

**South Carolina Young Adult Book Award Nominees
2002 - 2003**

<u>145th Street: Stories</u>	<u>A Dance for Three</u>	<u>Hope Was Here</u>	<u>Players</u>
<u>Battle Dress</u>	<u>Dancing with an Alien</u>	<u>The Last Book in the Universe</u>	<u>Send One Angel Down</u>
<u>The Body of Christopher Creed</u>	<u>Dreamland</u>	<u>Locked Inside</u>	<u>Stargirl</u>
<u>Crooked</u>	<u>Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet out of Idaho</u>	<u>Meely LaBauve: A Novel</u>	<u>True Believer</u>
<u>Cut</u>	<u>The Heart Calls Home</u>	<u>Night Hoops</u>	<u>Turnabout</u>

145th Street: Stories
Walter Dean Myers
Delacourte Press, 2000
151 pages

SUMMARY

Told in ten short stories, this book gives readers the opportunity to delve into the world of Harlem's 145th Street and meet the many varied and wonderful residents from Big Joe, who wants a bang-up funeral while he's still around to enjoy it; the oldest resident; the cop on the beat; fine Peaches and her girl, Squeezie; Monkeyman; and Benny, a fighter on the way to a knockout.

RELATED READINGS

House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros
My Man Blue: Poems by Nikki Grimes and Jerome Lagarrigue
Rainbow Jordan by Alice Childress
Buppies, B-boys, Baps, and Bohos by Nelson George
Straight Outta Compton by Richard Cortez Cruz

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Psychology
Personal Development
Guidance-Counseling
Sociology
Multiculturalism
Language Arts

WEBSITES

[Learning About Walter Dean Myers](#)
[Scholastic's Authors on Line Walter Dean's Biography](#)
[Review](#)

BOOKTALK

Delve into the life of Harlem's 145th Street where something funny happens and then something bad. "It's almost as if the block is reminding itself that life is hard, and you have to take it seriously." *145th Street* is an interconnected book of short stories about a community filled with violence, drive-bys and gang war, yet the characters find love and hope through survival. In this 'hood teens will become acquainted with the mysterious 12-year-old Angela, whose sad dreams

seem to predict the future for an unlucky few, and the fast-talking Jamie Farrell, a smooth basketball player who's praying that his streak of good luck doesn't end before he can ask out Celia Evora, "the finest chick in the school." Then there is the story, "Monkey-man" about a quiet, studious youth's brave stand against a gang. They will chuckle at the affable Big Joe, who wants to enjoy his funeral party while he's still alive, yet feel their hearts tighten when Big Time Henson senses his drug addiction drawing him closer and closer to an early grave. Myers changes the point of view from teen to adult and back again as he successfully builds a bridge of understanding between adolescents and adults. *145th Street* is a worthy and recommended read that beautifully illustrates the good that can come out of a community that stands together. Newbery Honor-winning Myers has written more than 50 books, including *Monster* and *Fallen Angels*. This latest book proves Myers standing as a classic and award-winning young adult book author.

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prepared by Mary Bailey

Battle Dress
Amy Efaw
HarperCollins, 2000
291 pages

SUMMARY

Andrea Davis (Andi) has accepted an appointment to attend West Point, the United States Military Academy and is going through "Beast", the six week long new cadet training program. Andi narrates the story as she undergoes the taunts, the rigid physical training, the education, and the myriad of other experiences to which she and the other new cadets are exposed. Adding to the interest is the fact that Andi is one of two females in her platoon.

RELATED READINGS

Lords of Discipline by Pat Conroy

The Return of Philo T. McGriffin by David Poyer

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Military Education

Self Confidence

Interpersonal Relations

WEBSITES

[West Point](#)

[Amy Efaw](#)

[Review](#)

BOOKTALK

This is Amy Efaw's first book and it is based on her experiences as a cadet at West Point. She provides the reader with an inside look at not only the life of a cadet but also an insight into the experiences particular to a woman cadet. The "Beast" is the special time of training of new cadets, when they are introduced the realities of the plebe (freshman) year and of life in a military academy. We meet Andrea Davis (Andi) at the beginning of Beast as she discovers that there is only one other female in her platoon. She knows the reputation of the United States Military Academy as having tough and rigorous training to prepare individuals for a military career, or at the least to be contributing members of society. However, according to Andi, West Point can't be any worse than her life at home with a dysfunctional family. As the days progress

the cadets are insulted, yelled at, and subjected to physical and mental abuse. Andi is subjected to the still present resentment of women in the military. Andi also finds that the real focus of cadet training is not just to tear down the individual but to build a team that will trust, defend, and support each other no matter what. This book is frustrating, a little frightening, and satisfying. You will find yourself pulling for Andi and her platoon mates to be successful as they progress through the toughest six weeks of their lives. To find out whether Andi and her platoon mates succeed please read *Battle Dress*.

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prepared by Sheila Reynolds

Body of Christopher Creed

Carol Plum-Ucci

Harcourt, 2000

248 pages

SUMMARY

When a classmate disappears, Torey Adams begins to question the circumstances and chain of events surrounding the disappearance. With his friend Ali, who is trying to clear her boyfriend's name, they attempt to uncover the truth.

RELATED READINGS

Jumping the Nail by Eve Bunting

They Never Came Home by Lois Duncan

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Missing Persons

Emotional Problems

High Schools

WEBSITES

[Carol Plum-Ucci](#)

[Peer Pressure](#)

[Teen Runaways](#)

[Review](#)

BOOKTALK

When Christopher Creed, one of the school oddball-outcasts, leaves a suicide note and disappears, Torey Adams is surprised. When no body is found, Torey begins to be more than suspicious. Did Christopher commit suicide or not? Torey lived next to the Creeds, and is affected greatly by the other boy's disappearance. He joins with "bad girl" Ali to find out what happened. Ali is involved with a young man who is considered a suspect in the disappearance or murder, and with Torey she works to clear her boyfriend and to discover what happened to Christopher. While looking for Christopher's body, Torey stumbles upon an earlier suicide mystery, and may even lose his sanity. First-time novelist Carol Plum-Ucci has also been nominated for an Edgar Allan Poe award, and her suspense filled novel may be made into a motion picture.

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Prepared by Nancy Self

Crooked
Laura McNeal
Alfred A. Knopf 1999
346 pages

SUMMARY

Clara Wilson and Amos MacKenzie are secretly falling for each other, but they will have to deal with the infamous Tripp brothers.

RELATED READINGS

Breaking Rank by Kristen Randle

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Dating

Parent-child Relationships

Youth Offenders

WEBSITES

[Laura McNeal](#)

BOOKTALK

Clara Wilson has always hated her crooked nose. Amos MacKenzie, the milkman's son, has become famous after his accident. Both high school students are secretly falling for each other. But the infamous Tripp brothers, Charles and Eddie, have also become aware of Clara and Amos and will stop at nothing to terrorize them.

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Prepared by Derryll Satterwhite

Cut
Patricia McCormick
Scholastic, 2000
176 pages

SUMMARY

Fifteen-year-old Callie is hospitalized at Sea Pines, or "Sick Minds", with other girls suffering from a variety of behavioral disorders – anorexia, bulimia, substance abuse and, in Callie's case, self mutilation. Depressed and overwhelmed by a home life that includes a sickly younger brother, an overanxious mother, and an absent father, Callie turns to cutting. The physical pain she inflicts upon herself by cutting is an escape from her emotional pain. Known as "S.T." for "Silent Treatment" because of her refusal to talk, at first Callie's daily therapy sessions fail to pull her out of her silent shell, but it's not until she finds the courage to start talking to her therapist and the other girls in the hospital that she truly finds the release she needs to stop the hurting and begin the healing.

RELATED READINGS

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Stick Figure: A Diary of My Former Self by Lori Gottlieb

Girl, Interrupted by Susanna Kaysen

Skin Game by Caroline Kettlewell

The Luckiest Girl in the World by Steven Levenkron

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Psychology

Guidance – Counseling

Self Esteem
Peer Pressure

WEBSITES

[Self Injury & Related Issues](#)

[Review](#)

[Patricia McCormick](#)

BOOKTALK

There you sit with your notebook open, pen tapping on a blank page while I'm supposed to explain something I can't even explain to myself. Cutting. Why does the feel of a sharp edge slicing through my skin, blood bubbling up to the surface, give me such a rush of pleasure and release from pain? You look at me expectantly, waiting for words to come spilling out of my mouth about why my parents feel compelled to keep me here in this loony bin - oh, sorry, this "residential treatment facility" where you work. Some job, huh? You sitting there listening to psychos, or "guests" as you and the nurses so politely refer to us, whine about their "issues" with eating, drinking, drugging, anger and the like. Of course, a cutter like me is probably a novelty for you. Bet you'd like to pick my brain and get me to open up about my poor brother Sam who's so sick with asthma he can't even attend regular school, or my mom who frets and worries 24/7 about him, or my dad who, well, with all the craziness around the house has turned staying scarce into an art form. Yeah, if I bothered to talk at all you'd have enough notes to fill up that empty notebook of yours and then some. But instead, I'd rather count the number of red stripes in the wallpaper on the wall behind you. Or guess what shape the shadow from the tree outside your window is casting on the floor. Or figure out a way to discreetly take that paper clip lying so innocently on the floor by your feet with me so I can use it later to cut. Anything but talk to you. You see, if I talk to you, I'll have to deal with why all this started.

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Prepared by Jennifer Garrett

A Dance for Three
Louise Plummer
Random House 2000
230 pages

SUMMARY

Hannah is fifteen years old and pregnant. She has no parental support. Instead her agoraphobic mother is totally dependent on her since her father's sudden death two years earlier. Hannah feels sure Milo will marry her and they will live happily ever after with his family. Her disillusionment over Milo's violent reaction to her pregnancy is more than she can handle. She ends up in the psychiatric ward of the hospital before she can sort through her feelings about Milo, the pregnancy, her father's death and her mother.

RELATED READINGS

Dear Nobody by Berlie Doherty

Detour for Emily by Marilyn Reynolds

Someone Like You by Sarah Dessen

Coping With An Unplanned Pregnancy by Carolyn Simpson

Coping With Teen Parenting by Kay Beyer

Kids Having Kids: Talking About Teen Pregnancy by Janet Bodie

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Teen Issues
Family Life
Adoption
Psychology
Agoraphobia

WEBSITES

[Review](#)

[Adoption](#)

[Teen Pregnancy](#)

BOOKTALK

Hannah is fifteen and in love with handsome, wealthy Milo. When she becomes pregnant she is sure Milo will marry her and they will live happily ever after. She will be able to escape her mother's straggling dependence on her. Hannah is totally unprepared for Milo's reaction to the news. She is faced with a reality about her relationship with Milo and her unborn child that she doesn't want to accept.

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Prepared by Judy Hall

Dancing With An Alien

Mary Logue

HarperCollins 2000

134 pages

SUMMARY

Branko has come to Earth from another planet to find a wife. Here he meets Tonia and falls in love with her.

RELATED READINGS

Dreamweaver by Louise Lawrence

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Astronomy
Space Travel
Dating
Parent-child relationships

WEBSITES

[Mary Logue](#)

[Review](#)

BOOKTALK

Branko has come to Earth from another planet to find a wife. Here he meets Tonia and falls in love with her. Will Tonia fall so in love with Branko that she is willing to leave Earth and go to a strange planet to live? Will Branko tell Tonia the whole truth about life on his planet?

Read *Dancing With An Alien* by Mary Logue.

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Prepared by Derryll Satterwhite

Dreamland

Sarah Dessen

Viking, 2000
280 pages

SUMMARY

When her “perfect” older sister, Cass, runs away from home rather than begin her freshman year at Yale, sixteen-year-old Caitlin is left reeling. She begins a serious relationship with Rogerson, a boy whom she meets that at first seems to fill the void that Cass has left. When Rogerson begins to hit her, Caitlin walks around in a dream-like state, smoking pot, hiding her bruises, and rationalizing his abusive behavior. Ashamed to tell anyone, she becomes more and more isolated from caring family and friends, until the abuse is discovered. Her parents put her in a rehabilitation clinic, where she begins to recover her self-esteem.

RELATED READINGS

Leslie’s Journal by Allan Stratton

Past Forgiving by Gloria Miklowitz

Everything You Need to Know about Relationship Violence by Katherine White

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Dating Violence and Abusive Relationships

Self Esteem

Runaways

Psychology

Personal Growth and Development

Family Life

WEBSITES

[Sarah Dessen](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Abusive Relationships](#)

BOOKTALK

When her older sister, Cass, runs away from home, sixteen-year-old, Caitlin, misses her terribly. She has always been in her sister's shadow and as Caitlin seeks her own identity, she makes some bad choices. She becomes involved in a serious relationship with Rogerson, who at first seems to be exciting and mysterious, but quickly turns into a dangerous influence. When Rogerson begins to hit Caitlin, she descends into a dream-like state, smoking pot and hiding her bruises. She continues to love him and make excuses for his behavior. Ashamed to admit what is happening to her, she becomes more and more isolated from caring family and friends. What will it take to free Caitlin from Rogerson? Why does she continue to love him when he abuses her? Read Sarah Dessen’s *Dreamland*. It's a powerful story.

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Prepared by Kathy Thomas

Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet Out of Idaho

Jon Katz

Villard Books, 2000

207 pages

SUMMARY

Two teenage boys escape their small town in Idaho by using the Internet. Technology helps them change their lives and alter their destiny.

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Computer
Computer Technicians

WEBSITES

[Jon Katz](#)

[Teacher Guide](#)

[Review](#)

[Interview with Jesse Dailey \(one of the Geeks\)](#)

BOOKTALK

Jon Katz begins *Geeks* with "Where does it begin, the sense of being the other?...in middle school, when the jocks turn on you and you pray you will get through gym class alive. Or maybe it comes in high school, where you find yourself on the outside looking in, getting jostled in the halls, watching TV on weekends while everyone else goes to parties." As a writer for *Rolling Stone* and *Hotwired*, Katz received hundreds of emails from computer geeks when he wrote a series of articles on the computer geek phenomenon. He received an email from Jesse Dailey who said that he was surprised that his own "geek experiences" were similar to others. He described his Geek Club, which a teacher had organized at his high school, and which gave him a place to belong. The two exchanged emails and Katz decided to go to Idaho and interview Jesse and his roommate, Eric, for a new book project, which turned out to be *Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet Out of Idaho*. Follow Jesse and Eric as they ride the Internet out of Idaho and into Chicago and a new life.

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Prepared by Patty Tucker

The Heart Calls Home
Joyce Hansen
Walker Publishing Company, 1999
175 pages

SUMMARY

After the Civil War, former slave Obi Booker tries to make a new life on a South Carolina island while waiting to be joined by his beloved Easter, who is studying in the North.

RELATED READINGS

Christmas In The Big House, Christmas In The Quarters by Patricia McKissack; Fredrick L. McKissack

Family by J. California Cooper

The Glory Field by Walter Dean Myers

My Name Is Not Angelica by Scott O'dell

Which Way Freedom? by Joyce Hansen

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

African-American History

Civil War/Reconstruction

South Carolina Sea Islands

WEBSITES

[About Joyce Hansen](#)

[African American Odyssey](#)

[African Americans in South Carolina](#)

[Sea Island Gullah Heritage Families in Bondage](#)

BOOK TALK

From slave to free man, this is Obi Booker's story. He ran away from the only home and family that he had ever known to join the Union Army and fight for his right to be a free man. Now the war was over and Obi was working with the reconstruction forces in Charleston, South Carolina. Obi had many things going for him: He could read and write; he was a young man with his whole life in front of him; and he was in love. Obi has his life planned out, he wants to own his own piece of land and support the family that he and Easter will have. The only problem - he lost track of his love, Easter, when they were separated during their escape. Can Obi find Easter, and if he does, does she still want the same life that they had planned for themselves during the war?

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Prepared by Kim Isiminger

Hope Was Here

Joan Bauer

G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2000

186 pages

SUMMARY

Sixteen-year-old Hope (high school student and part-time waitress) and her aunt Addie (diner cook) have moved from city to city, wherever Addie's work has taken them. Now a small town in Wisconsin is "home" and it's time to start the whole process of settling in all over again. This story of a young woman and her aunt on a quest to find their place in the world is full of adversity, courage, bullies, heroes, love lost, and love discovered.

RELATED READINGS

Rules of the Road by Joan Bauer

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

Where the Heart Is by Billie Letts

A Year Down Yonder by Richard Peck

The Wanderer by Sharon Creech

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Health: Study effects of and treatments for leukemia. Discuss the issues of choosing to be involved in a clinical trial (treatment study).

Psychology: Discuss non-traditional family roles. Is this a growing trend in America? in South Carolina?

Government: Investigate campaign financing. How much money do high school students spend on their own campaigns at school?

Parenting: Study developmental stages of children from infancy through age 18. Design activities to stimulate a 6-month old baby.

Language Arts/Communications for the Workplace: Research how to legally change your name. Discuss the agencies/businesses (DMV, credit cards, etc.) that would need to be notified & draft a letter of notification.

WEBSITES

[Profile of and interview with the author, Joan Bauer](#)

[More About Joan Bauer](#) (be sure to click on the "Achuka Authorfile" link to find interesting tidbits about Joan Bauer)

[Review](#)

[Leukemia](#)

[“Nontraditional Families: A Guide for Parents”](#)

[“Capitol Gains: Using the Internet to Investigate Presidential Campaign Finances”](#)

[So You Wanna Change Your Name?](#)

BOOK TALK

Who among us has ever said the words, “Life’s not fair”? It certainly wasn’t fair for Tulip Yancey, deserted by a mother who couldn’t be bothered to take care of a baby. By the time Tulip reached age 12, she’d had enough of the name Tulip and, after much deliberation on the importance of a name, legally changed it to Hope. Her favorite definition of the word was “from Webster’s collegiate dictionary: Hope—to cherish a desire with expectation of fulfillment.” It’s this attitude that carries Hope through life without a mama or daddy, moving all over the country. Work has brought Hope to a diner, whose owner is dying, in a town run by a very corrupt mayor who will stop at nothing to be re-elected. So far, this is sounding pretty sad and dreary, but this is one of the funniest books you will ever read. Or, maybe you don’t think finding a dead mouse in your salad is funny....

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Prepared by Elizabeth Harrell

The Last Book in the Universe

Rodman Philbrick

Scholastic/Blue Sky

224 pages

SUMMARY

When given orders by his gang leader to rob an old man, Spaz begins a journey that brings him closer to his family and his own strength. In this futuristic land, the genetically improved humans, or proovs, live a healthy life in Eden while the imperfect, such as Spaz and his new friend Ryter, must live out an impoverished life in the Urbs. Ryter and Spaz befriend a proov who helps them save Bean, Spaz’s foster sister, who has been ill and close to death. With the help of Ryter and Lanaya, the proov, Spaz finds new hope in his once hopeless situation.

RELATED READINGS

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Works of Thy Hands by Gyla Beth Seal and January Taylor

Turnabout by Margaret Peterson Haddix

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Utopian Society

Technology in Society

Negative Effects of Poverty

Mind-Altering Drugs

Genetic Research

Coping with Death and Disabilities.

WEBSITES

[Rodman Philbrick Home Page](#)

[Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Book Database](#)

BOOKTALK

This science fiction story centers around the protagonist, Spaz, an epileptic who lives in the Urbs and steals for the Bangers, a latch gang, in order to survive. Since the great shake, people who live in the Urbs stay alive by doing what the gang leaders tell them to do. That is when they are not “hooked” into a mind probe. That’s a needle that goes into the brain and creates a hallucination or fantasy. Just about everyone does it but Spaz. His seizures kept him from trying it when he was younger, and now that he’s older, he’s glad he never did. When his boss, Billy Bismo, sends him out to shakedown Ryter, an old man living in the Urbs, Spaz is surprised that Ryter is expecting him. Ryter is ready and willing to give up all his stuff, but when Spaz finds papers in a crate, Ryter tells him he is writing a book. But Spaz does see Ryter again, and he begins a journey that leads him back to his roots, to the family he didn’t get to know well, and to a new way of life. Read *The Last Book in the Universe*, by Rodman Philbrick to find out what Spaz learns while on his journey.

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Submitted by Donna Moyer

Locked Inside
Nancy Werlin
Delacorte Press, 2000
259 pages

SUMMARY

Kidnapped from the exclusive boarding school she attends, heiress Marnie Skyedottir questions her idealized relationship with her mother, her definition of family and her own sense of who she is.

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Kidnapping

Identity

Mothers and Daughters

Internet Gaming

Internet Safety

RELATED READINGS

The Sacrifice by Diane Matcheck

Mind's Eye by Paul Fleischman

Carolina Crow Girl by Valerie Hobbs

The New You by Kathleen Leverich

Carolina Autumn by Carol Lynch Williams

Sammy Keyes and the Hollywood Mummy by Wendelin Van Draanen

Where the Broken Heart Still Beats: The Story of Cynthia Ann Parker by Carolyn Meyer

Gemini7 by Jordan.Cray

Virtual World by Chris Westwood.

Infogirl: A Girl's Guide to the Internet by Marty Brown

Everything You Need to Know About Staying Safe in Cyberspace by Jennifer Croft

WEBSITES

[Nancy Werlin's Page](#)

[Interview with Nancy Werlin](#)

BOOKTALK

Can you really have it all?

Can you have it all and not know it?

What if you could have anything you wanted and had the means of getting it?

What if you were only a 16-year-old girl?

What sort of decisions would you make?

What kind of friends would you have?

Would they be true friends, or do they only care about the status that comes from being with “the girl who has it all”?

This is the predicament of young Marnie Skyedottir. In the care of a guardian since the tragic death of her rock-star mother, Marnie has difficulty relating to people because of the wall she builds around her. Developing a “cyber alter ego”, Marnie makes cyber friends as she dominates all in her cyber world, except one. As her everyday reality unravels, she immerses herself deeper into her cyber habitat until friends become enemies, enemies become friends, and the most faithful of friends become family.

To unravel Marnie, this mystery, and find out “what if”, please read *Locked Inside* by Nancy Werlin. It's not what you're thinking.

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Prepared by Lynne Douglas-Simmons

Meely LaBauve

Ken Wells

Random House, 2000

248 pages

SUMMARY

Set in the bayous of Louisiana, this coming of age story introduces the reader to Meely (short for Emile) LaBauve, a fifteen-year-old left alone much of the time by his widowed father. When bullies make life miserable for him, Meely and his supporters teach the bad guys a thing or two about Cajun justice. This triumph of good over evil has been compared to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

RELATED READINGS

The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Beyond Providence by Steven Schnur

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Fathers and Sons

Louisiana

WEBSITES

[Ken Wells](#)

[Louisiana Swamp](#)

[Absentee Fathers](#)

[Alligators](#)

[School Bullies](#)

BOOKTALK

Meely (short for Emile) LaBauve and his father live in the Louisiana Bayou, although Mr. LaBauve is absent most of the time hunting or doing other pursuits. Often the target of bullies, Meely doesn't go to school much. Instead, he spends his time outdoors, living an unstructured, unsupervised life, including some encounters with the girl-next-door and with the neighboring alligators. At the age of fifteen, Meely is basically a good kid. When local bullies, who have the sheriff on their side, target him, Meely finds out who his real friends are, and shows everyone a thing or two about how a boy living by his wits gets revenge.

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prepared by Nancy Self

Night Hoops
Carl Deuker
Houghton Mifflin, 2000
212 pages

SUMMARY

While trying to prove that he is good enough to be on his high school's varsity basketball team, Nick must also deal with his parents' divorce and erratic behavior of a troubled classmate who lives across the street.

RELATED READINGS

Slam by Walter Dean Myers

Stuck in Neutral by Terry Trueman

House of Sports by Marisabina Russo

Miracle's Boys by Jacqueline Woodson (A Coretta Scott King Award Winner 2001)

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Basketball

Sports and Activities

Interpersonal Relations

Divorce

Peer Pressure

BOOKTALK

Always in the shadow of his older brother, Nick Abbott begins to catch his Father's eye when Scot gives up basketball to pursue other interest and Nicks' basketball prowess begins to develop. Nicks basketball talents are further nurtured by nightly one-on-one games with a disturbing neighbor, Trent Dawson. He just moved to town, doesn't know anybody, has a big ego and a bad attitude. The two boys both make the basketball team at the local high school. Trent has to decide if he was going to go live with his brother who was on the run or stay to finish out the season and play in the championship finals. On the day of the championship game, Trent didn't show up. Does he show up? Does the team win? Read *Night Hoops* by Carl Deuker and hoop it up.

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Prepared by Darryle Albert

Players
Joyce Sweeney

Winslow Press, 2000
222 pages

SUMMARY

Eighteen-year old Corey sees a threat to his dream of winning the basketball championship when he discovers that the new player on his team is a girl- stealing, friend-framing, team destroying force of evil.

RELATED READINGS

Playing Without the Ball: A Novel in Four Quarters by Rich Wallace

Slave Day by Rob Thomas

Night Hoops by Carl Deuker

Kit's Wilderness by David Almond

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Basketball

Sports and Recreation

Social Situations

Friendship

Peer Pressure

BOOKTALK

Corey Brennan, the newly elected basketball team captain is faced with several decisions as the season starts. The team chooses hot-shot transfer student Noah Travers for their second-string. But Noah has bigger ambitions than anyone realizes and a few schemes of his own. Although St. Phillips is poised to make all-city - Noah's plans for himself change the entire outlook for the team. Corey has to decide if he should trust Luke, his longtime teammate and best friend. Is Noah really the threat Luke thinks he is? Is Corey really in love with Luke's girlfriend? Will the team's love for playing the game be enough to hold the team together? Will Corey make the right decisions? Read *Players* by Joyce Sweeney and hoop it up.

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Prepared by Pam Davenport

Send One Angel Down
Virginia Frances Schwartz
Holiday House, 2000
163 pages

SUMMARY

Set on a plantation in pre-Civil War Alabama, Eliza's story is told in the first person by Abram who cared for and tried to protect the girl. The author has written a potent, painful historical novel based on the true recollections of Abram (a pseudonym for Doc Daniel Dowdy).

RELATED READINGS

Fever 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson

Hope Was Here by Joan Bauer

A Year Down Yonder by Richard Peck

Nory Ryan's Song by Patricia Reilly Giff

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Slavery

Racially Mixed People

Cousins
Prejudice & Racism

SUMMARY

Born a slave with light skin and blue eyes, Eliza's differences are not noticeable to her as a young child. Eliza was allowed to play with the children in the big house daily and was never sent to work in the fields. As they grew older, Abigail, the master's daughter became jealous of her childhood playmate. Because of this, Eliza is sent to be a field hand. Eliza's light skin gets kissed by the sun and makes her beauty more noticeable and Abigail's dislike for her intensifies. Abram, Eliza's older cousin, protected her as much as possible. But even Abram could not keep her from the auction block. What will happen to Eliza? Who is the stranger bidding on her at the auction? Will Eliza ever see her family again? Read *Send One Angel Down*.

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Prepared by Pam Davenport

Stargirl
Jerry Spinelli
Knopf, 2000
186 pages

SUMMARY

A home-schooled benevolent dreamer attends a local high school, is cruelly mistreated, but triumphs by using intelligence and compassion. In the process she challenges local social mores and shows mental and emotional maturity is not found while "fitting in". Her "boyfriend", who acts as a catalyst for the many varied trials Stargirl suffers, tells the story.

RELATED READINGS

Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key by Jack Gantos

Mansfield Park by Jane Austen

Jane Fairfax by Joan Aiken

Robots of Dawn by Isaac Asimov

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Sociology

Psychology

Prejudice

Home-schooling

Dating

Teen Issues

Character Development and Tolerance

Performing Arts

Social Acceptance.

WEBSITES

[Stargirl Reader's Guide](#)

BOOKTALK

You know, every school has a weird kid, the kid who knows the right answer but asks a question instead. The kid who is always smiling, but no one knows why. He, or she, wears weird clothes, and knows a lot about stuff normal people never even think about. Sometimes they gather in groups, join things like the "save the tribbles taskforce", prerequisite: must speak klingon or

nominal romulan. I think you get my point, the ultimate in weird, right? Maybe, but maybe it's for a good reason, to be honest somebody has to think of that stuff. A normal person might not keep a pet rat, but then how else would we have found out that rats eat roaches? And somebody has to buy the incredibly odd-looking pineapple prom dress, and the dancing porcupine neckties. If not us, why not them? Sometimes a book is exactly like its cover, a little odd, kinda funky, but would you want to think you're getting the latest on Justin and Britney and end up reading the New York Times? After Columbine and September 11th everyone is a little nervous when something gets kinda weird, odd, or downright funky, but we are the world of psychedelic sundresses, leather hot pants, MTV, and Larry King Live, of SUV's and Gremlins, of pineapple pizza and orange juice with a shot of Tabasco. Sometimes freedom doesn't ring, sometimes it plays the entire Lion King soundtrack on a kazoo in the wrong key, but every now and then you ought to say hakuna matata. Please read *Star Girl* by Jerry Spinelli.

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Prepared by Shelby Simmons

True Believer
Virginia Euwer Wolff
Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001
264 pages

SUMMARY

Living in the inner city amidst guns and poverty, fifteen-year-old LaVaughn learns from old and new friends, and inspiring mentors, that life is what you make it – an occasion to rise to.

RELATED READINGS

Make Lemonade by Virginia Euwer Wolff

The Dear One by Jacqueline Woodson

Life Riddles by Melrose Cooper

One Sister Too Many by C.S. Adler

Taking Care of Terrific by Lois Lowry

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Single-parent families

Teenage girls

Social Issues

Friendship

WEBSITES

[Virginia Euwer Wolff](#)

[Single Parent Central](#)

[Girlstart](#)

[Challenges and Social Issues](#)

BOOKTALK

Verna LaVaughn lives in an apartment building in the city. She lives with her mother and younger sister in a high-rise apartment building with a smelly elevator. She's lucky though, she has a bedroom of her own – not like her friend Annie who sleeps on a fold-out in her house. LaVaughn's father "got killed" when she was little, but she knew him, and she knew he loved her. And that's better than Myrtle's father who takes drugs and can't seem to get his act together at rehab. LaVaughn's lucky though, her Mom is a good parent, a strong parent. She may be a little too pushy, sometimes – like when she's helping LaVaughn remember why she needs to go

to college, and how hard she will have to work to get there. Then there's Jody. Jody and LaVaughn used to be playmates, best friends . . . until Jody's mom decided that they needed to move to a better neighborhood so Jody could have a better education and better opportunities. But here he is all of a sudden, stepping on the elevator, and "He is suddenly beautiful." Accompany LaVaughn on her journey through her 15th year as she learns about herself, life, and maybe a little bit about love.

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Prepared by Kim Isiminger

Turnabout
Margaret Peterson Haddix
Simon & Schuster, 2000
228 pages

SUMMARY

Project Turnabout, a scientific/medical experiment offered to very elderly residents of Riverside Nursing home, promised a reversal of the aging process to those who would agree to participate. The participants would receive an injection to begin growing younger and upon reaching the ideal age would receive the injection to stop the process. Friends Amelia and Anny Beth were ages 100 and 103 when they decided to take the injection. When they found out later that the shot to stop “deaging” not only didn’t work but was deadly, they decided to search for someone who could take care of them when they became too young to care for themselves. Now, 85 years later, Amelia, or Melly as she is now known tells the story of their lives, as they have grown younger. Back in the present at ages 15 and 18, Melly and Anny Beth know that the time is near for them to find the person who will care for them.

RELATED READINGS

Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt

Running out of Time by Margaret Peterson Haddix

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

Biology/Genetic Engineering

Medical Ethics

Psychology/Aging

BOOKTALK

Wouldn’t you love to turn back the clock just a few years? Aren’t there a few things that you would like the chance to do over again? Now, if you are 15 years old you might not want to go back to age 13 or 10, but if you were 65 or 85 or 105 that might be very desirable. Just think of your parents or grandparents who you hear saying: “if I were just a little younger I would still be able to…” or “when I was __ years old I could…” Well, if you or they lived at Riverside Nursing Home Project Turnabout would provide that opportunity. At least that is what Amelia and Anny Beth, and forty-eight other residents were looking forward to. Researchers told them that they could take the injection to begin “unaging” and at the correct time take another shot, which would stop the process. Now, 85 years later Amelia, or Melly as she is now called, tells us that things don’t always turn out right when scientists do experiments. A while after the patients took the injections they learned that the antidote was deadly. Some residents who had already taken the antidote were dead. What a shock! They were doomed to unage until they were zero. After receiving the news, Melly and Anny Beth decided they would rather take their chances surviving in the real world than to stay hidden away at the nursing home. They didn’t like the

options with the antidote injections. It is interesting to read about Melly and Anny's adventures as they re-experience life. However as Melly relates the urgency to find someone to take care of them without having others find out the truth about them, their cover is in danger. There is a reporter seeking information about Amelia. More strangely, this reporter is living in Melly's childhood home.

Do you suppose they should talk to the reporter?

Find out more by reading *Turnabout* by Margaret Peterson Haddix.

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Prepared by Sheila Reynolds