new graphic novel shelves, are constantly having to be restocked. We plan on being even more irresistible and popular with the new gift giveaways from our *Read Across the Prairie* program.

FYI:

Hispanic Heritage Month: Began September 15----

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities>

<http://www.factmonster.com/spot>

<http://www.history.com/classroom/hhm/>

Top Picks: *Consiga un trabajo hoy* by Luis Cortes, Jr.
How to Write a Resume and Get a Job

Ayude a sus hijos a tener éxito en la escuela by Mariel Dabbah.

Help your Children Succeed in School.

Crece en una familia bilingüe by Elke Montanari
Growing Up in a Bilingual Family

Banned Book Week: September 29-October 6

<http://www.ala.org>

Top Three Most Challenged Books of 2006:

And Tango Makes Three by Justin Richardson
Gossip Girls series by Cecily Von Ziegesar
Alice series by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Teen Read Week: October 14-20

<http://www.ala.org>

Check out the Teen Read Week Wiki

http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen_Read_Week

New slogan for this year:

LOL@yourlibrary

Which College or University Appeals to You?

Belinda Stanley-SGP9

Are 9th grade students too young to be thinking about college? At South Grand Prairie 9th Grade Center, we don't think so. As a matter of fact, we believe it is very important that our students start considering their higher education options now. To bring home this concept, hanging above each classroom door is a banner, pennant, poster, or other sign of the college or university that the occupying teacher attended. There are small pennants of different universities surrounding the windows of the front office, and large pennants covering the computer lab windows.

In the SGP9 Library, pennants for Stephen F. Austin State University and Sam Houston State University fly proudly over the circulation desk signifying the universities attended by the librarian. But there are many more colleges and university represented in the library. Large pennants from TCU, UT, Baylor, OU, Duke, and Florida State are on display, just to name a few. In fact, there are over 50 different college and university pennants spotlighted in windows, attached to book shelves, and on the walls of the library. We would love to have at least 100 colleges and universities represented in the library so we are keeping our eyes open for any and all school spirit accessories. Also, the library's collection of college and university manuals has been updated. Maybe one of the books or banners will spark the interest of our students and start them thinking.... "College IS for me!"



"Curiosity and questioning go hand in hand in the development of higher level thinking skills and teaching for understanding. Curiosity fuels imagination and leads to wonderment; thus it is a prerequisite to good questioning." This quote, taken from *The Student as a Questioner* by Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan, embodies the ideas and passions of Jamie McKenzie who believes in the importance of 'wondering' during the research process. In fact, it is true a student who has a burning question, one that really matters to them, will strive harder to find the information as well as employ the use of multiple electronic and print resources. Encouraging students to wonder will lead to good questioning habits. It is these habits that must be instilled in our students as we assist them on their journey towards information. Remember, in research, the question is an important starting place that will lead students to success as learners!

Check out Jamie McKenzie's website!
<http://www.fno.org/>

Literary Happenings

TAIR Texas Association for the Improvement of Reading

Thursday, October 18 ---Mother Goose sighting @ Camp Read-a-Lot 2pm and 6:30 @ 2102 N. Carrier Pkwy.

StarLit Conference - 10 AM to 2 PM Saturday,
October 20, 2007

St. Andrews United Methodist Church, Plano
StarLit is a one-day literary festival bringing top
children's authors and illustrators to the Dallas area.
This year's authors/illustrators include Will
Hillenbrand, Laura Numeroff, Bryan Collier,
Kimberley Willis Holt, Cynthia Leitich Smith, and
Greg Leitich Smith. For more information
visit <http://www.dallasbethlehemcenter.org/starlit/index.html>.

GP Arts Council -

Halloween Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre
October 26th, 27th, and 28th
For ticket and performance information,
http://www.artsgp.com/current_cast_and_show.htm



Writing opportunity for our students-

The Texas Association of School Librarians and the Texas Center for the Book proudly announce the 2008 Letters About Literature contest. Students in grades 4-12 are invited to write a letter to an author (living or dead) who has somehow made a difference in their lives. The deadline is December 14. To get contest information and an entry coupon go to one of these two links:

www.loc.gov/letters (Library of Congress website) or
www.dallaslibrary.org/tcbintro.htm (Texas Center for the Book website)

ROSS THE READER RECOMMENDS



SNOW FLOWER AND THE SECRET

FAN and **PEONY IN LOVE** both by Lisa See
Recommended Audience: Adult and Young Adult

Lisa See is a Chinese-American author who has written two fascinating historical fiction novels about the life of women in China. The first book, **SNOW FLOWER AND THE SECRET FAN**, is set in nineteenth-century China and tells the story of two young girls who become "old sames", friends for life in a culture where women have their feet bound and are then sent from their parents' home to become a wife in an arranged marriage and property of the husband's family. They are isolated from the rest of the world. Women in a remote area of China developed a secret code of

writing so they could communicate with others. In this book, Snow Flower and Lily become old sames at age seven and learn the secret language; for decades, they send messages to each other by secretly writing on a fan that is sent back and forth between their homes. Their lives are not at all what they seem to be. This novel is the story of the lives of these two women and the story of China.

See's newest novel is **PEONY IN LOVE**. Set in seventeenth-century China, it is about a group of women writers called the "lovesick maidens of Hangzhou": teenage girls who were obsessed with the opera **THE PEONY PAVILLION**. Their lives followed that of the opera's heroine. Peony accidentally sees a young man as she is watching the opera from behind a screen; she falls in love with him but because her family has arranged a marriage for her, she starves herself to death. Her ghost cannot find peace and she watches those she loves from her place beyond. This novel is based on a true story of three of those "lovesick maidens" who were married to the same man.

These summaries make the novels sound corny, like bad "chick flicks", but both books are absorbing looks at life in China. I would recommend them for adults and high school students. The descriptions of foot binding are gruesome and the descriptions of everyday life in China are eye-opening.

Reviewer: Katie Sessler @ Jackson Middle School

NO MORE DEAD DOGS by Gordon Korman
Recommended Audience: Middle School

I recently read *No More Dead Dogs*, a teen fiction book by Gordon Korman, and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience! The title refers to all of the books the main character, 8th grader Wallace Wallace, has read in his life that ended with a beloved dog dying. Wallace has a problem at school that results in him being suspended from the football team and serving detention with his English teacher, who is directing the school play *Old Shep, My Pal*. The resulting crazy events that involve Wallace, his friends, enemies, and teachers lead up to a wild ending. I think you would enjoy this funny look at literature and 8th graders. If you like rollerblading, explosions, football, dogs, rock music, and middle school students, this would be an excellent choice. If you don't laugh out loud while reading this twisted look at school life in the 8th grade, then you just aren't paying attention. I loved every minute of it, and I hope you will, too!

Reviewer: Kay White @ Lee Middle School