**Better Off Friends**Elizabeth EulbergPoint, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., 2014278 pages

SUMMARY:

Levi and Macallan have been best friends since seventh grade when he moved to their Wisconsin town from California. They share a love for zany British comedies and their friendship only grows stronger, no matter what their peers say about boys and girls not being able to be friends. As they get older, though, their friendship begins to stand in the way of prospective boyfriends and girlfriends. Nothing says unapproachable like a constantly-there buddy of the opposite sex. Besides, no one gets Levi like Macallan, and no one gets Macallan like Levi. Is it time to let the friendship go, or time to take it to the next level? Follow these two from 7th grade through high school and read about the evolution of their friendship. Told in alternating points of view, this tale of growing from friendship into something more will appeal to both girls and guys.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY . . .  
*The Boy on Cinnamon Street*, Phoebe Stone  
*The Geography of You and Me*, Jennifer E. Smith  
*Guitar Notes*, Mary Amato  
*The Heartbreak Messenger*, Alexander P. Vance  
*Kiss Me Tomorrow*, Susan Richards Shreve  
*The Summer I Turned Pretty*, Jenny Han

WEBSITES:  
Author’s website (Elizabeth Eulberg) www.elizabetheulberg.com/  
Visit this website to find out about the author, as well as the back story for *Better Off Friends*.

BOOKTALK:   
Levi and Macallan have been best friends since seventh grade when he moved to their Wisconsin town from California. He’s a former surfer dude with long blonde hair; she’s the serious student just getting over her mom’s death. A shared love for zany British comedies begins years of friendship, that only grows stronger, no matter what their peers say about boys and girls not being able to be friends. As the years go by, though, their friendship begins to stand in the way of prospective boyfriends and girlfriends. Nothing says unapproachable like a constantly-there buddy of the opposite sex who *always* gets your jokes. Besides, no one gets Levi like Macallan, and no one gets Macallan like Levi. Is it time to let the friendship go, or time to take it to the next level? Read *Better Off Friends* by Elizabeth Eulberg.

Prepared by:Mary Cockrell, James Island Middle School, Mary\_Cockrell@charleston.k12.sc.us

**The Boy on the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible on Schindler’s List**   
Leon Leyson   
Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2013  
240 pages

SUMMARY:  
Leon Leyson (born Leib Lezjon) was only ten years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and his family was forced to relocate to the Krakow ghetto. With incredible luck, perseverance, and grit, Leyson was able to survive the sadism of the Nazis, including that of the demonic Amon Goeth, commandant of Plaszow, the concentration camp outside Krakow. Ultimately, it was the generosity and cunning of one man, a man named Oskar Schindler, who saved Leon Leyson’s life, and the lives of his mother, his father, and two of his four siblings, by adding their names to his list of workers in his factory—a list that became world renowned: Schindler’s List.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY…  
*The Boy Who Dared* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti  
*Prisoner B-3087*  by Alan Gratz  
*I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust* by Livia Bitton-Jackson  
*The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne  
*The Berlin Boxing Club* by Robert Sharenow  
*Hiding in the Spotlight: A Musical Prodigy’s Story of Survival, 1941-1946* by Greg Dawson  
*Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli   
*Escape -Teens on the Run: Primary Sources from the Holocaust* by Linda Jacobs Altman  
*We Are Witnesses: Five Diaries of Teenagers Who Died in the Holocaust* by Jacob Boas

WEBSITES:  
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: Learn About the Holocaust, <http://www.ushmm.org/learn/>, includes an introduction to the Holocaust, a timeline of events, a Holocaust encyclopedia and related maps

Yad Vashem: The Holocaust, <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/index.asp>, includes a thematic and chronological narrative of the Holocaust with related video, photos, and documents

The History Channel: The Holocaust, <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/the-holocaust>, includes a summarized timeline of events, video clips, photographs, speeches and other audio clips.

BOOKTALK:  
As a young Jewish boy growing up in Poland in the 1930s, Leib Lejzon was an ordinary boy. He was not so very different from you. He was energetic, mischievous, fun-loving, and close to his family and friends.  But all of that changed when the Nazi’s invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Little by little, Leib’s family was shut out from the rest of Polish society forced to live in horrible conditions. One night, members of the police Getsapo showed up at Leib’s family’s front door, smashing and breaking everything his family owned, beating and even imprisoning his father. Leib’s fun-loving childhood began to turn into a life of fear, until one day when Leib’s father had a chance encounter with a German factory owner and Leib suddenly became “the boy on the wooden box”. Leib’s story is about hope, kindness, life, and death and it is *not* made up...

Prepared by: Christina Willson, E.L. Wright Middle School, chwillson@richland2.org

**Counting by 7’s**Holly Goldberg SloanDial Books for Young Readers, 2013380 pages

SUMMARY:  
Young, exceptionally gifted, eccentric, and suddenly orphaned by her parents’ deaths, Willow Chance is on a quest to find a new family. Willow has never really fit into “normal” society. Now, grieving and alone, she must try to connect with someone somewhere and find a new home. While this sounds like a profoundly sad plot, this book is so much more than what it seems. Willow comes to stay with the Nguyens, who she met through an after-school counseling program. She becomes a catalyst for change, not only in the lives of the Nguyens, but also in the life of the school counselor and others that she comes in contact with. Readers will find themselves cheering for this quirky girl who refuses to give up on finding her own happy-ever-after.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY:  
*Missing May*, Cynthia Rylant  
*One for the Murphys*, Lynda Mulally Hunt  
*Stargirl*, Jerry Spinelli  
*Millicent Min Girl Genius*, Lisa Yee

WEBSITES:  
Holly Goldberg Sloan, <http://hollygoldbergsloan.com/counting-by-7s.php>, the author’s homepage – gives background on all of her novels

National Association for Gifted Children, <http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/my-child-gifted>, information on how people are determined to be labeled as ‘gifted’

Kids’ Gardening, [www.kidsgardening.org](http://www.kidsgardening.org), tips for gardening for kids as well as grants and programs for funding gardening in schools

BOOKTALK:  
Willow Chance has always known that she was different. Her genius intellect makes her way of seeing things, people, and the world differently from almost anyone else that she meets. Her interest in diseases isn’t exactly a conversation starter, and her passion for gardening is different from the interests of just about any other middle school kid around. But, her adoptive parents have always provided a haven for her interests and intellect and have showered her with love. Now, those parents are gone, both killed in an accident, and Willow is all alone, except for the school counselor and the Nguyen family, who were with her when she got the news. Most people would break under the weight of such grief and abandonment, but Willow, like her name, bends and grows as she searches for a new home. And, as she searches for a new place to put down roots, she changes the lives of the people she encounters. Willow is not a victim, and you will cheer for her to find her happy ending when you read Counting by 7’s by Holly Goldberg Sloan.

Prepared by: Anne Sidey, North Augusta Middle School, asidey@acpsd.net  
Michelle King, Kennedy Middle School, mking@acpsd.net

**Eruption! Volcanoes and the Science of Saving Lives**

Elizabeth Rusch

Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 2013

247 pages

SUMMARY:

This title from the *Scientists in the Field* series follows volcanologist Andy Lockart, John Pallister, and members of the Volcano Disaster Assistance Program as they try to predict how and when volcanoes will erupt in order to prevent unnecessary loss of life. Dramatic photographs capture the power of eruptions and the devastation that can result.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY…

*Anatomy of a Volcanic Eruption*, Amie Jane Leavitt

*Volcanoes: The Science Behind Fiery Eruptions,* Alvin Silverstein

*Lava Scientist: Careers on the Edge of Volcanoes*, Sara L. Latta

WEBSITES:

Elizabeth Rusch, <http://www.elizabethrusch.com/>, the author’s website with biographical information as well as a list of all of her books

PBS, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/volcano/team.html>, a NOVA program, Volcano’s Deadly Warning, which tells about the eruption that prompted the formation of the Volcano Disaster Assistance Program (VDAP)

United States Geological Survey, <http://www.usgs.gov/science/science.php?term=1209&type=feature>, links to an exhaustive list about everything you could ever want to know about volcanoes

BOOKTALK:

Horrified by the deaths of 23,000 people in the 1985 eruption of Nevado del Ruiz in the Andes Mountains, United States Geological Survey scientists, including Andy Lockart, realized that nearly one billion people worldwide live in the shadows of dangerous volcanoes and created the VDAP team. From Mexico to the Philippines, members of the VDAP team move in to measure the telltale signs of impending eruptions – rumbling earth, shooting steam, puffing ash plumes – in an effort to predict eruptions and order life-saving evacuations. If they get it right, countless lives are saved. If they get it wrong? Join the VDAP team as they predict, monitor, and sometimes personally confront pyroclastic flows, rolling ash clouds, powerful earthquakes, and swiftly-moving mudflows that result from volcanic eruptions.

Prepared by:

Betty T. (BT) Bouton, Fort Johnson Middle School, betty\_bouton@charleston.k12.sc.us

Michelle King, Kennedy Middle School, mking@acpsd.net

**Falcon in the Glass**

Susan Fletcher

Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2013

300 pages

SUMMARY:

In Venice in 1497, the secrets of glassblowing are very zealously guarded, to the point of murder, to protect these secrets. Twelve-year-old Renzo must pass his glassblower’s apprenticeship test in order to fulfill a promise he made to his dying father to continue the family heritage of glassblowing. If he fails this once-only test, he will always be a drudge in the glasswork factory. Renzo practices his trade all night, every night but does not improve. He needs a second pair of hands so that he may master his craft. When Letta appears, he wants to use her in his quest. But Letta is part of a group of children with magical connections to birds who have been condemned as witches. Renzo may have taken on more than he can handle when he tries to master glassblowing and help these homeless children.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY…

*Wolf-speaker,* Tamora Pierce

*A Perfect Friend,* Reynolds Price

*What the Dog Said,* Randi Reisfeld

WEBSITES:

The book’s website, <http://www.susanfletcher.com/books/bk_falcon.html>, a brief summary of the book and a word from author Susan Fletcher on her writing of the book

Glass of Venice, <http://www.glassofvenice.com/murano_glass_history.php>, learn how glass was blown

Susan Fletcher, <http://www.susanfletcher.com/>, about the author and her books

BOOKTALK:

Take a pinch of fantasy, add a dash of adventure, throw in murder and redemption, and a generous handful of the history of glassblowing and you have the perfect recipe for Susan Fletcher’s *Falcon in the Glass*. Set in 1497 Venice, this is the story of Renzo and Letta, two children with different agendas who find themselves aligned to restore family heritage and save children from persecution. Renzo is attempting to master the highly complicated and difficult craft of glassblowing and Letta is trying to save children in her care from being hung as witches for their telepathic connection to birds. They must help each other to reach their goals and to survive.

Prepared by:Jane Chinault, Busbee Creative Arts Academy, jchinault@lex2.org

**Far Far Away**

Tom McNeal

Alfred A. Knopf, 2013

371 pages

SUMMARY:

Jeremy Johnson Johnson is a strange, quiet kid who lives in the small town of Never Better. His mother has left Jeremy and his father, and his father is having a hard time handling her absence. Jeremy has a secret—he can hear the voices of ghosts, particularly the voice of Jacob Grimm, the famous collector of fairy tales. Jacob tries to help Jeremy by offering advice, encouragement, and support—along with quite a bit of knowledge about fairy tales and German history. When Jeremy meets lively Ginger Boultinghouse, he reluctantly follows her on mischievous adventures, full of pranks and sneaking around. But when people in Never Better begin to go missing, Jeremy and Ginger become dangerously involved in the mystery. It seems that the baker in town, Sten Blix, is involved in more than just baking, and the ghost of Jacob Grimm whispers this secret to Jeremy. When Jeremy and Ginger try to solve the mystery on their own, the story takes a very dangerous turn.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY…

*The Poisoned House*, Michael Ford

*Egg & Spoon*, Gregory Maguire

*Texting the Underworld*, Ellen Booraem

WEBSITES:

The Grimm Brothers’ Fairy Tales, <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimmtales.html>This website includes the full text of each of the Grimm Brothers’ Fairy Tales in both English and the original German.

Biography for Jacob Grimm, <http://www.biography.com/people/jacob-grimm-21085187#synopsis>This website gives information about the life of the 19th century German scholar who collected fairy tales with his brother Wilhelm.

BOOKTALK:

When Jeremy Johnson Johnson’s mother eats a Prince Cake from the bakery in Never Better, she falls in love with the first man she sees and leaves Jeremy and his father. Jeremy’s father disappears into his bedroom with a broken heart, and Jeremy is left on his own—except for his constant companion, the ghost of Jacob Grimm. Jeremy has been able to hear the voice of Jacob Grimm since he was a young child, and Jacob has been both a friend and protector to Jeremy. When Jeremy meets lively Ginger Boultinghouse, he joins in her adventures and shares his secret with her. With Ginger’s and Jacob’s support, Jeremy begins to recover from the loss of his mom. When people begin to disappear from Never Better, Ginger and Jeremy become involved in solving the mystery. With Jacob’s ghost following along, they find themselves on a scary, dangerous path leading straight to the evil heart of town, the village bakery. If you like scary tales, mystery, and a little bit of magic, read *Far Far Away* by Tom McNeal.

Prepared by:Nora Whelchel, Liberty Middle School, whelchelnora@yahoo.com

**Gated**  
Amy Christine Parker

Random House Children's Books, 2013

352 pages

SUMMARY:

Lyla Hamilton, a seventeen-year-old girl leads, what many would consider a unique lifestyle. Lyla and her family live in a gated community with other families who have one goal in life…to survive the apocalypse without letting others into their community. The families were chosen to live in the community by their charismatic and persuasive leader, Pioneer. As Lyla and the others prepare for the end of the world, the local sheriff and his son Cody pay a visit to the community. As Lyla gives Cody a tour of their community she begins to realize what she might be missing out on by living inside the community. The two teens plan to meet the following Saturday when Lyla knows that she and her parents will be allowed to leave the community in order to purchase supplies. While Lyla and her parents are on the outside, she is involved in an accident that causes her to be hospitalized. During her hospitalization, Cody sneaks Lyla out of her room and away from her nervous, over-protective mother. As the two teens begin to talk, Lyla opens up about life inside the community and Cody begins to convince her that Pioneer may not be as honest and upstanding as she and the others believe him to be. When Lyla returns to the community, she and the others are forced to enter the community’s underground shelter in preparation for the end of the world, but Lyla is torn. She must choose between Pioneer, who she has always trusted, and Cody, who she just met.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY…

*Astray*, Amy Christine Parker

*The Program*, Suzanne Young

*Free to Fall*, Lauren Miller

*Dorothy Must Die*, Danielle Paige

WEBSITES:

YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1FCCERFn5o>, a short book trailer for *Gated*

Amy Christine Parker, <http://www.amychristineparker.com/>, the author’s website with information about her and her books

Blogspot, <http://amychristineparker.blogspot.com/>, a link to the author’s blog

BOOKTALK:

Lyla’s gated community seems like the perfect place to be when the world ends, but is it? Pioneer, the community’s leader, has accounted for every detail needed to ensure the safety of the community members. What if he’s lying? What if the world isn’t nearing its end and the outsiders have no plans to hurt them? What if Pioneer is manipulating the community members? When Lyla meets Cody, an outsider, she begins to question all that she knows to be true. In this fast-paced thriller, Lyla must decide to follow what she has always known or to trust the stranger that has made her second guess her entire life.

Prepared by:Christy Brown, Blythewood Middle School, cbrown@richland2.org

**The Great Trouble: a Mystery of London, the Blue Death and a Boy Called Eel**

Deborah Hopkinson

Alfred A. Knopf, 2013

249 pages

SUMMARY:

Eel is an orphan on the streets of London in 1854. Life is hard for him, but the odd jobs he does around town help provide a bare living for him and his little brother. When a mysterious illness starts affecting Eel’s friends in the neighborhood, he finds himself helping Dr. John Snow determine the cause and stop the spread before it is too late.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY**:***Fever, 1793*, Laurie Halse Anderson   
*The Misadventures of Maude March, or, Trouble Rides a Fast Horse,* Audrey Couloumbis  
*The Diamond of Drury Lane*, Julia Golding  
*The Incredible Charlotte Sycamore,* Kate Maddison  
*The Great Death,* John E. Smelcer  
*Splendors and Glooms,* Laura Amy Schlitz

WEBSITES**:**

UCLA Department of Epidemiology, John Snow, <http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html>

This website provides information about John Snow, an early figure in the field of epidemiology.

Cholera and the Thames, <http://www.choleraandthethames.co.uk/>

Developed by the city of Westminster, this website details the fight against Cholera that took place in London in the 19th century.

John Snow: The London Cholera Epidemic of 1854, <http://www.csiss.org/classics/content/8>

This website provides background information on John Snow and describes how his work identified the source of Cholera contamination in 19th century London.

Author Deborah Hopkinson, <http://www.deborahhopkinson.com/>  
This is the official website of the author.

BOOKTALK:

Eel’s life seems pretty grim. He’s an orphan in London in 1854, and he has to work several small jobs just to make enough money to survive and care for his young brother. And to make matters worse, he’s hiding from Fisheye Bill Taylor, a nasty fishmonger. Eel has lots of friends, though, and his work caring for the animals of Dr. John Snow, a doctor and researcher, is especially interesting. When people in his neighborhood of Broad Street are hit by Cholera, Eel finds himself working closely with Dr. Snow to figure out where the disease is coming from. Then, it’s a race against time to convince the residents that it’s the water that’s causing the illness. Will Eel and Dr. Snow get the water pump shut down in time to prevent more deaths?

Prepared by: Carolyn Masek, HAND Middle School, cmasek@richlandone.org

**The Haunting of Gabriel Ashe**

Dan Poblocki

Scholastic Press, 2013

288 pages

SUMMARY:  
Gabe is the new kid in town and makes a fast friendship with Seth who lives just through the woods. They spend a lot of time in those woods playing a game of Seth’s invention chasing and fighting beasts, monsters, and villains. When Gabe decides he is about done playing in the woods and wants to distance himself from Seth and his games, especially ‘The Hunter’, a terrible, child-eating monster, scary things begin to happen. At first Gabe blames the strange occurrences on Seth, but those dark shadows just on the edge of the woods and the figure in his house begin to make him think The Hunter is real and it is out to get him. The ending of the book will certainly surprise you. You’ll pay for the whole seat, but you’ll only need the edge!

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY…

*The Ghost of Graylock*, Dan Poblocki  
*The Nightmarys*, Dan Poblocki

*All the Lovely Bad Ones*, Mary Downing Hahn

*Wait Till Helen Comes*, Mary Downing Hahn

WEBSITES:

Dan Poblocki, <http://www.danpoblocki.com/>, the author’s website

Jean Book Nerd, <http://www.jeanbooknerd.com/2012/11/dan-poblocki-author-interview.html>, an interview with Dan Poblocki

BOOKTALK:

You probably wouldn’t think of your house burning down as a blessing, but Gabe does. He sees it as a way to start over, to reinvent himself in a new town and a new school. Right away, he meets Seth, a boy who lives just through the woods. Those dark woods are the perfect setting for fighting beasts and monsters, and they spend hours at it. When Gabe begins to tire of Seth’s made up world and wants no part of Seth’s childishness, weird things start happening. A dark figure in the woods. Wet footprints in the hall. A wooden puppet moved on its own. Something’s out to get Gabe, and it’s about to make a believer out of him…if he survives.

Prepared by: Michelle King, Kennedy Middle School, mking@acpsd.net

**Jungle of Bones**Ben Mikaelsen   
Scholastic Inc., 2014  
224 pages

SUMMARY:  
After a joy ride gone wrong, Dylan Barstow finds his summer plans turned upside down. His mother has finally had enough of his reckless behavior and sends him to spend his break with his uncle who is an ex-marine. Unsure of what to expect, Dylan finds himself caught up in his uncle Todd’s plans to trek across Papua, New Guinea, with a group of misfits in search of a World War II B-17 bomber that his own grandfather used during the war. With his grandfather’s journal as his compass, Dylan embarks in an adventure full of lessons about sacrifice, honor, and respect. His greatest lesson, however, is presented when he finds himself separated from his group with no supplies and limited survival skills. It is through this specific lesson that Dylan learns what it really means to survive anything in life.   
  
IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY…  
*The Sword Thief*, Peter Lerangis  
*Earthquake Terror*, Peg Kehret  
*The Japanese Tsunami, 2011*, Lauren Tarshis  
*The Cryptid Hunters*, Roland Smith  
*Hide and Seek*, Katy Grant  
*Outcast*, Michelle Paver  
*Leepike Ridge* By Nathan Wilson

WEBSITES:  
Military History, <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/new-guinea/ng.htm>, information related to the setting of the story  
  
Ben Mikaelsen, <http://www.benmikaelsen.com/index.html>, a link to the author’s website

BOOKTALK:  
My mother clearly overreacted. All I did was take the car out for a joy ride and ended up here in the jungle searching for a lame B-17 bomber from back in WWII. Why she ever thought that spending time with my Uncle Todd would be a great idea beats me. If it wasn’t for her, I wouldn’t be in this situation that I am in now. I wouldn’t be stuck, lost without the group and no supplies. I mean, I admit, I can be hard to get along with sometimes ever since my father was killed in his pursuit of helping others, but that doesn’t mean she had the right to send me away. What happens if no one finds me? What if I die here? It’ll be all her fault because it’s not like I deserved this punishment. \*shudder\* I sure hope I can survive through this.  
  
Prepared by: BriAnne Baxley, Berkeley County Public Library, bbaxley@berkeleycountysc.gov

**Lawless**

Jeffrey Salane

Scholastic Press, 2013

277 pages

SUMMARY:

M. Freeman is an only child who has been home-schooled her whole life until she is accepted into the prestigious Lawless School. However, she is in for a shock when she gets there because Lawless is a prestigious school for educating master criminals, and it turns out that her parents not only attended Lawless themselves, but they have been preparing her to attend her entire life. M. does so well at Lawless that she gets a chance to plan and carry out a real-world heist, but when it goes very wrong, M. learns that the main truth at Lawless is that you can trust no one. Will M. succeed, or will she fail, and which one should she want?

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY . . .

*HIVE: Higher Institute of Villainous Education*, Mark Walden

*I’d Tell You I Love You But Then I’d Have to Kill You*, Ally Carter

*The Mysterious Benedict Society*, Trenton Lee Stewart

*The Mysterious Case of the Albright Academy*, Diane Stanley

*Pure Dead Batty*, Debi Gliori

*Spy School*, Stuart Gibbs

*Stormbreaker*, Alex Horowitz

WEBSITES:   
Jeffrey Salane, <http://jeffreysalane.com/>, the author’s official website

The Central Intelligence Agency – Kids’ Zone, <https://www.cia.gov/kids-page>, official page of the CIA with information about the agency as well as activities and games for kids

The Federal Bureau of Investigation Kids Page, <http://www.fbi.gov/fun-games/kids/kids>, all about the FBI for kids

How Stuff Works, <http://www.howstuffworks.com/arts/artwork/art-heist.htm>, chronicles the 10 most impressive art heists of all time

BOOKTALK:

M. Freeman isn’t your ordinary homeschooled only child. But, when she is accepted into the prestigious Lawless School, she finds out just how different her education has been. The Lawless School is the ultimate school for educating master criminals, and M. finds herself to be a star pupil. Everyone assumes that her parents, themselves honor graduates, told her about Lawless, but they never told her anything. When her first project, a “real-world” heist goes big-time wrong, M must figure out who was the rat and who she can trust, before it’s too late.

Prepared by: Mary Cockrell, James Island Middle School, Mary\_cockrell@Charleston.k12.sc.us

**The President Has Been Shot**

James L. Swanson

Scholastic Press, 2013

336 pages

SUMMARY:

Providing a dramatic and detailed account of the day President Kennedy was assassinated, Swanson transports the reader to one of the most tumultuous eras in American history. Complete with photographs and diagrams, the book provides a complete biography of Kennedy’s early life and career and introduces his killer, Lee Harvey Oswald.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY…

*Chasing Lincoln’s Killer*, James L. Swanson

*End of Days: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, James L. Swanson

*Kennedy Assassinated!: The World Mourns: a Reporter’s Story*, Wilborn Hampton

*Lincoln’s Grave Robbers*, Steve Sheinkin

WEBSITES:

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/>, includes a media gallery that highlights Kennedy’s presidency and famous speeches

US Presidential Assassinations and Attempts, <http://timelines.latimes.com/us-presidential-assassinations-and-attempts/>, features a timeline of presidential assassinations and attempts from 1835 to 2011

James L. Swanson, <http://www.teenreads.com/authors/james-l-swanson>, features a brief biography of the author along with a list of written works and their reviews

BOOKTALK:

On a November day in 1963, a lone gunman stands perched inside an open window at the Texas School Book Depository, preparing his weapon for the perfect shot. Blocks away, a young president at the height of his career, waves to a crowd of onlookers from his open vehicle.

The shot is fired from the window. The world is never the same.

James Swanson not only provides a thorough look at the early life and career of John F. Kennedy, a family man and charismatic political figure, but also gives a shocking glimpse into the mind of his killer, Lee Harvey Oswald.

This suspenseful thriller reaches a peak when it takes the reader on the exact motorcade path Kennedy took in the last moments of his life. Readers will discover little-known details surrounding the hours after the president’s death including Jacqueline Kennedy’s devastating airplane ride back home and conspiracy theories that hint that Oswald did not act alone. Swanson delivers an emotional and impeccable narrative that leaves the reader wanting more!

Prepared by: Carmen Mangus, Pelion Middle School, cmangus@lexington1.net

**Prisoner B-3087**Alan Gratz  
Scholastic Press, 2013  
272 Pages

SUMMARY:  
When Hitler’s army occupies Krakow, Poland, in 1939, 10-year-old Yanek’s life is never the same. With his family trapped inside the Jewish ghetto, Yanek observes the horrors of war and how conditions quickly change for Jews losing their businesses and homes before being deported to the concentration camps. Yanek is Prisoner B-3087 and this book tells his story of survival in ten different concentration camps. This book is based on the true story of Jack Gruener, a Holocaust survivor.  
  
IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK TRY: *Beyond Courage*, Doreen Rappaport  
*The Diary of a Young Girl*, Anne Frank  
*The Boy In The Striped Pajamas*, John Boyne  
*Torn Thread,* Anne Isaacs  
*Daniel’s Story,* Carol Matas

WEBSITES:  
Alan Gratz, <http://alangratz.blogspot.com/2011/01/prisoner-b-3087.html>, the author’s official website  
  
Penguin Young Readers, <http://www.penguin.com/static/pages/youngreaders/teachers-librarians/author_appearance/gratz.php>, the publisher’s website with information about the author  
  
Holocaust Encyclopedia, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005143>, an easy-to-understand explanation of the Holocaust and timeline  
BOOKTALK:If only I could have seen into the future…if there had been any way to know what was going to happen…If only. I was just a kid and had no idea what would happen to my family and my world. Up until 1939, I had a normal life, living in a nice home with my family with plenty to eat and drink. Then, the Germans arrived in our town. We heard the rumors but chose to ignore them believing that the world would never allow the Jewish race to disappear from Europe. Families were removed from their homes and began to disappear, and finally my family was sent away. I was the only one left. That didn’t last long. I was taken first to Plaszow and my work in the concentration camps began. Words cannot describe the things I did and the things I saw. I don’t know how I held on and survived living in ten of the concentration camps operated by the Germans. The horrors of these places are too much for me to describe, so you’ll have to read my story in *Prisoner B-3087*.

Prepared by:Kay Falls, York Intermediate School, kfalls@york.k12.sc.us

**QB 1**Mike Lupica  
Philomel Books, 2013  
261 Pages

SUMMARY:  
Jake Cullen has big shoes to fill at fourteen-years-old. His brother Wyatt led their high school team to the Texas state championships last season and is now off at Texas Tech being a big-shot there. His father made a name for himself as an NFL quarterback. Jake just wants to be a good teammate and a good quarterback. He wants to make his father proud, but Jake also wants to do it on his own and in his own way – not just because he’s his father’s son or Wyatt’s brother.

IFYOU LIKED THIS BOOK, THEN TRY:  
*Perfect Season*, Tim Green  
*First Team*, Tim Green  
*Fantasy League*, Mike Lupica  
*Cover Up: Mystery at the Super Bowl*, John Feinstein

WEBSITES:  
National Football League, <http://www.nfl.com>, This is the site for the National Football League.  
  
National Collegiate Athletic Association, <http://www.ncaa.com/sports/football>, This is the official site for college football.

Texas High School Football, <http://texashsfootball.com>, This site is all about football in Texas.

Time for Kids, <http://www.timeforkids.com/news/chat-mike-lupica/112206>, This *Time for Kids* article is an interview with Mike Lupica regarding *QB1* and his inspiration for the book.

BOOKTALK:  
Everyone in the town of Granger, Texas, eats, sleeps, and drinks football. If you’re looking for someone on a Friday night, you can find them at the high school stadium whether they have a kid who plays or not and every other day is spent analyzing and discussing the team. I think that’s what they call “obsessed.” Jake Cullen is a freshman quarterbacking the team that his brother Wyatt took all the way to the Texas State championship game just the season before. As you can imagine, big things are expected of Jake. If standing in the shadow of his amazingly-talented brother isn’t enough, Jake is also compared to his father, Troy Cullen, a local celebrity because of his success in the NFL. But Jake wants to do things his own way. He wants to be a great teammate; he wants his team to be successful; and he wants his dad to stand up and take notice that maybe there’s more than one way to be successful.

Prepared by:Christy Brown, Blythewood Middle School, cbrown@richland2.org

Michelle King, Kennedy Middle School, mking@acpsd.net

**SYLO**

D. J. MacHale

Razorbill, 2013

407 pages

SUMMARY:

High school freshman Tucker Pierce and his family have moved to the peaceful island of Pemberwick, Maine. He enjoys playing football and living a normal life, even if his life seems boring at times. When Tucker witnesses a bizarre midnight explosion over the ocean caused by strange aircraft flying through the night sky, he realizes that his boring life on the island may be changing. These strange events occur after the mysterious death of a fellow teammate. When the whole island is quarantined by SYLO, a secret branch of the US Navy, Tucker begins to suspect that all of these events are connected to a strange “supplement” known as “Ruby.” “Ruby” is being sold by a creepy surfer dude who claims it can give superhuman power to those who use it. As Tucker struggles with the forced quarantine that SYLO has placed on the island, he becomes suspicious of other people in the community, including his own parents. Tucker is joined by his best friend Quinn and classmate Tori as they try to find answers, dodge murderers, and avoid explosions throughout the story.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY…

*Virals*, Kathy Reichs

*The Water Wars*, Cameron Stracher

*Crashland*, Sean Williams

*Overpowered*, Mark H. Kruger

WEBSITES:

SYLO Chronicles trilogy, <http://www.sylobooks.com/>This website gives more information about SYLO and the rest of the trilogy. It includes biographical information about the author, videos related to the series, excerpts and audio, and a book trailer.

History of US Quarantines, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2014/10/07/a-brief-history-of-quarantines-in-the-united-states/>This website gives readers a brief history of times when areas of our country have been quarantined.

BOOKTALK:

“It was the perfect night for a football game. And for death. Not that the two have anything in common. When you hear the term ‘sudden death,’ you normally don’t expect there to be an actual loss of life, sudden or otherwise, but there was nothing normal about that night. It was the night it began. The night of the death. The first death.”

Tucker Pierce lives the normal life of a high school freshman, playing football and trying to be brave enough to ask a girl out. The mysterious death of his fellow teammate Marty begins a series of strange events that are anything but normal or boring. Tucker witnesses a strange midnight explosion over the ocean involving an odd flying object and finds a pile of mysterious red rocks on the beach. When the Maine island he lives on is placed under a forced quarantine by SYLO, a secret branch of the US Navy, Tucker realizes that his normal life is about to change. Read *SYLO* by D. J. MacHale to follow Tucker on his journey of adventure, mystery, and national conspiracies.

Prepared by:Dana Whelchel, Liberty Middle School, danawhelchel@pickens.k12.sc.us

**Tesla’s Attic**

Neal Shusterman and Eric Elfman

Disney – Hyperion Books 2014

246 pages

SUMMARY:

After a tragic fire results in his family moving to Colorado Springs, they discover an attic full of things that are reputed to have belonged to Nikola Tesla. Only after Nick disposes of many of these items do strange things begin to happen, and he and his friends must try to get everything back to prevent disaster.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY…

*Mickey Bolitar* books, Harlen Coben

*Books,* Blue Balliet

*The Brimstone Key,* Derek Benz

*Whales on Stilts,* M.T. Anderson

*Galaxy’s Most Wanted,* John Kloepfer

WEBSITES:   
Neal Shusterman, <http://www.storyman.com/>, author’s official site

Simon and Schuster, <http://authors.simonandschuster.com/Neal-Shusterman/1531698>, publisher’s official site for Neal Shusterman

PBS News Hour, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/5-things-you-didnt-know-about-nikola-tesla/>, eight things you didn’t know about Nikola Tesla  
  
PBS: Tesla Life and Legacy, <http://www.pbs.org/tesla/ll>, very thorough information about Tesla and his work  
  
Activist Post, <http://www.activistpost.com/2012/01/10-inventions-of-nikola-tesla-that.html>, the ten inventions of Nikola Tesla that changed the world

BOOKTALK:

What do a box camera, a tape recorder and a baseball glove have in common? Stumped? Well, let’s try again. What do an old box camera that takes pictures of future events, a tape recorder that records what you are thinking, and a baseball glove that attracts space objects, large space objects, have in common? These are all things Nick finds in his attic.

Nick, his dad, and brother Danny have just moved to an old Victorian home in Colorado Springs after a tragic fire costs them their home and Nick’s mother. Wanting to raise some cash, Nick decides to get rid of all the junk they find in the attic, and that’s when the fun and mystery begins. Nick and his new friends must track down all the items from the attic in order to save the world from a fatal collision with an asteroid poised to impact Colorado Springs.

Prepared by:Heidi Lewis, Guinyard-Butler Middle School, scjbalewis@gmail.com

**Under the Egg**

Laura Marx Fitzgerald

Dial Books for Young Readers, 2014

247 pages

SUMMARY:

When Theo’s grandfather Jack is hit by a car, his dying words to her hint at a treasure that may lie “under the egg.” What Theo stumbles upon leads her on a quest to solve a mystery and find a way to keep the family home. Along with her new neighbor Bodhi, Theo learns about Jack’s secret past, uncovers a potentially valuable lost work of art, and finds unlikely friends in her Greenwich Village neighborhood.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY …

*Kepler’s Dream*, Juliet Bell

*Moxie and the Art of Rule Breaking*, Erin Dionne

*Turn Left at the Cow*, Lisa Bullard

*Rescuing the Children: The Story of the Kindertransport,* Deborah Hodge

*Chasing Vermeer*, Blue Balliet

*From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler,* E. L. Konisburg

WEBSITES:

Author’s website, <http://www.lauramarxfitzgerald.com/>, Discussion guide with classroom activities; resources section with “Fact vs. Fiction,” links to more information on Raphael and WW II, and an interactive map of Theo’s Greenwich Village and NYC haunts

The True Story of the Monuments Men at The Smithsonian, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/true-story-monuments-men-180949569/?no-ist>, article with archival photographs, pictures of art work, and interactive map

Berga: Soldiers of Another War at PBS, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/berga/index.html>, Excellent sections dealing with the POW camp; video clips; interactive features

Raphael at the BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/artists/-raphael-4229>, Brief biography with a slideshow of more than one hundred paintings by Raphael

BOOKTALK:

Jack and Theo have always made a game of pinching pennies – raising chickens in the backyard, growing their own vegetables, and “recycling” others’ castoffs found on the curb. But when Jack is killed in an auto accident, the game turns serious as Theo tries to keep her eccentric mother in exotic tea and the crumbling family mansion (and even the electricity) running. When a familiar painting of an egg in Jack’s art studio reveals a hidden secret, Theo sets out to learn the truth about the painting and find Jack’s promised treasure. She is soon joined by Bodhi, whose movie star parents have moved in next door, in searching museums and the local library to track down the truth. Is there a real treasure? Is the painting a long-lost Renaissance work? Was Theo’s beloved grandfather Jack really an art thief? The answers are all under the egg.

Prepared by:Betty T. (BT) Bouton, Fort Johnson Middle, betty\_bouton@charleston.k12.sc.us

**The Winner’s Curse**   
Marie Rutkoski   
Farrer Straus Giroux, 2014   
355 pages

SUMMARY:   
Kestrel is the daughter of General Trahan. She is a member of the ruling Valorian class, and as a seventeen-year-old, she has a major life decision to make. She must decide to either marry or enlist in the army before she turns twenty. She does not want to do either. Kestrel loves music and is extremely competitive. This strong-willed teen would rather play the piano or a game of Bite and Sting than fight. Kestrel is moved to pay an inflated price for Arin, a handsome, Herrani slave who is up for auction. The Herrani people were conquered and enslaved by the Valorian emperor. Kestrel's competitive nature has her challenge Arin to a game of Bite and Sting. Through a series of games, Kestrel and Arin both learn that they are more alike than different, and they fall in love. However, the tables are turned when the Herrani take over the city, and Kestrel herself becomes Arin's prisoner and slave. She risks all by using her skills as a gambler and military strategist to free herself and negotiate a peaceful resolution to the Herrani-Valorian conflict.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...   
*What My Mother Doesn't Know*, Sonya Sones *Everneath*, Brodi Ashton  
*Fiendish*, Brenna Yovanoff  
WEBSITES:   
Publishers Weekly <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/podcasts/index.html?channel=5&podcast=203>  
Find out what prompted the author to write this story.

The Winner's Trilogy Official Website  
<http://www.thewinnerstrilogy.com/>

Play Bite and Sting  
<http://www.thewinnerstrilogy.com/bite-sting.html>  
This was a game that allowed Kestrel and Arin to compete with each other while at the same time learn about each other.

BOOKTALK:  
Kestrel is smart, determined, and competitive! As the general's daughter, she lives in a very elite and lavish society. At seventeen, she has two choices for her future. She can either marry or join forces with her father in the military. Her choices are muddied when she meets Arin. He would appear to be the opposite of Kestrel. As the two interact, they find that they are more alike than not. Being from opposite societies, they fight their feelings for each other. It would be scandalous for the two to be together. Is it a gamble worth taking for Kestrel or Arin? Will the Winner's Curse prevail?

Prepared by: Anne Sidey, North Augusta Middle School, asidey@acpsd.net

**Zebra Forest**  
Adina Rishe Gewirtz  
Candlewick Press, 2013  
200 pages

SUMMARY:  
Eleven-year-old Annie and her little brother, Rew, live with their unstable Grandmother in a small town where nothing exciting ever happens. Their mother ran off when they were both toddlers, and the only thing they know about their father is that he was killed in a brutal fight with another man. Annie and Rew spend their time reading their incomplete copy of *Treasure Island*, making up adventurous stories about their father, and playing in the Zebra Forest of white birch and chocolate oak trees behind their house. Annie wishes to have a real adventure, but she never expects that wish to come true. However, her wish does come true in an unexpected way when an escaped convict from the local prison shows up at their back door and takes them hostage. As a result, Annie and Rew realize that what they thought they knew about their family, and themselves, was completely wrong.

IF YOU LIKED THIS BOOK, TRY...  
*Tending to Grace,* Kimberly Newton Fusco  
*The Art of Keeping Cool,* Janet Taylor Lisle  
*Rex Zero, King of Nothing,* Tim Wynne-Jones  
*Finding Family,* Tonya Bolden  
*Way Down Deep,* Ruth White

WEBSITES:  
Adina Rishe Gerwitz, <http://www.adinagewirtz.com/>, the official website of the author of *Zebra Forest*; the site contains information about her works

Adina Rishe Gerwitz, author of Zebra Forest (Candlewick), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1SSDVAf0jg>, a video of the author talking about *Zebra Forest*.

Blythe Woolston: Zebra Forest: A Fresh Ink interview with Adina Rishe Gewirtz, <http://blythewoolston.blogspot.com/2013/04/zebra-forest-fresh-ink-interview-with.html>, an interview with Adina Rishe Gerwitz about the book

BOOKTALK:  
What would you wish for if you had three wishes? Annie wishes to get tall, to have an adventure, and to meet her father. She doubts that her first two wishes will come true, but she *knows* that her third wish is impossible. Why? Because her father is dead. Gran said he was killed in a fight with an angry man. Then, their mother ran off and left them at Gran’s house when they were still toddlers. Now, Gran hardly talks anymore and spends most of her time alone in her room. Annie and Rew entertain themselves by making up adventure stories about their father the pilot or secret agent. Annie never expects that her wish for a real adventure is about to come true; only, it is not the kind of adventure that she and her brother had imagined. This adventure comes in the form of an escaped prisoner walking through the back door, taking her family hostage, and altering everything that Annie and Rew have ever known about themselves.

Prepared by: Natalie Childs, Gable Middle School, childsna@spart6.org

**Zombie Baseball Beatdown**

Paolo Bacigalupi

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2013

304 pages

SUMMARY:

Ever wonder where your food comes from? This fast-paced mix of comedy and horror will leave you curious as to what exactly is in that school hamburger meat. Rabi, Miguel, and Joe are playing a friendly game of baseball when a sudden stink from the local meat-packing plant takes them on a wild ride of zombies, business malpractice, and racial biases. The boys must use their bats and their wits to survive the zombie invasion.

IF YOU LIKE THIS BOOK, TRY…

*Zombie Tag*, Hannah Moskowitz

*Zombie Apocalypse Survival Guide,* Heather Dakota

*How to be a Zombie: The Essential Guide for Anyone who Craves Brains,* Serena Valentino

WEBSITES:

Zombies, <http://www.umich.edu/~engl415/zombies/zombie.html>, a history of the folklore of zombies

A College Student’s Guide to Surviving a Zombie Attack, <http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/fall09/harris_m/index.html>, facts about zombies, tips on weapons, defense, shelter, and travel, as well as the top ten things to always remember around zombies

BOOKTALK:

*Zombies…baseball…flesh eating cows… poisonous beef* are essential parts in this action-packed novel. Rabi, Miguel, and Joe were enjoying a little baseball when a wave of stinky air came from the direction of the meatpacking plant. Even though, the cops and their own parents didn’t believe them, the boys still were convinced the plant was up to something. Join the boys as they discover the true secret behind the plant’s walls.

Prepared by:Dillon Burr, Chesterfield-Ruby Middle School, jburr@chesterfieldschools.org