

LIBRARY NOTES

Grand Prairie Independent School District V.13, No.4
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It's a Bouncing Baby Book!!!! The Legend of Ross the Reader Comes to a School Near You

Belinda Jacks

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As most of you are aware, GPISD's *Read Across the Prairie* initiative has been a resounding success. It has received recognition across the state and even the nation. As this initiative has developed it has become more robust. Kids wanted to know things like "What is the name of the reader on the horse?" We named him Ross, after the illustrator who drew the picture. "What is Ross's horse's name?" We named him Scout. "Do you have any stories about Ross the reader?" We wrote a book.

Yes, we wrote a book. In a staff development about the next phase of *Read Across the Prairie*, Evelyn Edington, librarian at Seguin Elementary, suggested writing a book as the next stage. Thus the idea for The Legend of Ross the Reader was born. It took nine months, and now we are the proud parents of a bouncing baby book.....The Legend of Ross the Reader.

So how did a diverse group of librarians write a book? They formed a committee. We weren't sure it was possible to write a book by committee.

After months of meeting, we were successful. In the end, those involved in the process felt it was the best example of professional collaboration we had ever experienced. Eight librarians are the authors. We came up with the pseudonym of Reid Dailey as a name for all the authors rather than naming each one. It was a picture book so we needed an illustrator. What better person, we thought, than the originator of the *Read Across the Prairie* logo and our hero's namesake Ross Edgerley.

Ultimately, the collaboration for this book went beyond the eight librarians. It was really a GPISD community effort. Major work was done by all the librarians in the district. Many librarians contributed ideas, helped edit, gave opinions and advice. Others have spent hours on a committee for the book launching. And then there was everyone else involved in getting this book to publication. Numerous people across the district contributed to this book with their time and ideas. If I started naming them I would miss someone. Suffice it to say the GPISD family all had a part in the creation of this book.

We are having an official book-launching event in late January. All are invited. Please see the invitation elsewhere in the newsletter.

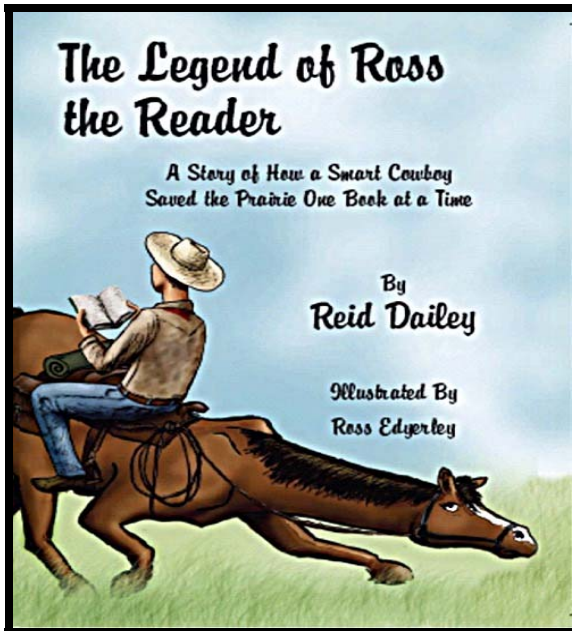
We are selling the book in Grand Prairie for \$5.00. We want the students to have an opportunity to be able to afford the book. Our entire focus is on Reading for Fun. GPISD librarians are proud of the publication of this picture book about our favorite hero Ross the Reader. To our knowledge this is a first for a school district to publish a book of this kind. Believe it or not, we are already writing the sequel to this book. When you do something new you learn from it. We learned it takes a long time to publish a book.

Why did we write this book? We want to have a positive impact on our students' lives. Anything that can foster the love of reading in a child is our ultimate goal and the purpose of *Read Across The Prairie*. We believe the more we can help kids understand that reading is fun, cool, and okay, the better. We hope The Legend of Ross the Reader is another tool in this process.



"Mane" Attractions at a Glance

"Mane" Attractions at a Glance



**Dr. Susan Simpson and the
GPISD Librarians Invite
You to Kick Up Your Spurs
And Join Us!**

The Legend of Ross The Reader!

Date: January 24, 2008

Time: Sundown 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Place: The OK Corral
Education Center Boardroom
2602 S. Beltline Road
Grand Prairie, TX 75052

This book was written as a collaborative effort by librarians from the Grand Prairie Independent School District and is a part of the *Read Across the Prairie* reading initiative. The core belief of this initiative is free choice reading every day just for the fun of it!

SPOTLIGHTING:

Readers' Advisory

By Martha Jordan



How often does this happen--a student stops you in the hall to thank you for giving them that great book to read? It actually did, one afternoon in December! Success! I can personally recount a few other spectacular success stories, along with a few spectacular failures as well.

This aspect of our job – officially labeled **RA, Reader’s Advisory** - has recently come to the forefront of professional library literature. Some writers have called it “the scariest part of a librarian’s job,” while others say “What many of us love most...is the opportunity to talk about books.” **I say it is the best reason to come to work every day!**

So how do we get through to a reluctant reader or even a non-reader? I find that a one-on-one conversation is my best chance at connecting with a student. That means walking around the library and talking with each student, especially the one who is in the back corner pretending to look at something.

Next, the good Readers’ Advisory Librarian must have some knowledge of most genres, formats, the newest best sellers, classics; the list goes on and on. How can we do this? Is it enough to read reviews, study catalogs, visit bookstores, and talk to our patrons? Actually, no! We must also read, read, and keep reading. And then we must analyze – what kind of readers will connect to this character? Or to this setting or storyline? Is there a non-fiction tie-in we could make? Or a graphic novel to mention?

Do we, as RA Librarians, only suggest the books we love? Hopefully not! Our favorites don’t really matter. What we must be able to do is to convey the **appeal factor** of a book. Is it the subject matter, the storyline, the imagery and writing style, or a character and situation that we think can draw in a reader? We must be able to make suggestions from authors, styles, and genres that we do not normally read, as well as from those that we do!

Just a few of the many resources available:

1. Professional articles -search Gale / Power Search – Readers’ Advisory
2. The **Read On** Readers’ Advisory series available from Libraries Unlimited
3. Professional titles available from ALA Publications
4. Online tools:
www.readersadvisoronline.com (subscription)
www.webrary.org/rs/flmenu.html
<http://www.jackflannel.org/ra.html>
www.complete-review.com
<http://flamingnet.com/index.cfm> (YA)
NoveList from EBSCO (subscription)
5. Standby titles – Fiction Catalog, What Do I Read Next?, the new Nonfiction Readers’ Advisory, Book Lust I & II by Nancy Pearl.
6. Even the reviews and blogs from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.

Building life-long readers – the most significant part of my job as I see it.

Readers’ Advisory – the most significant way to achieve this goal.

Books and kids – always changing.

The challenge – to keep relevant with both.

Saricks, Joyce, “Rethinking the readers’-advisory interview.(At Leisure).” Booklist, April 1, 2007.

Wyatt, Neal. “An RA big think: the concept of appeal is on the table, and readers advisory librarians are revolutionizing it.(LJ Series:Redefining RA).” Library Journal. July 1, 2007.

Library, Cafe or Train?

Kathy Brundrett-Austin Elementary

During the month of December the Austin Library was transformed into a Literacy Cafe! Our second grade students served some community and school district leaders a variety of reading genres. All of the students were invited on a special journey aboard The Polar Express. Our special conductor, Mrs. Mallery, punched their tickets as they boarded the train, in their pajamas, to hear the story read aloud. Reading activities filled the air as Austin had a

day of adventure. It was all about literacy and reading just for the fun of it!

One Book and a Bunch of Students

Christine Rayl – Bowie Elementary

What do 65+ fourth grade students have in common to talk about at Bowie Elementary? Survival. They are all coming into the library at one time to listen to the book, The Girl Who Owned a City by O.T. Nelson. Reminiscent of

the novel, Lord of the Flies, this novel is geared towards the upper elementary/middle school student while retaining those serious issues of teamwork, resourcefulness, honesty, and most importantly, responsibility. The main character is a girl and she is portrayed as being strong, responsible, and also introspective about the events that are taking place. It is fascinating to read her thoughts and see how important it is to her to remain true to what she knows is right while also problem solving the road blocks that come her way.

Some of the questions that were asked of the students before beginning the book were: What would you do if you were under the age of twelve and everyone older than twelve died of a plague of which there was no cure? What would you do? More importantly, how would you survive? While they could not answer those questions initially, as the story progresses they are hearing how one girl, with the strength of a vision, brings together a community of young children; all working together in order to survive.

James Bowie Elementary Library has received a \$1,000.00 grant from Dollar General Store! The grant was written and submitted by the librarian, Christine Rayl for the purchase of audio books on CD with matching text for students in grades 3 through 5. The Dollar General Store has wonderful grant opportunities for schools in their stores' vicinities. For more information, check out their Web site.

The British Are Coming!!

Lisa Howell- Crockett Elementary

Those were the words Paul Revere called as he embarked on his infamous midnight ride in the spring of 1775. Crockett 5th graders learned all about Paul Revere's ride as well as many other parts of the Revolutionary War. During a six weeklong research project, the 5th graders visited the library and computer lab digging for information on this pivotal event in our nation's history. Groups of two were assigned specific events that ultimately led up to our independence from Britain. The events included the Stamp Act, the Quartering Act, the Boston Tea Party, the Boston Massacre, the First and Second Continental Congress and of course the Declaration of Independence!

As a culminating event, the 5th grade "experts" created boards that contained information on

their event including a front-page news story as well as a biography of an influential individual from that time. The other students then visited the library - which was transformed into a Revolutionary War Museum and learned from our experts!

Looking Forward, Looking Back

Melissa Forsythe - Dickinson Elementary

January is a good time to look back and reflect on what has been accomplished in the year that just ended and to look forward to what is ahead in the coming year. At Dickinson, we strive to instill a love of reading in our students through our various Read Across the Prairie initiatives where we read just for the fun of it. In October, we had our annual Reading Restaurant. Fourth and fifth grade student workers served (read) delectable offerings from a menu of wonderful books to our kinder through third grade customers. In November, tents filled the library as it was transformed into Camp Read A Lot. Students loved spending time in the tents reading by flashlight in the darkened library. In December, during our Polar Express Celebration, students dressed in pajamas had their train boarding tickets punched as they entered the library. Everyone was treated to a reading of *The Polar Express* by actor Lou Diamond Phillips thanks to <http://www.storylineonline.net/>.

In the months to come we will continue to celebrate our love of reading by reading just for the fun of it during many exciting events. Some of these events include our Reading Rock A Thon, Love Your Library Day on Valentine's Day, our Reading Marathon, and an author visit. Dickinson Cowboys love to *Read Across the Prairie*!

Morning Smart Starts

Karen McPherson - Fannin Elementary

How do you like to start your day? Having one more cup of coffee or cocoa? Smacking the snooze button one more time? Loading the dishwasher? Students at Fannin are choosing to read.

Three mornings a week Fannin students can come to the library between 7:30 and 8:00. A different age group comes each day. Older students use the computer to locate books of interest, check books in and out, and/or

information for research topics. Younger students mostly browse the magazines, animal books or listen to a book read aloud.

The most exciting outcome from this is the book talk among the kids. Kindergartners to fifth graders are discussing books, recommending favorites to friends or looking over each other's shoulders at interesting pictures. While it can get pretty lively, there are the still, quiet times where students are totally absorbed in their books, oblivious to conversations, movements and the dreaded 8 o'clock bell.

As librarian, this morning time gives me the opportunity to visit with kids about their reading preferences, carry on our own book discussions without the distractions of an entire class. It also provides time to visit with those students who have yet to find a book or genre that interests them.

All too soon the bell rings and students gather belongings. As students begin to file out of the library, there is always that lone voice crying, "Wait, Miss, one more page!"

It's a Book Parade!

Michelle Casey - Garcia Elementary



The Garcia Toros enjoyed, for the second year in a row, an annual Children's Book Week Book Parade. It was a spectacular event with over thirty book floats entered in the race for first, second and third place. The lucky winners won gift certificates for books, to be spent at the next book fair of the year. Students dressed up as their favorite book characters and pushed the floats through the Toro halls. Ten special characters handed out bookmarks, pencils, and stickers to all the spectators.

The first place prize of \$25.00 worth of Scholastic Book Fair merchandise went to Mrs. Davis and her class. Their float was a response to Beetle McGrady Eats Bugs, by Megan McDonald. Brian Salazar, one of Mrs. Davis'

students wrote, "I liked to push the book float. I liked the story of Beetle McGrady Eats Bugs. I dressed like the teacher. We got first place!" Brian is a Toro in Garcia's first grade. The book parade was the highlighted event of a weeklong celebration honoring children's literature. The celebration consisted of storytellers provided by Target and The Grand Prairie Arts Council, a district-wide DEAR time, flashlight reading, and wide-range of dress up days. All the events that are held during Children's Book Week is just another way the Garcia Toros let everyone know that we have fun reading.

Winter Wonderland

Marcie Eckhout - Houston Elementary

The Houston Library has been turned into a winter wonderland with snowflakes, snowmen and twinkling lights. During the month of December all grade levels enjoyed winter themed story times along with a terrific book give away the last week of school. Each student in the school was able to choose a new book to take home over the holiday to add to their home library. This is now the third year in a row that the Houston Hornets have been able to enjoy the gift of a new book around the winter holiday season. Thank you to Becky Culley, our art teacher, for finding the resources for these free, new books. It is nice to have a book of your very own to cuddle up with over the holiday break.

Books for Everyone

Monica Dubiski - LBJ

Hello from the LBJ Elementary Texans. We've been indulging in some wonderful learning experiences in our library. One of the fun activities for students has been exploring the different areas on the Gale Database and navigating individually for quality learning experiences. We had a wonderful Scholastic Book Fair a few of weeks ago. It was the first one of the year and the enthusiasm of students was invigorating. We also made our annual trek to the Scholastic Warehouse to purchase two books for every LBJ student as gifts for Christmas. A special thank you goes out to our principal, Ms. Tonia Walker for providing this opportunity. Together with the Literacy Strategist, Beverly Mayes, and the Math and Science Facilitator, Laura Foreman, we chose

one fiction and one nonfiction book for all students.

In November we had the treat of a current university library student, Emily Zwierlein, visit with Mrs. Winn's kindergarten class in the library. She prepared a hands on craft project and reading program centered around the celebration of Thanksgiving.

Coin Drive!

By A.J. Tickell-Marshall Elementary

This busy time of year often brings about warm feelings of family, food and gifts. Our thoughts are occupied with things like shopping, wrapping, decorating and making travel arrangements. For many, this is a time of reflection, prayer and giving.

The Marshall Mustangs have this giving spirit and it started back at the end of October with our first school wide Coin Drive. The purpose of the drive was to raise funds to purchase books for students in our district that are currently living in shelters. Grade levels competed the week of the book fair by donating their book purchase change or bringing money from home. They found money in all kinds of creative places from the floor of the car; the clothes dryer, couch cushions and some even gave from their own piggy banks. After all this scrambling for coins and dollars the fourth graders wiped out the competition with \$77.30! School wide the Mustangs raised \$241.89 that will be spent at the Scholastic Warehouse sale, donated to Brighter Tomorrows and distributed to students in need by their staff.

One Marshall student said, "it feels good to know that I helped another kid and maybe we like the same books." Through this simple coin drive, roughly 50 students will be receiving books during this holiday season. The spirit of giving is what the Marshall Mustangs are all about. We hope you all have a safe, restful and joyful holiday!

Who is Christkindl and La Befana?... and What's a Dreidle?

Linda Dragg -Moore Elementary

The third grade classes at Moore took a whirlwind trip around the world during the

month of December via research to study holiday customs. All of the classes visited the library several times to learn about Christmas and Hanukkah traditions in Italy, Germany, and Israel. The students used Venn diagrams to compare and contrast Christmas traditions in Germany with those in the United States. Some students were surprised to learn that children in Germany receive gifts twice, once from St. Nicholas on December 6th and again from Christkindl on Christmas Eve! The Legend of La Befana, the old witch lady who was too busy sweeping to help the Wisemen search for the Christ child, came to life as the students researched Christmas traditions in Italy. Then the students created flip-fact books that described important symbols of Hanukkah such as the dreidel, a four-sided top that is used to play a fun game during this holiday. It was very interesting to learn how holidays are celebrated in other countries!

Palominos Everywhere!

Denise Wallace-Powell Elementary

Palomino students are spending A LOT of time in the library as we continue to promote the library as an open and educational space on our campus. Having just celebrated Children's Book Week in November and gearing up for our author visit by Susan Stevens Crummel, December 10th, students are excited about "goings-on in the library." To help promote our author visit I created a PowerPoint exposing "Jackalope" on the loose in our school (<http://powell.gpisd.org/library/index2.htm>). I also had the opportunity to participate in the morning announcements during Children's Book Week and got to see my principal in a whole new light behind closed doors ☺. 1st graders have started coming to the library as part of their centers to take AR tests for the first time ever, and I inducted my 1st parent volunteer to cover the library one morning in my absence. She now has a new appreciation for library management! Family Checkout night was another 1st this past month, and was a great success. Over 25 families came and checked out unlimited numbers



of books to take home over the Thanksgiving Holiday. Lastly, the month would not have been complete without our annual book character parade, which I led, while dressed as "Prudence Proovit" who demands proof that fairy tales

really exist! Moving into the new-year, I will be implementing "Morning Reads FOR THE FUN OF IT" from 7:45–8:00 where I'll read aloud picture books in the library before classes start.

Of course, all the planning, gathering, and organizing behind the scenes is what makes all of these educational events effective as I continue to work alongside our great staff. Happy Holidays everyone!

The Value of a Dime

Evelyn Edington - Seguin Elementary

The dime, smallest of the U. S. coins, was first issued in 1796 and has little value by today's standards. However, in 1860 with the publication of "dime novels" the word dime carried a whole new meaning throughout the United States. These exciting stories became so popular they were seen in saddlebags and in back pockets from coast to coast. Thousands of these novels were published between 1860 and 1915.

Dimers, as they were called, are the center of a current Bluebonnet book, *The Misadventures of Maude March*. Maude and her sister Sallie are orphaned sisters on the run who innocently become involved in a bank robbery and murder. The younger sister, Sallie, helps the girls out with the information she gets from reading her dimers. You can find out more about this book and others by Audrey Coulombis at <http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/maudemarch/>. Seguin's Fifth Grade Lunch Bunch is enjoying reading about the dangerous trail these two young girls are riding.

The popularity of dimers dwindled as Americans turned to magazines for their pleasure reading. Dimers are now valuable collector items and The Library of Congress has a collection of nearly 40,000 dime novels. Here is a site for more information about dime novels: <http://www.bookrags.com/history/dime-novels-sipc-01/>.

Stallions Reading and Writing

Lisa Miller-Whitt Elementary

During our final weeks before the holidays, the Stallions were busy with numerous literature activities. Mrs. Waller and Mrs. McGlothlin had their second grade comparing and contrasting different versions of *The Night Before Christmas*. The classes then put on their "author

hats" and wrote their own new versions of the story! Mrs. Morton's fifth graders practiced using their Double Bubble maps to analyze different versions of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. Mrs. Jones-Murphy's third graders enjoyed a book club reading of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. (Of course Mrs. J-M and Mrs. Miller like that story, too!) The entire school participated in our annual *Polar Express Day*. Various activities associated with the book and the 2004 movie were completed by each of the grade levels.

January sees the Stallions diving into the Six Hours for Six Flags reading contest and diligently trying to complete the Bluebonnet nominees in preparation for the voting.

"Yum-O!"

Beverly Harkness - Adams M. S.

What's for breakfast? What's for lunch? What's for dinner? If you don't know the answer to those questions all you have to do is turn the channel over to the Food Network that offers food related programming 24/7. It has been reported that the Food Network is viewed in over 85 million households worldwide. The network has something for everyone that will enlighten, entertain, and educate people of all ages. Many people find themselves drawn by the charismatic hosts like Paula Deen or Emeril Lagasse, or it may be the multitude of competitions like Throwdown with Bobby Flay, or The Iron Chef.



You may be asking yourself what this has to do with the library? Well, students at Adams Middle School are also tuning in frequently to see what celebrity chefs have on the menu for the day or to see what creation Duff Goldman on the *Ace of Cakes* has dreamed up.

This food craze seems to have had a strong influence on the cookbook collection at AMS. Students began requesting cookbooks by some of their favorite celebrity chefs and Mrs. Harkness has worked to fill the bill. A new arrival of cookbooks by Rachel Ray, Paula Deen, and Emeril Lagasse has been popular among many future chefs, as well as the culinary arts books for the future pastry chefs. Students have found plenty of delicious treats to prepare. "Yum-O!" recipes just in time for the new year!

Christmas in the Library: You Win Some, You Lose Some

Katie Sessler - Jackson M. S.

It doesn't matter what month it is: when new books arrive, it's Christmas in the library. We unpack the thousands of dollars' worth of new books, all shiny and new. As soon as the books are processed, I check out a stack of "I can't wait to read these" books. Then I look at others and wonder why in the world I ordered it.

Just how does a librarian choose which books are ordered? There are many ways to choose books—read reviews in library journals, ask for student and staff recommendations, find titles to support the curriculum, and browse through the glossy publisher catalogs. Is this successful? Sometimes...

Each month I read reviews in BOOKLIST, SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL and LIBRARY MEDIA CONNECTION. Librarians, teachers and professional reviewers give a summary of the book and recommend a grade level or reading level. Librarians can't judge books just by reading levels. We need to take into account maturity levels as well. Case in point: [A Bad Boy Can Be Good For a Girl](#) has an AR reading level of 4.3; Beverly Cleary's book [Beezus and Ramona](#) has a higher AR reading level at 4.8. Just because a student CAN read a book, doesn't mean he should. [A Bad Boy](#) is a great book for high school but inappropriate for fourth graders. [Beezus and Ramona](#) is cute for elementary school but would bore older readers.

Sometimes the book review makes the book sound wonderful, then the book arrives and it's not at all what I expected. Sometimes I will read a book and not like it very much and students will rave about it—and vice-versa. I am reminded that it's important to go outside my comfort zone. I can't order only what I want to read. So I need to rely on the opinions of others who love a particular genre.

It can be a tricky process, but I've found that the best way to discover those great books is to read, read, read and then talk, talk, talk.

Peer to Peer

Barbara McCaffrey - Lee M. S.

At Lee M. S., we are working to instill a love of books and reading in our students. Accordingly,

we want the library to be a joyful reading environment. A teacher recently commented to me, "You work in the happiest place on earth." That statement sums up what we want library to be for our students – an inviting, comfortable place where people share their enthusiasm for books, reading, and the world of ideas.

Students can be very persuasive with their peers. They love to hear what other students find controversial, or packed with action, or thought provoking, or enticing in some way. Peers can help each other find that "perfect" book.

Some ways we have attempted to facilitate this include student book talks, creating "Reader's Choice" cards as advertisements for titles, using a "Best Books Box" (books chosen by students), and other book displays to generate interest and conversation about books. We have used student announcement plugs concerning books, designed bookmarks to promote particular titles, and placed book reviews by students on the desktops of library computers.

A few more incentives one may employ include the tried and true book club as well as newer ideas such as a "Reader's Blog" where students and teachers contribute written opinions of books for their classmates and colleagues. Another idea is to put a book recommendation label in the front of a book suggested by a student for others with the submitting student's name and the date submitted displayed. Rotation stations are where small groups of students examine/browse through five or six books at seven or eight tables divided by genre; each group then chooses the one book they found the most appealing and describes it to the class. Whatever the method, the end result should be that students are enjoying reading and taking pride in sharing books with peers.

Riding Reading and Researching at Truman

Linda Johnson - Truman M. S.

The *Read Across the Prairie* trail ride begun earlier this year continues at Truman; we have had a few new riders join including our new vice-principal, Ms. Wallace, who recently signed on and picked up her gear. Students are fulfilling the pledges to read that they made earlier this year by coming in record numbers to the library before school in the mornings for free reading; the periodicals are really getting a workout!

Research seemed to focus on concern for our planet and its inhabitants. Mr. Fischer's 7th grade science classes researched endangered species for a report or a poster. The students chose an endangered animal they found interesting, and using both print and Internet materials gathered information about that animal. The assignment was intended to parallel the study of the environment with that of ecology. Through their research, students learned which animals are becoming extinct and why. They also learned what steps needed to take place to remove the animal from the endangered list.

On a cross-curricular note, Ms. Summers' art classes came to the library to research biomes. Accessing both print and online resources to learn everything possible about the various biomes, students researched climate, geography, vegetation and wildlife to get the "feel" for the biome they had chosen. Once the research was complete, the students painted scenes to represent the different biomes. Blank ceiling tiles were then taken from Ms. Slocum's 7th grade

science classroom, wrapped in the artwork, and returned to the ceiling; the result was fantastic. Talk about a creative collaboration!

HEY MISS!!!

What good books do you have?????

Carmen Koshnoodi – GPHS

Oh, what a lovely refrain that is and very dear to our ears because that opens up many opportunities to recommend, suggest and sometimes cajole even the most particular and reluctant of our patrons here at GPHS--teens and otherwise.... Our natural response --What interests or hobbies do you have? If you are a romantic or like **romance** novels try: Nicholas Sparks, Nicholas Evans, Meg Cabot or even Sarah Dessen. If you prefer **science fiction** or **fantasy** how about Margaret Weis, Terry Brooks or maybe the current favorite Stephanie Meyer. And so on goes our conversation....Our permanent displays of graphic novels, romance novels, mystery and fantasy novels and our chicken soup area help the students make their selections. Actually 'tis the season for cookbooks and craft books which teachers as well as students love to check out. And as they leave to hear the lovely refrain once again **THANKS MISS** ---- our job here is done just for today at least.....

Recommendations for pleasure reading:

The Daring Book for Girls by Andrea Buchanan
The Darkest Evening of the Year by Dean Koontz

I am America (and so can you!) by Stephen Colbert

The Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett

GPHS library staff hopes everyone had a wonderful and safe holiday!!!

Carmen Koshnoodi - Kathy High -Mary Bridges

Law and Order

Belinda Stanley– SGP9

The Defendant: Tom Robinson

The Defending Lawyer: Atticus Finch

The Verdict: Guilty!

The Appeals Process: Never happened! Or DID IT?

What would have happened if Tom Robinson, of To Kill a Mockingbird fame, had lived long enough to appeal the guilty verdict handed down by the juror “not of his peers”? Would another jury hand down the same verdict? Would the verdict have been overturned? Would witnesses step forward to aide Mr. Robinson? Would Atticus Finch’s powerful words turn the tide?

After reading To Kill a Mockingbird, Ms. Pedersen’s English classes at SGP9 held mock Appeals Court Trials for Tom Robinson. Students researched the era, the people, and the mood of the country at the time of the novel. Each student took on the persona of a character from To Kill a Mockingbird or a new character added for the purpose of the trial. The library was transformed into a courtroom, with a judge’s bench, a jury box, defendant and prosecutor tables, and witness stand. The courtroom audience overflowed into the “balcony,” and the crowd was vocal and excited as the anticipation grew. Would Tom Robinson go free? Would justice be served?

The “Trial of the Century” at Boze SLC

Leslie Briles-Boze

Based on the acclaimed yet tragic novel, An American Tragedy, the trial of the century was conducted at Boze SLC. Boze students tried a young man, Clyde Griffith, for the murder of

Roberta Alden, a loving, caring young woman who made the mistake of falling for Clyde, and becoming pregnant with his illegitimate child. All of the court: judge, prosecuting attorneys, defense attorneys, witnesses, coroner, detective, reporter, jury, and defendant were students in Ms. Leinwand's fourth period class.

After a long and grueling investigation into Clyde's past and present lifestyles, the police uncovered that Clyde was suspected of murder in New York and Kansas. There was enough evidence to arrest Clyde. The D.A. at Boze SLC, Samantha Leinwand, decided to bring Clyde to justice. With the help of her students, the trial was held. After a long trial, the students had their verdict!

To arrive at verdict, students had to read and research. All students involved were enthusiastic for they knew all their research and their reading would help get a conviction or an acquittal. It was a great educational experience and it was fun!

RESEARCH ROUND-UP

Teaching students to be successful researchers and writers is always a challenge. Couple those challenges with plagiarism and copyright issues and you have got quite a handful. The following sites have been chosen by a handful of district librarians to help teachers and students successfully navigate the puzzling and often confusing world of copyright, plagiarism and citing sources.

"Carol Simpson"

<http://www.carolsimpson.com/>

The above site includes a PowerPoint on the ethics of copyright and plagiarism. It also includes a one page guideline for students and a short article on how much material a student can use in a school presentation/assignment. This website is helpful to students and teachers alike.

"Copyright Kids"

<http://www.copyrightkids.org/>

Copyright Kids is a teacher and student friendly website that discusses the important issues regarding copyright law. Sections within the website include the definition of copyright, frequently asked questions about the law and a copyright quiz. A unique section called "The Yearbook Club" allows users to interact with fictional characters on a yearbook committee. They are faced with challenges related to

copyright law and production of the yearbook. This entire site is great for use with students, and even adults learning about copyright law.

"Exploring Plagiarism, Copyright and Paraphrasing"

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_vie_w.asp?id=1062

Read, Write, Think produces this extremely helpful website that is intended for use by

¹⁰educators, especially those in the library science field. Teaching young individuals the importance of copyright law and the consequences of plagiarism is very important and this article details a lesson plan for use with young learners. The lesson plan includes three specific parts. These parts are plagiarism, copyright and fair use, as well as the importance of proper paraphrasing. The lesson plan also includes the student objectives, an instructional plan and detailed information for each session. This is a helpful resource for any individual responsible for teaching these tricky topics!

"Gale Database, Kids Info Bits"

<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/KidsInfoBits?locID=tlc109103930&helppg=citeasource.htm&ste=59>

The above site can be accessed through KidsInfoBits which is part of our districts Gale Databases. This is a short webpage which guides students through the correct process of how to cite sources used in a school assignment. This site also includes a worksheet that can be printed and used by the student during a research project.

"Plagiarism.org"

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

This is an excellent site that would benefit educators and students in understanding the full meaning of plagiarism. It includes important skills that will equip you in organizing a research project from all aspects. Information included in this site are:

- 1) Definition of plagiarism and other research terms.
- 2) Tips on how to avoid plagiarism and at the same time have original ideas when producing writing assignments.
- 3) Answers to questions about copyright laws, fair use and public domain.
- 4) Printable handouts for students.

“Plagiarism Court”

<http://www.fairfield.edu/documents/Library/plagiarismcourt.swf>

This is a presentation with graphics and music that leads teachers and students through a short course on plagiarism and copyright. Teachers and/or students have the ability to view the entire presentation or just certain chapters of the presentation. At the end of this presentation there is a quiz to see how much the viewer has learned about copyright and plagiarism.

“Stanford University Libraries”

<http://fairuse.stanford.edu/index.html>

This site would be more useful for junior high and high school. It contains a substantial amount of information that would equip any student in the process of writing a research paper, designing a multimedia project or other presentations that would like guidelines in the area of plagiarism, copyright laws and to cite correctly all information. It also gives a brief description of the many courtcases in which copyright or plagiarism law have been broken which is a valuable tool for the unbelievers.

“Vaughan Memorial Library”

<http://library.acadiau.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/>

This is an excellent tutorial on plagiarism that I believe would be appropriate for 4th grade and up. It gives examples of what is plagiarism and what is not. Also examples are given of what needs to be cited and what does not, plus a variety of citation styles. It makes students aware of some common misconceptions in all aspects of writing a research paper. At the end, it gives you an option to view 3 other tutorials that will better equip you in writing your research paper.

“What is Plagiarism? (And why you should care)”

<http://www.sdst.org/shs/library/powerpoint/plagiarism.ppt>

This URL links the user directly to a power point presentation that defines plagiarism in simple terms; easily understandable by the older elementary student. The power point then continues with statistics of students that actually have plagiarized in the past and possible excuses stated for the plagiarism. The excuses included too much to do or careless paraphrasing. It also includes examples of famous historians that lost great opportunities due to acts of plagiarism. This site is excellent for teachers and librarians to use while teaching students about the pitfalls of plagiarism.

ROSS THE READER RECOMMENDS

YOU ARE SPECIAL by Max Lucado

Recommended Audience: Upper Elementary

This is one of my all time favorite books. Punchinello, the main character in this story, feels bad about himself because of the way the other Wemmicks treat him, and it isn't until he pays a visit to Eli, the woodcarver, that he starts to feel better about himself. The book teaches, very simply, that everyone is special in the eyes of their Creator. It also points out that you shouldn't let what other people say about you, or do to you, affect the way you feel about yourself. This can be a wonderful and powerful book for upper elementary students.

Reviewer: Michael Broussard @ Bush Elementary

THE SAINT OF DRAGONS by Jason Hightman (Recommended for grades 6 – 9)

If you're looking for a book portraying dragons as mighty and pure of heart, you're looking in the wrong place. According to Hightman there are dragons all around us. They are never easy to spot, but they are there, and they are not our friends. They have evolved and can be found in politics and in all sorts of organized crime. Where there is pain and suffering, dragons are at the heart of it.

We have been led to believe that dragons are the stuff of myth and fantasy, and that's what Simon St. James, a lonely orphaned schoolboy at the Lighthouse School for Boys has always believed, but he is in for a rude awakening.

Simon is the grandson of the legendary dragon slayer, St. George. His father, Aldric St. George is the last knight in an ancient order of dragon slayers whose quest is to slay the last dragons thereby ridding the world of their hateful influence.

Simon, abandoned by his father eleven years ago, has no idea that he has “dragon hunter” blood or that the frightening stranger who shows up at his boarding school is his father, Aldric St. George, a dragon slayer. With his father, Simon becomes caught up in a wild and dangerous adventure; he must sharpen his fighting skills and learn to trust in his own instincts. Unlike his father, Simon simply will not believe all dragons are purely evil; there has to be good in at least one of them. Is it possible that a boy with a pure

heart and a dragon willing to “bend the rules” might change the destiny of the world?

Reviewed by: Linda Johnson @Truman

EVERYTHING BAD IS GOOD FOR YOU

by Steven Johnson

This non-fiction book by the social critic Steven Johnson contends that multidimensional TV shows, video games and other media give the mind a better workout than naysayers may believe. He uses the TV show *The Sopranos* as an example of how many many characters and many intersecting plotlines and hypercomplex story lines that stretch over multiple seasons make the viewer really have to focus in and remember what is happening. He claims that reality shows like *The Apprentice* offer “psychological intimacy” and demonstrate social survival techniques. He also makes the point that as technology advances, more of it becomes participatory; video games force you to look at the variables, assess the information and make a decision. And he claims that is a huge part of what it means to be smart. His advice for parents is that they should provide a balanced media diet: if a child spends too many hours a day on video games or watching TV they need to step in and be proactive and have them read a book or go out and play or exercise. This book presents what is happening in our society now with the over abundance of technology that our children are faced with and that some of it is useful and necessary as they continue to grow and become college age and out there looking for the jobs of the future; but, ultimately it is the parents that need to be more engaged with their children.

Reviewer: Carmen Koshnoodi GPHS Librarian

THE E-MAIL MURDERS by Paul Zindel

Recommended Audience: Middle School



Not long ago, I read a book called The E-mail Murders, and it was very amusing! The author, Paul Zindel, wrote an entire series of mystery books; this is one of them. This series is about two kids, Peter Christopher, (P.C.) Mackenze Riggs. In this series they get themselves into a lot of trouble, and usually get out, but will their luck run out in The E-mail Murders? A trip to a place like Monaco would seem exciting, with beaches, hotels, stores, and restaurants, but there is a serial killer on the

loose. That’s exactly what P.C. and Mackenze had to deal with, and the worst part was, the killer was in their hotel! These detectives were eager to find out for themselves who the real criminal was, but sadly, Mackenze’s father told them to not get involved in the investigation. If they wanted to find the criminal they would have had to disobey Mackenze’s father and solve the crimes. Do they, or don’t they? I personally would recommend this book to any mystery lover, because this book can grab anyone!

Reviewer: Ana P., 6th Grade, Mrs. White's ELA @ Lee M. S

PARANOID PARK by Blake Nelson

Recommended Audience: Middle School/High School

I have recently read Paranoid Park, a fiction book by Blake Nelson, and I must admit it was awesome! The title refers to Outlaw Park, a place where skateboarders go to hang out and have fun. The main character struggled at home with his parents, who were on the verge of getting a divorce, and he had issues as well at school with girls and their problems. That all seemed quite too much for him, but then a fatal and gruesome accident happened in Paranoid Park; he was faced with the consequences he’d live with and the choices he’d made. I think this book looks at reality in a very distinctive way, and 8th graders should definitely read it. This book is worthwhile, and if I loved it, so will you!

Reviewer: Catherine A., 8th grade, Mrs. White's ELA @ Lee M. S.

TEEN IDOL by Meg Cabot

Recommended Audience: Middle School/High School

I know some people who finish their homework and they don’t know what to do, or they have a book report and don’t know which book to get. I was one of those people until I read *Teen Idol*. It’s a teen fiction story about a girl named Jenny, whom everyone likes as a friend. She goes to a wild high school in her hometown. With her best friends, Scott and Trina, life is manageable, but when she has to guide star Luke Striker around her school without anyone noticing, things get difficult. Will she fall for Luke like the rest of the girls? Can she keep everyone from knowing Luke’s true identity? Can she alone change the school? Read this book and find out! This book is about friendship, comedy, and some love!

This is a book that everyone will enjoy reading again and again!

Reviewer: Jocelyn P., 8th gr., Mrs. White’s ELA @ Lee M. S.