

# Young Adult Top 40: Common Core Partnerships



PSLA Conference  
Session C  
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## **YA Top 40 Reviewers**

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**Melissa Daugherty, Sharon MS/HS, Sharon City School District, Sharon\***

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Krista Goodzinski, Riverside Middle School, Riverside School District, Ellwood City

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Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School, General McLane School District, Edinboro

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**Bold** – YA Top 40 Coordinators

\*PSLA Media Selection and Review co-chairs. PSLA Media Selection and Review includes: Best of the Best in Children's Literature, Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award, and YA Top 40

The 2014 YA Top 40 list is presented in alphabetical order by author of the fiction title in each pair. For a full list of all reviews from 2013 check out our blog, "PSLA Best in Children's and YA Literature" at <http://pslamediaselectionreview.edublogs.org/>

**Anderson, Laurie Halse.** *The Impossible Knife of Memory.* New York: Viking, 2014. 978-0-670-01209-1. \$18.99. 391p.  
Gr. 9 and up.

Hayley Kincaid has been running away for the past five years. Running away from her past; from memories that haunt her, and from the death of the father she used to know. But now Hayley must face the past she's been running from; a history of memories that she's lost, hidden, or suppressed. A history that torments her father, Andy, a war veteran haunted daily by his experiences; a history Hayley does not want to remember because it hurts, like an eighteen wheeler, and Hayley has enough hurt in her life. *The Impossible Knife of Memory* cuts to the core of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the impact it has not only on the person who suffered the trauma, but also family and loved-ones. Anderson eloquently separates the pain one trauma can have on an individual and the residual effect and suffering endured for years to come because "[t]he difference between forgetting something and not remembering it is big enough to drive an eighteen-wheeler through" (147-8).

**Realistic**

**Erin Parkinson, Lincoln Jr/Sr High School, Ellwood City**

**Farrell, Mary Cronk.** *Pure Grit: How American World War II Nurses Survived Battle and Prison Camp in the Pacific.* New York: Abrams, 2014. 978-1-4197-1028-5. \$24.95. 160 p. Gr. 7 and up.

Unlike other World War II titles, *Pure Grit* explores the harrowing lives of Army and Navy nurses stationed in the Philippines from 1941 – 1945. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the female nurses worked tirelessly to care for the wounded soldiers and sailors sent to Manila during the bombings on the Pacific front until they were taken prisoner by Japanese forces in January 1942. Continuing their work, the imprisoned nurses cared for military and non-military alike through starvation, severe disease, and lack of medical equipment and medicines. It was not until 1945 that the nurses, and others, were liberated by U.S. troops. Upon their return home, the women struggled returning to the "female role" of the late 1940s and 1950s. Many suffered from PTSD, but, since it was not recognized by the military at this time, they were left to figure out life on their own. In 1983, the women who served and were imprisoned in the Philippines by the Japanese were finally recognized for their heroism and patriotism. Today, all military women, including those identified in *Pure Grit*, are recognized in Washington D.C. at the Women in Military Service for America monument. *Pure Grit* is a must-have for all middle school and high school libraries because it not only provides a different perspective of World War II, but it also shares the stories of heroism by Army and Navy nurses that are often forgotten.

**940.54; World War II**

**Erin Parkinson, Lincoln Jr/Sr High School, Ellwood City**

**Brown, Don.** *The Great American Dust Bowl.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013. 978-0-547-81550-3. 80 p. \$18.99.  
Gr. 7-12.

*The Great American Dust Bowl* is, simply put, a beautiful book. It manages to convey the horror of the Dust Bowl in an 80 page graphic format. The book starts at the very beginning, describing the geological formation of the Great Plains. It also discusses the delicate ecological balance between the life of the American Indians and the bison. The Native Americans took as many bison as they needed, and there was still enough free land to sustain the area's ecosystem. Things began to change when the pioneers settled in the Southern Plains and their cattle over-grazed the land. Soon, World War I, and an increasing need for food, led farmers to plow their fields under to plant wheat. The post-war collapse of the wheat market, combined with a ten-year drought, resulted in a kind of misery that has rarely been seen in the United States. The illustrations of dust, death, and desperation have an impact that many students will not feel from reading a text book. *The Great American Dust Bowl* contains source notes and a useful selected bibliography. There is one current photograph in the book, a picture of a dust storm hitting Phoenix, Arizona in 2011. Seeing that picture made me wonder what, if anything, we have learned from the catastrophic events of the 1930's.

**978; American History, Dust Bowl Era**

**Susan Fox, Washington Jr/Sr High School**

**Marcus, Leonard S.** *Randolph Caldecott: The Man Who Could Not Stop Drawing.* New York: Frances Foster, 2013. 978-0-374-31025-7. 64 p. \$24.99. Gr. 6 and up.

As the Caldecott Medal turns 75, Leonard Marcus's *Randolph Caldecott: The Man Who Could Not Stop Drawing* reminds readers of the impact one illustrator has had on storytelling. Born March 22, 1846, Randolph Caldecott was the premier artist and illustrator of stories throughout the middle and late Nineteenth Century. Beginning with his sketches on bank stationary while working as a bank clerk, Caldecott soon moved into the world of news by drawing major events for the *Illustrated London News*. Soon after his career began, Caldecott moved to Manchester and later London to hone his craft. As his popularity grew from his newspaper drawings, he also began to gain notice in the literary world after illustrating Washington Irving's *Old Christmas: From the Sketch Book of Washington Irving*, which included over 100 original Caldecott drawings. Marcus crafts a beautiful biography of Caldecott through both his words and Caldecott's drawings. Every page includes Caldecott's drawings ranging from his time as a bank clerk, through his newspaper days, and many famous story illustrations. This is not only a biographical piece, but also a wonderful addition to any art collection.

**741.6; Art, Biography**

**Erin Parkinson, Lincoln Jr/Sr High School, Ellwood City**

**Cataneo, D.M. *Eggplant Alley*. Piermont, NH: Bunker Hill Publishing, 2013. 978-1-59373-146-5. 352 p. \$17.95. Gr. 9-12.** Nicky Martini is a seventh grader growing up in the Bronx in 1970. He has decided that his life has changed for the worse and has come up with a list of “five things that ruined my childhood.” Nicky’s list has little bearing on the reality of the time. His predominantly Italian-American neighborhood is becoming more diverse as different ethnic groups move into his apartment complex. Racism and crime are growing; hippies are a part of the landscape, and Vietnam War protests are rampant. Nicky makes sense of the world by dividing it into “US” (the white families in his neighborhood) and “THEM” (minorities and war protesters). Things become a little less clear when his brother, Roy, is drafted to go to Vietnam. Nicky befriends Roy’s girlfriend, Margalo, as they grieve over Roy’s departure. Their grief is almost insurmountable when Roy is declared “missing in action”. Nicky also makes friends with a new boy in his apartment complex, Lester Allnuts. Lester and Nicky share a love of stickball, water balloons, and other teenage pursuits. There is something mysterious about Lester, although Nicky cannot figure out what it is. This “mystery”, when revealed, changes Nicky’s whole perspective on “us” and “them”. Nicky truly begins to grow up and become his own man. This book is an authentic view of post-Camelot America. Students will probably be shocked at the blatant racism, as well as some of the language used, but the book does reflect life in the late 1960s.

**Historical Fiction (Vietnam War Era)**

**Susan Fox, Washington Jr/Sr High School**

**Swanson, James L. *“The President Has Been Shot!”: the Assassination of John F. Kennedy*. New York: Scholastic, 2013. 978-0-545-49007-8. 270 p. \$18.99. Gr. 6-10.**

Many books have been written about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. “*The President Has Been Shot!*” is a little different in that it seems aimed toward reluctant or younger readers. The language is vivid and easy for most students to understand. Some attention is paid to JFK’s life and political career, but the main focus of the book is Lee Harvey Oswald. Oswald’s psychology is examined closely; after all, what type of person would want to kill a president? His attention-seeking behavior, obsession with firearms, and belief in Communist/Socialist philosophy may have provided some clues to his future actions. The rest of the book is devoted to Oswald’s execution of “the perfect crime”, JFK’s funeral, and Oswald’s own murder by Jack Ruby. Although the author’s writing style seems a bit simplistic and sensational, this book is a winner. It is a feast for the eyes with its many archival photographs and diagrams. The supplemental material at the end of the book is extensive. There is a listing of places that one can visit to learn more about the assassination, as well as a thorough bibliography with source notes. One last point should be noted: James Swanson believes in the “single bullet theory”. Readers should not expect to find any conspiracy theories detailed within this book.

**973.922 American History, Biography**

**Susan Fox, Washington Jr/Sr High School**

**Clement, Jennifer. *Prayers for the Stolen*. London: Hogarth, 2014. 978-0-8041-3878-9. \$23.00. 224 p. Gr. 9-12.**

*Prayers for the Stolen* is not for the faint of heart nor the unenlightened reader, but it is an excellent read for those who are ready to learn more about the lives of those affected by the drug trade in Mexico. The young narrator, Ladydi Garcia Martinez, begins her tale by saying that all of the mothers in her small mountainous village in the Mexican state of Guerrero wish for boys, since young girls can easily become one of “the stolen”: young girls taken by members of the drug cartels and often turned into sex slaves. Ladydi and her group of friends attend school when they can but are dependent upon the teachers sent by the state, and many are often frightened of the possibility of working in the dangerous part of the country. Beautiful Paula becomes one of the stolen, but she manages to escape and return to the village. When Ladydi is given the opportunity to work for a wealthy family in the nearby city, she cannot know how this one decision will change the course of her life forever. Numerous difficult themes are presented, from political corruption to marital infidelity, and alcoholism to human rights. Give this novel to your mature students interested in learning about the lives of teens in other countries and situations.

**Realistic Fiction**

**Lindsey Myers, Peters Township High School**

**Lewis, John. *March: Book One*. Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions, 2013. 978-1-6030-9300-2. \$14.95. 128 p. Gr. 9-12.**

If young adults knew nothing about John Lewis prior to reading this graphic novel, it will quickly peak their interest to learn more about this important character in the Civil Rights Movement. The first in a planned trilogy, the text begins with Congressman Lewis preparing to attend the inauguration of President Barack Obama in January of 2009. When he meets a young black mother and her two children, he shares with them his life story, telling of his early years growing up on a farm in Alabama, his dedication to learning Scripture, and his experiences with segregation in the South. The story jumps back and forth as the Congressman answers the youngsters’ questions, highlighting how he became involved in the nonviolent protest movement through his associations with Martin Luther King, Jr. and his participation in the lunch counter sit-ins in Nashville. The stark black and white illustrations echo the segregationist policies of the time period but also offer clear and unapologetic images of the lives of the young, intelligent black community that desperately wanted to make a difference but keep their promise of non-violence. This graphic novel brings alive the struggles of those who fought for racial equality, and readers will eagerly await the upcoming installments.

**323 Civil Rights**

**Lindsey Myers, Peters Township High School**

**Crilly, Paul. *The Osiris Curse (A Tweed and Nightingale Adventure Book 2)*. Amherst, NY: PYR, 2013. 978-1-61614-857-7. 286 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7 – 12.**

*The Osiris Curse*, the second adventure of British teens Octavia Nightingale and Sebastian Tweed, begins with the veiled murder of Nikola Tesla. From there the adventure takes off as the world of Victorian England overlaps with a secret society in Egypt and a suspenseful quest unfolds. Tesla's designs for super weapons have fallen into the wrong hands. Tweed and Nightingale progress rapidly towards a resolution to the mystery in the "alternate historic setting" of Crilly's novel. The innovative gadgetry of *The Osiris Curse* will appeal to some readers while the witty characters will appeal to others. In Egypt, Tweed and Nightingale are slammed by a second mystery, when the people responsible for Tesla's demise turn out to be the same people responsible for the disappearance of Nightingale's mother. The amateur detectives end up on the maiden voyage of an airship, The Albion, which is hijacked. They navigate in pods to catch up with the villains as the plot races to a satisfying conclusion with a hint of future adventures for Tweed and Nightingale. This novel hits the bull's eye in every way!

**Steampunk; Adventure**

**Susan L. Ennis, Seneca Valley Middle School**

**Walker, Robert. *Transportation Inventions: Moving Our World Forward (Inventions That Shaped the Modern World series)*. New York: Crabtree, 2014. 978-0-7787-0223-84-8. 48 p. \$16.99 Gr. 5-8.**

*Transportation Inventions* is a high interest, nonfiction selection that can be paired with *The Osiris Curse* to enhance one's reading of the novel. Each passage is a quick read, yet is still laden with technological details. Historical context is included with each section of transportation highlights. Chapter 2, "Steam and Rail", showcases the creation process, trial and error, and final transport design, presented fluidly yet efficiently. This chapter perfectly matches the transportation mode used in several parts of the novel. Chapter 3 extends from the original airships to modern zeppelins and explains the purpose of such a cumbersome example; this supports the scenes in the novel when the limitations of driving an airship change the trajectory of the plot. The best thing about *Transportation Inventions: Moving Our World Forward* is that readers are drawn to its content, eager to examine the many primary source sketches and blueprints and discuss the progress of vehicular travel throughout the 20th century.

**388; Transportation**

**Susan L. Ennis, Seneca Valley Middle School**

**Davenport, Roger. *Wanderer*. New York: Sky Pony Press, 2013. 978-1-62087-541-4. 277 p. \$16.95. Gr. 5-10.**

At first, *Wanderer*, by Roger Davenport, seemed to be just another predictable, dystopian YA novel. However, the main characters of Keen, a desert wanderer in the vicinity, and the pampered Essa, living comfortably in the pyramid, align their strengths to overcome thrilling dangers. The best aspect of *Wanderer* is that there are no vulgarities, sexual situations, or sensitive issues to distract from a winning plot and fascinating characters. The action is the key, and the characters, from two diverse worlds, Keen and Essa, make decisions to overcome obstacles and forge a new future for their generation. Although the author has not announced a sequel or series, the plot leaves open a door for future installments. Futuristic trends, such as genetic experiments and technological weapons, mix with hot air balloon rides and themes of friendship and loyalty to craft an excellent novel in the style of *The Hunger Games*. This novel is perfect for any middle school reader and can be enjoyed by older readers who love a classic adventure theme.

**Dystopian**

**Susan L. Ennis, Seneca Valley Middle School**

**George, Charles and Linda George. *The Pyramids of Giza (Ancient Egyptian Wonders series)*. San Diego: Reference Point, 2013. 978-1-60152-258-0. 80 p. \$29.99. Gr. 7-12.**

*The Pyramids of Giza*, by Charles and Linda George, features stunning photographs along with detailed maps and other illustrations to stand above the typical text about Ancient Egypt. The content is to the point, yet detailed enough for this nonfiction book to be used as a credible research source; information is presented in an informal, highly accurate style to attract the reader. In *Wanderer*, the novel that can be paired with *The Pyramids of Giza*, students can learn not only the reasons why pyramids were built to last, but can also compare the historic need for the pyramids with the basic descriptions of the ever-present pyramids that shadow the desert people in *Wanderer*. Another strong aspect of *The Pyramids of Giza*, distinguishing this Egyptian book from other well-known texts, is the use of numerous fact boxes sprinkled throughout each chapter. These fact boxes highlight tidbits of fascinating data about the pyramids and other Egyptian artifacts. It is recommended to use this book in advance of reading the novel *Wanderer* in order to preview the setting and emphasize the greatness of the structures.

**932; Egypt**

**Susan L. Ennis, Seneca Valley Middle School**

**Gansworth, Eric. *If I Ever Get Out of Here*. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2013. 978-0-545-41730-3. 359 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-12.**

Lewis "Shoe" Blake lives on Western New York's Tuscarora Indian reservation during the mid-1970s. Lewis is gifted and in an academically advanced class at a predominantly white junior high school. There is a great deal of prejudice toward Native Americans,

so Lewis is a social outcast. Things begin to change for him when George Haddonfield arrives at his school. George is a military kid; his father is stationed at the local Air Force base. He has no idea about the troubled history between the local whites and the Native Americans, so he befriends Lewis. George and Lewis bond over the Beatles, Paul McCartney and Wings, and other popular rock groups. The two boys spend a lot of time together, but their relationship becomes strained. Lewis refuses to talk about the poverty he lives in, his shame about being an Indian, or about a bully who is making his life miserable. Eventually, a number of factors force him to be honest with George. Just as the boys' friendship is getting back to normal, George's father is transferred to another Air Force base. George leaves within a short time, but Lewis is forever changed. Lewis has a deadpan sense of humor of which many teens will relate. The adult characters in this book are particularly well developed with their own strengths and weaknesses. Lewis' Uncle Albert is also memorable; he isn't book smart, but he has a self-deprecating wisdom that guides Lewis as he's growing up.

**Historical Realism**

**Susan Fox, Washington Jr/ Sr High School**

**Ellis, Deborah. *Looks Like Daylight: Voices of Indigenous Kids*. Toronto: Groundwood, 2013. 978-1-55498-120-5. 252 p. \$15.95. Gr. 7-12.**

Deborah Ellis, author of the *Breadwinner* series, spent two years travelling North America interviewing Native American/First Nations students. The young people she interviewed ranged from nine to eighteen years in age and belonged to Indian Tribes located from the Arctic Circle to Florida and from Hawaii to Nova Scotia. These students live in a variety of different settings, but all seem to experience the effects of government policies designed to eliminate their culture. There is a sense of grief that is a major theme running through this book. Most interviewees mention the effects of the infamous residential schools and government adoption programs that removed Native children from their homes. The problems these students describe- substance abuse, poverty, health problems, and violence- are pervasive throughout the tribes. More and more of the young people interviewed are handling their challenges by turning to traditional customs. Students are involved in tribe governance, spiritual practices, and cultural events. Many of the interviewees express deep pride in their heritage and new optimism about the future. *Looks Like Daylight* gives a very human face to Native American/ First Nations historical study.

**305.23 Indian Children, North America**

**Susan Fox, Washington Jr/Sr High School**

**Gardner, Sally. *Maggot Moon*. Berryville, VA: Candlewick, 2013. 978-0-7636-6553-1. 279 p. \$16.99. Gr. 9-12.**

In this 2014 Michael Printz Honor Book, readers are introduced to fifteen-year-old, Standish Treadwell, in 100 short chapters. In a dystopian, alternative 1950s United Kingdom, Standish lives in a world controlled by an oppressive regime, The Motherland, who is determined to show their world supremacy with a moon landing. Standish is a bit of a loner; he cannot read or write and only has one friend, Hector. The pair survive school beatings, food scarcity, constant surveillance, and a life of poverty by weaving rich daydreams and finding comfort in something as simple as their friendship. While the loss of Standish's parents left him a shell of the self he once knew, Hector encourages him that his differences, including different colored eyes and illiteracy, make him more original and unique than anyone else in their cruel society. When Hector and his family disappear, Standish is driven by his friendship to find them, and uncovers that The Motherland may not be all it seems, and the moon landing is just a hoax. Gardner creates a unique world and unique voice in Standish that is unlike any other dystopian or alternative history novel out there; images of flies, rats, and maggots accompany the text as the story unfolds. This is a must for any teen collection, but is recommended for older teens due to the vivid descriptions of violence.

**Dystopian**

**Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School**

**Cunningham, Darryl. *How to Fake a Moon Landing: Exposing the Myths of Science Denial*. New York: Abrams ComicArts, 2013. 978-1-4197-0689-9. 176 p. \$16.95. Gr. 6-12.**

Fact, fiction, misinformation, and disinformation are all explored in *How to Fake a Moon Landing*, a nonfiction graphic novel that explores the scientific process. With a little help from Bill Nye and the television show, Mythbusters, Cunningham's topics include evolution, vaccines, climate change, and the moon landing; all hot-button issues students are exposed to in school, or that are explored in the media and by their favorite celebrities. Interspersing scientific fact with common knowledge, this clever and often cheekily funny graphic novel shows teens that critical thinking is important when researching, arguing, and presenting on a topic; no matter the subject. Cunningham provides well balanced research, an important skill for students, that directly correlates to PA Common Core. This graphic novel provides an interesting conversation for any classroom, prompting students to explore the topics on their own, and better yet, consult the list of sources at the end of the book to come to their own conclusion on a specific topic.

**001.9 Science (Graphic Novel)**

**Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School**

**Gaiman, Neil. *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*. New York: Harper Collins, 2013. 978-0-0622-5565-5. 178 p. \$25.99. Gr. 10 and up.**

Neil Gaiman masterfully does it again with *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*. In this haunting tale of hope, acceptance and ultimately of forgiveness, the un-named narrator revisits his childhood home in rural England. He finds himself in front of his old neighbors' farmhouse and memories come flooding back to him. He is seven years old again and meeting the mysterious Lettie Hempstock for the first time. Lettie takes him on an adventure that changes their lives forever. When the narrator brings the parasite Ursula Monkton back, he is determined to be brave and get rid of her on his own. Lettie, her mother, and grandmother are the only ones strong enough to rid the world of Ursula, and eventually they sacrifice everything for Lettie's new friend.

**Science Fiction**

**Laura Ward, Fox Chapel Area High School**

**Earl, Ester. *This Star Won't Go Out*. New York: Dutton, 2014. 978-0-525-42636-3. 431p. \$19.99. Gr. 7 and up.**

After being diagnosed with thyroid cancer at the age of twelve, Esther Grace Earl continued to touch the world with her online presence in the Nerdfighting community and on Catitude. *This Star Won't Go Out* is Earl's memoir, sharing her extraordinary letters, sketches, and fiction, as well as family and friends' photographs, essays, and caring bridge entries that emphasize the infinite amount of lives she has touched. Award winning author, John Green lends a hand by writing the introduction for his dear friend Esther's memoir.

**362.19699 Cancer, Memoir**

**Laura Ward, Fox Chapel Area High School**

**Gantos, Jack. *From Norvelt to Nowhere*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013. 978-0-374-37994-0. 278 p. \$16.99. Gr. 6-9.**

When readers last left Jackie Gantos (*Dead End in Norvelt*, 2011), a series of murders had occurred, killing off all of the "old ladies" of Norvelt, until Miss Volker was the only original Norveltian remaining. Tied to a promise she once made to Mr. Spizz about marrying him if she was the last one standing, Spizz has become the prime suspect in the murders, but he has disappeared. When Mrs. Custard, an original Norveltian, moves back to Norvelt, Miss Volker is no longer tied to her promise of marrying Spizz; at least that is until Mrs. Custard eats a poisoned Girl Scout Thin Mint and dies. Now it's up to Jackie and Miss Volker to find Spizz before the police do and figure out who the real murderer is. Set during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Gantos once again weaves together historical realism that integrates the 1960s, 1930s, American history and geography, and world history to hilariously share the story of twelve-year-old Jackie Gantos and his escapades of finding a "bomb shelter", being a getaway driver up and down the East coast, and solving a murder while being chased by the murderer. This is a perfect follow-up and must have for all middle school collections.

**Historical Realism**

**Erin Parkinson, Lincoln Jr/Sr High School, Ellwood City**

**O'Reilly, Bill. *Kennedy's Last Days: The Assassination That Defined a Generation*. New York: Henry Holt, 2013. 978-0-8050-9802-0. 318 p. \$19.99. Gr. 5-9.**

*Kennedy's Last Days*, an adaptation for younger readers of *Killing Kennedy* also by Bill O'Reilly, is a wonderful addition to any middle school and/or high school American history collection. Through original photographs, campaign images, pictures, and maps, O'Reilly shares the story of the rise of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Massachusetts senator and 35th President of the United States of America and his assassination by Lee Harvey Oswald in 1963. Each short chapter integrates images of the people, places, and events surrounding JFK's rise to power, reign in Camelot, and death to enhance the reader's understanding of this horrific event. In addition to biographical information about Kennedy, O'Reilly also includes much detail about Kennedy's assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, Civil Rights, the Kennedy family, Robert F. Kennedy, and the early to mid-1900s. This book is a perfect Common Core companion for literary and informational text comparison.

**973.922; American History, Presidents**

**Erin Parkinson, Lincoln Jr/Sr High School, Ellwood City**

**Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Gingersnap*. New York: Wendy Lamb, 2013. 978-0-375-83891-0. 147 p. \$15.99. Gr. 6 and up.**

Jayna and Rob were orphaned at a young age when their parents were killed in a car accident. They lived in foster homes until Rob turned eighteen and took custody of Jayna. He is her only family; she cannot even remember her parents. When Rob gets called to active duty in the war, Jayna is left with their cranky landlady, Celine. When she receives notification that Rob is missing in action, she goes into their house where Rob has told her there are things relating to her family. She finds a recipe book with a photo of a bakery named Gingersnap, which is her nickname. She leaves her upstate New York home bound for Brooklyn with a ghost and a turtle as her companions. When she finds Gingersnap, she has a feeling she is speaking with the grandmother she never knew. As Jayna waits for news of Rob, Elise takes her in, and they discover the bonds of family run deeper than either of them knew. Soup recipes pepper the book, with names like Hope soup and Feel Better soup relating to Jayna's state of mind.

**Historical Fiction (WW II); Fantasy**

**Kathryn Gilbride, North Pocono Middle and High Schools**

**Weaver, Dennis. *Hearty Soups: A Collection of Homemade Soups*. Kindle eBook: Prepared Pantry, 2014. 55 p. \$2.99. Gr. 6 and up.**

This cookbook includes only soup recipes that provide basic instruction for a variety of cream and broth based soups that are appropriate for beginner cooks. The 24 different recipes offer a variety of soups for students, but are not overwhelming. It correlates well with various aspects of PA Common Core by integrating reading, math, and food technology and science, along with connecting to “food based” literary fiction, such as *Gingersnap*, to provide students with literary and informational connections.

**641.8 Cookbook**

**Kathryn Gilbride, North Pocono Middle and High Schools**

**Hoblin, Paul. *The Beast*. Minneapolis: Darby Creek, 2013. 978-1-4677-0301-7. 109p. \$20.95. Gr. 6 and up.**

Alyssa Duncan likes to think of herself as the “the beast” of her high school soccer team. Her job, to be a totally committed and assertive goalie in order to help her team make the state championships, is jeopardized when she suffers a concussion and is forced into the uncomfortable position of sitting on the sidelines. When Becca, a talented teammate, is tapped to fill in at goal, she turns out to be a pretty talented goalie too. Alyssa struggles with her newfound feelings of insecurity and jealousy as she watches the team succeed without her. Worried about losing her spot on the team, she contemplates rushing her recovery in order to get back in goal, but that action could have serious medical and long-term repercussions.

**Realistic**

**Elizabeth Henry, Lampeter-Strasburg HS/MS**

**Hudson, Maryann. *Concussions in Sports*. North Mankato, MN: ABDO, 2014. 9781624031205. 64 p. \$22.95. Gr. 6-10.**

Awareness of concussions and other types of traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) in sports is at an all-time high due to high profile incidents in the NFL and other professional sports. In *Concussions in Sports*, author Maryann Hudson turns an investigative lens on this important topic. The causes and science behind concussions are discussed and explained in an easy to understand manner. Also discussed are concussion prevention recommendations and treatment protocols used by medical professionals and athletic groups. Real life experiences of both male and female student and professional athletes from various sports (football, soccer, lacrosse, etc.) that have suffered concussions are incorporated throughout the text. Discussion questions and activities, along with a glossary of medical terms are also included. This book will serve as a good overview source for students working on research projects or for athletes seeking information on the topic.

**617.4; Sports Injuries**

**Elizabeth Henry, Lampeter-Strasburg HS/MS**

**Kizer, Amber. *A Matter of Days*. New York: Delacorte, 2013. 978-0-385-73973-3. 276 p. \$16.99. Gr. 6-12.**

Following the release of a deadly virus which killed 98% of the world’s population, sixteen-year-old Nadia and her little brother, Rabbit, must follow their Uncle Bean’s plan to join him and their grandfather, Pappi, across the country. Chapters are divided by the amount of days since “The Outbreak”, beginning on day 56 when their mother dies, and the pair set out in their loaded Jeep. Throughout their journey they encounter problems including heavy snow, multiple thieves, and ruthless gangs, but also some kindness. On day 62 they rescue a seriously injured Saint Bernard they name Twawki, and on day 63 they meet Zach, a formerly homeless teen. He kindly shares his resources, and on day 75 moves on with Nadia, Rabbit, Twawki and Al, an entertaining parrot. On day 100, exhausted and disheveled, they finally reach Pappi’s survivalist camp; their new home. This adventurous page turner is not as graphically brutal as other recent apocalyptic titles. In a four page author’s note, Kizer discusses her interest in viruses as her purpose for writing this story. She speaks directly to readers about viruses in general, the likelihood of a pandemic of this magnitude occurring, and past pandemics. While reassuring those who may fear these topics, she also recommends survivalist books and possible careers for those interested.

**Science Fiction**

**Michelle Hankin, Sandy Run Middle School**

**Jarrow, Gail. *Red Madness: How a Medical Mystery Changed What We Eat*. Honesdale, PA: Calkins Creek, 2014. 978-1-59078-732-8. 192 p. Grade 5 and up.**

In the early 1900’s, a deadly and disfiguring illness began to spread through the rural South. People who contracted the disease experienced a bright red rash on their hands and faces, intestinal illness, weakness, dementia, and eventually death. The disease, known as pellagra, was a mystery. It was clear that people who suffered from it tended to be poor and eat a lot of corn products. However, there was little agreement on how to cure or prevent it. *Red Madness* tells the story of how this medical mystery was solved. It also describes surprising changes made to the American food supply to prevent pellagra’s reoccurrence. This book includes the stories of pellagra victims, the research process, and many historic photographs. The supplemental information at the end of the book is especially useful; there is an extensive glossary, a timeline that illustrates the spread of the disease/development of a cure, and a broad list of additional resources. *Red Madness* is highly recommended for middle school and high school collections. It exemplifies real life application of the scientific process and is a compelling story for a wide range of students

**616.3; Illness, Pandemics**

**Susan E. Fox, Washington Jr/Sr High School**

**Kehoe, Stasia Ward. *The Sound of Letting Go*. New York: Viking, 2014. 978-0-6701-5535-5. 388 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9-12.**

Growing up is never an easy road since just about everyone has some difficulty or obstacle to overcome. Daisy is a sixteen-year old girl whose life revolves around the care of her younger teenage brother, Steven, who is severely autistic and becoming more difficult to manage. An accomplished trumpeter, Daisy has to practice in a sound proof room in her basement since sounds upset her brother. Rarely do her parents hear her play at home or at school because someone has to care for Steven. Daisy has to come home immediately after school many days so her mother can get a break from Steven who needs 24 hour care. Daisy's father is also coming home later and later, and Daisy has a major crush on an old playground friend who is now considered a bad boy. Daisy just wants to break away from her life, but when her parents approach her about finding a more suitable home for her brother, she finds her world turning upside-down. Unable to deal with the thought that her brother would be better off with others who are not family and the reality that she could have a "normal" life, Daisy feels completely torn, angry, and guilty. Told in verse, this novel is beautifully written and very touching on many levels.

**Realistic**

**Marian Kohan, Erie School District**

**Higashida, Naoki. *The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year Old Boy with Autism*. Translated by K.A. Yoshido and David Mitchell. New York: Random House, 2013 (English Translation). 978-0-8129-9486-5. 135 p. \$22.00. Gr. 7-12.**

This memoir is an absolutely remarkable book that is a must read for anyone who comes into contact with those with autism. This translated memoir, of a then thirteen-year old Japanese boy with autism, gives readers insight into the world inside the mind of a person with autism. Using an alphabet grid, Naoki is able to answer questions about his behaviors and outbursts common to many children with severe autism and gives readers a glimpse into what autistic children think about the world around them. The depths of wonder and compassion that are found in Naoki's words, and his feelings will enlighten any reader. Although this book has been both highly praised for its honesty and critically questioned as to its authenticity, it is a good addition to any library because of its new and unique voice about autism. It challenges the reader to consider the possibilities of what is going on in the brain of someone with this condition. Also included are short fictional pieces written by Naoki that reflect his ideas on life.

**616.85; Autism; Memoir**

**Marian Kohan, Erie School District**

**Kuehn, Stephanie. *Charm & Strange*. New York: St. Martin's, 2013. 978-1-25002-194-6. 224 p. \$17.99 Gr. 11 and up.**

Andrew Winston Winters is a troubled young man who is merely a lonely teenage boy, a werewolf, a psychopath, or something much worse. Andrew Winston Winters has been away at his Vermont boarding school since the age of twelve and is known to classmates as Win. The two alternating plots vary chapter by chapter throughout the book, "Matter" and "Antimatter". "Matter" recounts present day at the Vermont boarding school and a brutal slaying of nearby hikers. These chapters deal with Win not knowing if the beast inside him is real and whether or not he is the werewolf responsible for recent attacks on townies. In "Antimatter", readers are introduced to a violent and troubled ten year old boy, Drew, who lives on a farm in rural Virginia. Unlike anything published recently, Kuehn recounts a family history of abuse, violence, and psychological dysfunction through vivid flashbacks. These flashbacks directly connect to what is happening in sixteen year old Win's life. This book is a favorite realistic fiction title of the year and is truly difficult to detail without spoiling the mystery of Win/Drew. The content is graphic and best suited for upper high school grades and public library collections. It is the winner of the 2014 William C. Morris Award for a debut book published by a first-time author writing for teens.

**Realistic, Mystery**

**Robin Burns, Salisbury High School**

**Huddle, Lorena. *Teen Suicide (Teen Mental Health series)*. New York: Rosen, 2013. 978-1-44884-586-6. 48 p. \$27.95. Gr. 7 and up.**

*Teen Suicide* is part of a series published by Rosen, *Teen Mental Health*, and combines a unique news style into an informative nonfiction title geared toward middle and high school students. The text is easy to read and is augmented with colorful photographs and pop out statistical charts and graphs. Included in the title is an in depth definitions section, a list of "10 Great Questions to Ask a School Counselor", and a compilation of organizations available for outreach support. Depression and teenage suicide is a growing problem in the United States and the book gives a good overview of the contributing factors associated with such tragedies. The book has a glossary, web-site resource list, bibliography for further reading, and an easy to use index. This title is highly recommended for high school libraries looking to add to their mental health and wellness sections.

**362.28; Depression, Suicide**

**Robin Burns, Salisbury High School**

**LaFleur, Suzanne. *Listening for Lucca*. New York: Wendy Lamb, 2013. 978-0-3857-4299-3. 229 p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.**

Lucca hasn't said a word for quite some time, and Siena will do just about anything to encourage him to talk even if that means inhabiting the body of a young girl from 40 years ago. Siena and her family move from busy New York City to Maine to provide a more peaceful living situation for Lucca, who has not spoken a word since his older sister told him to "shut-up". As soon as they move into the house, Siena and Lucca begin experiencing moments when they can feel ghosts. Siena is able to channel Sarah, a young girl that lived in the house 40 years ago, by using a pen that she found, and Lucca is able to sense when the ghosts are in his room by making circles in the air with his hands. Through her collection of trinkets and the story she is writing through Sarah, Siena thinks she knows how to get Lucca to speak again. With the help of her new friends, Siena pulls the past and present together to bring a sense of unity back to her family.

**Historical**

**Krista Goodzinski, Riverside Middle School**

**Blum, Sophia. *Unspoken Words*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2013. 978-1-4679-8259-7. 74 p. \$25.00. Gr. 7 and up.**

Selective mutism is a condition that is not often talked about. Many times parents are embarrassed that their child is not communicating like other children. Selective mutism more often than not occurs suddenly. One day a child is talking, and the next day he/she is not. This book provides an overview of selective mutism from a teenage girl who suffered with the condition during her younger years. Often, those that suffer from the condition cannot explain why it has happened, but Sophie's story provides ways to overcome anxiety that is associated with selective mutism. She provides alternatives and ways that those who suffer with selective mutism are able to function as 'normal' as possible and be successful. This book could be used in conjunction with social/character education as well as in a life skills or health class.

**618.92; Pediatrics**

**Krista Goodzinski, Riverside Middle School**

**Lasky, Kathryn. *The Extra*. Somerville: Candlewick, 2013. 978-07636-3972-3. 320 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7 and up.**

Lilo is an ordinary fifteen year old girl living with her family in Vienna during the 1940's when her life is completely changed by Hitler's Nazi Party. Romani people like Lilo's family are told they must be fingerprinted and identified as part of the "Gypsy plague". The story for Lilo and thousands of other Romani quickly escalates as they are taken away and put into either work or concentration camps. Lilo is spared from the camps and ultimately separated from her family when she is hand selected by filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl to be in a Nazi propaganda film, *Tiefland*. Working as an extra and a fictionalized "film slave", Lilo struggles to stay alive in poor conditions before ultimately running away from the film set. Her escape to Salzburg is short lived, but Lilo is able to escape once more, and this time is successfully rescued by Allied forces. Filmmaking details provide a unique angle to the tragic story of the Holocaust and extermination of Romani people. This title provides a strong female protagonist during a historical period where women were generally subjugated and overlooked by society. A title that could be paired with many informational nonfiction titles about the Holocaust and genocide, this is an excellent addition to both middle and high school library collections.

**Historical (World War II)**

**Robin Burns, Salisbury High School**

**Bascomb, Neal. *The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World's Most Notorious Nazi*. New York: Scholastic, 2013. 978-0-545-43099-9. 256 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7 and up.**

Bascomb's adult book, *Hunting Eichmann*, is the basis for this award winning young adult nonfiction title. The story details the struggles of the men who brought justice to one of the most notorious Nazi war criminals, Adolf Eichmann. Readers are provided detailed pictures, timelines, source notes, and an extensive bibliography that shows the research of this important work in young adult literature. The focus of the text is not on the criminal Eichmann, but instead on the men who brought him to justice fifteen years after World War II and the atrocities of the Holocaust. Eichmann who had been living in Argentina under an alias was found by the elite Israeli secret service, Mossad, who had to work with everyday citizens to find Eichmann and ultimately bring him to justice in Israel. The list of participants at the beginning of the book assists readers in keeping straight the many individuals involved in the plans to bring Eichmann to justice. *The Nazi Hunters* is the 2014 winner of the Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults (YALSA); the 2014 Teen Readers Gold Medal Sydney Taylor Book Awards, and the recipient of several state awards for nonfiction texts.

**364.15; Genocide, Holocaust**

**Robin Burns, Salisbury High School**

**Leveen, Tom. *Sick*. New York: Amulet, 2013. 978-1-4197-0805-3. 288 p. \$16.95. Gr. 9-12.**

When Brian and the rest of his misfit friends skip out of school for lunch the last thing they expect to come back to is a zombie apocalypse. A disease that starts out with flu-like symptoms has changed their friends and classmates into flesh eating beasts who maul anyone in sight. After witnessing his friend brutally tear apart another friend, Brian and others find shelter in the theater arts building. His relief is short lived though, as Brian fails to get in touch his younger sister and sort of ex-girlfriend, Laura, who has a

paralyzing anxiety disorder. Brian and his comrades struggle to formulate a plan to save their loved ones, escape the school, all while avoiding being killed, or even worse, turned.

**Fantasy; Horror**

**Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School**

**Kirkman, Robert and Charlie Adlard, ill. *What Comes After (The Walking Dead Book 18)*. Berkley, CA: Image Comics, 2013. 978-1-60706-687-3. 136 p. \$14.99. Gr. 10 and up.**

*The Walking Dead*, the popular AMC television show, is based off of the comic of the same name. *What Comes After* is volume 18 of the 21 volume series. Although similarities appear between the graphic novels and television show, viewers of the show and/or readers of the graphic novels will quickly notice the deviations, but will not be disappointed with either. In this volume, Rick and the other survivors struggle to adjust to a new self-appointed emperor. This issue is available in an eight volume graphic novel and are a huge hit with fans of *The Walking Dead*.

**741.59; Graphic Novel**

**Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School**

**Levithan, David. *Two Boys Kissing*. New York: Knopf, 2013. 978-0-307-93190-0. 208 p. \$16.99. Gr. 9 and up.**

*Two Boys Kissing* is a book about exactly what its title states, two boys kissing. However, Harry and Craig, the two boys, are only part of a much longer story told by a variety of narrators. Levithan uses the element of a Greek chorus, “shadow uncles”, and gay men who have died of AIDS from earlier decades, to explore the struggles, both in present day terms and the historical past, of homosexual men in the United States. The present day narrators are seven homosexual young men struggling with their own issues of coming out, transgender dating, relationships with family, relationships with each other, and the struggle to find themselves and speak their truth. This truth is unique to each of the seven young men and is seen through the eyes of the “shadow uncles” in relation to how they did or did not ultimately find their own truth; being comfortable with who they are and accepting themselves. *Two Boys Kissing* is a unique story that is a good addition to libraries looking to increase their LGBTQ fiction. I would highly recommend this title for both school and public libraries it is the recipient of the 2014 Stonewall Honor Book Award for Children’s and Young Adult Literature.

**Realistic**

**Robin Burns, Salisbury High School**

**Settington, Ken. *Branded By The Pink Triangle*. Toronto: Second Story, 2013. 978-1-926920-96-2. 155 p. \$15.95. Gr. 7 and up.**

Ken Settington examines a much forgotten part of the Holocaust, homosexual men and women. These victims were branded by the Nazis, but unlike other groups after World War II had a difficult time finding acceptance in their communities. Settington provides details about both the war and life as a homosexual in Berlin during the early 1900’s prior to the rise of Hitler and the Third Reich. Although homosexuality had been illegal in Germany since 1871 Berlin was the gay capital of Europe in the early Twentieth Century. Holocaust victims from other groups are also discussed and mentioned in broader accounts of the atrocities of the Holocaust. First person accounts from concentration camp survivors add a personal element that will engage readers of all ages. It is the struggle of homosexuals that is thoroughly researched and well documented in this informational text. This title is recommended for both middle school and high school collections and was a recipient of the 2014 Stonewall Honor Book Award for Children’s and Young Adult Literature.

**940.5138; Holocaust, WWII, GLBTQ**

**Robin Burns, Salisbury High School**

**Leyson, Leon. *The Boy on the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible on Schindler’s List: A Memoir*. New York: Athenum, 2013. 978-144249-781-8. 231 p. Gr. 5 and up.**

At 10 years old, Leon (then Leib) Leyson was the youngest person on Schindler’s List, which saved the lives of all of his family but his oldest brother. Thanks to his father’s job at Schindler’s glass factory, Leon, his mother, brother, and sister, were all able to establish jobs “essential to the war effort.” Leon details how he had to stand on a wooden box in order to attempt to use the machines. By no means exempt from brutal discrimination, fear, or lack of food, the family was nevertheless saved at war’s end. Most interesting to readers will undoubtedly be Leyson’s memories of Schindler. Though his memories of the war years can come across as vague, Leon’s post-war life, and in particular, the eulogies of his two children (Leyson died in January 2012) make him come alive as a grateful, generous person full of life. *The Boy of the Wooden Box* is a remarkable story and essential to Holocaust and World War II collections.

**940.53; Holocaust, Memoir**

**Melissa Scott, Shenango High School**

**Sadler, Martin W. *Imprisoned: the Betrayal of Japanese Americans During World War II*. New York: Walker, 2013. 978-0-8027-2278-2. 176 p. \$23.89. Gr. 6 and up.**

2014 YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction Honor Book, *Imprisoned* shares a dark time in United States history, when, as a nation, we “relocated” Japanese-Americans, many of whom were United States citizens, to camps in California, Arizona, Washington, and Oregon, to fulfill the hysteria and mistrust after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Sandler expertly intertwines the horrors of the relocation camps and U.S. actions towards Japanese-Americans with facts, stories from individuals, pictures, images, graphics, and poetry that encompass the Japanese-American experience prior

to US entrance into World War II, throughout World War II, both in the internment camps and fighting abroad, and the post-World War II realization of what had occurred and recognition of the horrific acts taken towards United States citizens. Not only is *Imprisoned* an important text for unveiling a dark part of U.S. history that is often overlooked, but it also considers the hypocrisy of a time when Japanese Americans were fighting for the United States in World War II and liberating Concentration Camps, while their own families were locked up and “relocated” back home.

**940.53; World War II, Japanese Americans**

**Erin Parkinson, Lincoln Jr/Sr High School, Ellwood City**

**Mesrobian, Carrie. *Sex & Violence*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2013. 978-1-46770-597-4. 298 p. \$17.95. Gr. 11 and up.**

Evan is used to being the “new guy”, so when he arrives at yet another boarding school he quickly sizes up the competition and available ladies. At only seventeen years of age, Evan has already suffered the loss of his mother and to fill that void uses casual “hookups”, sex, to forget. Most of the story takes place after Evan suffers a brutal beating following a “hookup” at his school. He is sent to recover at his family’s cabin in Minnesota with his estranged father. Evan’s healing and coming to terms with life and his emotions takes place through reconnecting with his absentee father, making new friends, working, and intensive therapy. The language in the title is frank and includes graphic details of sexual situations and a violent attack early on in the story. There are also references to teenage drinking, illicit use of drugs, and various other illegal activities. The content is graphic and best suited for upper high school grades and public library collections. It was a finalist for the 2014 William C. Morris Award, and also received the Perfect Tens – VOYA award, Publishers Weekly Best Children’s Books of 2013, and a Kirkus starred review.

**Realistic**

**Robin Burns, Salisbury High School**

***Sexual Violence and Abuse: An Encyclopedia of Prevention, Impacts, and Recovery*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013. 978-1-59884-755-0. 841 p. \$189. Gr. 11 and up.**

This two volume set offers an extensive review and detailed analysis of sex crimes dating back to the 1960s. Both the historical analysis of crimes and notable essays offer a wide scope to a sensitive topic. Although there are no photos or graphs in these books, they are packed full of information and include a list of suggested books, journals, and web links for further research. This is an excellent resource for an in depth study in criminology and sexual abuse issues and is recommended for upper high school grades and public libraries.

**964.153; Criminology, Sex Crimes, Sexual Abuse**

**Robin Burns, Salisbury High School**

**Messner, Kate. *Wake Up Missing*. New York: Walker, 2013. 978-0-8027-2314-7. 272 p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.**

*Wake Up Missing*, by Kate Messner, is a poignant and action-packed novel that incorporates the current issue of post-concussive syndrome in today’s young athletes within a suspenseful storyline about identity and scientific chaos. These universal themes emerge when Cat and her fellow patients at I-CAN in the Everglades realize that they are not only being treated for post-concussion symptoms but are also subjects for experimental DNA infusions. The storyline propels the reader as Cat and the rest risk escape in order to survive. This page turner will resonate with anyone who has experienced a concussion or knows someone who has. *Wake Up Missing* is easily a must-read for any teen that loves a great thriller.

**Science Fiction**

**Susan L. Ennis, Seneca Valley Middle School**

**Bryant, Jill. *Medical Inventions: The Best of Health (Inventions That Shaped the Modern World series)*. New York: Crabtree, 2014. 978-0-7787-0212-2. 48 p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.**

In *Medical Inventions: The Best of Health*, the focus is on the numerous ways in which modern medical technology is useful in diagnosing illness and saving lives. By presenting inventions and emerging technology in a chronological manner, the progression of these inventions is apparent and inspiring. Preventative uses for the medical inventions are also outlined. Enough detail about each medical device is included to spark the interest of future scientists and doctors as well as the casual reader. *Medical Inventions: The Best of Health* from the series *Inventions That Shaped the Modern World* merges well with the novel *Wake Up Missing* by Kate Messner.

**610; Medicine; Technology**

**Susan L. Ennis, Seneca Valley Middle School**

**Meyer, Marissa. *Cress (Lunar Chronicles Book 3)*. New York: Feiwel and Friends, 2014. 978-0-312-64297-6. 552 p. \$18.99. Gr. 7 and up.**

The popular *Lunar Chronicles* continues in this third book, introducing a Rapunzel-like character named Cress into the mix. Cress is a captive of Lunar Queen Lavana. She is given instructions to locate the ship containing outlaws Cinder, Captain Thorn, Scarlet and Wolf. Cress, with long golden hair, plays coy to her captors but is hiding a secret of her own; she is a prominent hacker who knows exactly where the ship is. She plans to find Cinder and ally with her against Queen Lavana (and she’s in love with Thorne, too). When a plot to rescue Cress goes awry, the gang is scattered to different locations across the globe, but (almost) all reunite in time to plan an

end to Queen Lavana's marriage to Prince Kai. Each character must find inner strength in order to overcome obstacles, an entirely relatable detail for teens. Meyer continues her fantastic sci-fi/fairy tale/fantasy mash-up with humor, angst, and an engaging, fast paced plot that will have readers of all ages anxiously awaiting the fourth and final book of the series *Winter*, scheduled for release in February 2015.

**Science Fiction, Fantasy**

**Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School**

**Lewis, Catherine. *Thrice Told Tales: Three Mice Full of Writing Advice*. New York: Atheneum, 2013. 978-1-4169-5784-3. 136 p. \$16.99. Gr. 6-12.**

Three blind mice; see how they run; see how they... give writing advice? Lewis turns the nursery rhyme of "Three Blind Mice" into a funny and easy to read narrative explaining everything from plot to exposition to verisimilitude. Each description is no more than two pages, and readers seeking more can look to the appendix for in-depth details on a particular topic. Clever illustrations draw the reader in and help tie the pages of advice together to give the overall narrative structure cohesion. This guide works well for those new to grammar usage and for those who may know a thing or two but want a refresher. A fresh take on a nursery rhyme and writing advice!

**803; Grammar, Usage, Writing Manual**

**Vicki Schwoebel, Friends' Central School**

**Myers, Walter Dean. *Darius & Twig*. New York: Amistad, 2013. 978-0-0617-2823-5. 201 p. \$15.34. Gr. 9 and up.**

Does it make a difference how you want to live your life if someone's intent on messing it up? Darius is convinced it does. Living in Harlem, where gangs and bullies are an every-day threat, he tries to focus on improving his less than stellar grade point average while helping his struggling mother and young brother at home. His best friend Twig, a sensationally gifted runner, is being scouted with the possibility of a scholarship to college and a way out of Harlem. Both boys are bullied on a daily basis by Midnight and Tall Boy, local neighborhood hooligans. When the editor of the Delta Review voices interest in one of Darius' short stories, this could be a way to move from the bleak streets of the city to a promising future. As he ponders the revisions to make though, he questions the main character's strength and reasons for pushing his physical limits, and along the way realizes he has his own hindrances to conquer. His character is called upon when he discovers his main tormentor could be laying on the street dying. A story of hope and faith or one of anguish, in Darius' world sometimes the two are so closely connected that it's impossible to distinguish one from the other.

**Realistic**

**Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School**

**Marsico, Katie. *Bullying (Real Teens Real Issues series)*. New York: Cavendish Square, 2014. 978-1-60870-849-9. 80 p. \$24.00. Gr. 9 and up.**

From the shopping mall to the football field and everywhere in between, being bullied is unfortunately becoming part of the teenage experience. Statistics show that "roughly one-third of U.S. teens" are tormented by bullies during their school years. Now teens are speaking out and sharing their stories in an honest and commendable manner. The personal narratives are mixed in with illuminating facts, indisputable statistics and encouraging advice from those who have endured the harassment and hurt. Teens and parents will learn the emotional and physical effects bullying has on its victims and how to overcome and heal from the damage. While teens strive to be accepted and admired, they also need encouragement and guidance on building friendships based on loyalty and honesty rather than solely on popularity.

**302.34; Bullying**

**Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School**

**Quick, Matthew. *Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock*. New York: Little, Brown, 2013. 978-0-3162-2133-7. \$18.00. 288 p. Gr. 9-12.**

In the beginning of Matthew Quick's novel, teenager Leonard Peacock has decided that it will be his last day on Earth. His plan is to use his beloved grandfather's gun to murder his ex-best friend, and then commit suicide. He chooses to spend his final day saying goodbye to the few individuals who have impacted his life. His relationship with his elderly neighbor is sweet, but his interactions with a religious girl that he meets on the street during one of his downtown wanderings does border on the obsessive. His favorite teacher eventually realizes that Leonard is on a downward spiral and seeks to help him. With many recent issues surrounding suicide and violence in schools, this is a difficult read but shares the perspective of one considering committing a violent act. Quick inserts lengthy footnotes to allow Leonard to describe past activities or further his own ideas. This can be confusing at the beginning, but the reader quickly falls into the rhythm of Leonard's story with occasional interruptions to expand on various aspects of his life. Matthew Quick is fast establishing himself as an author who is willing to take on the difficult topics of mental illness and psychological disorders. This novel forces readers to think about the experiences of those around them and how the simplest action can affect others.

**Realistic**

**Lindsey Myers, Peters Township High School**

**Yousafzai, Malala. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban*.**

**978-0-3163-2240-9. \$26.00. 352 p. Gr. 9-12.**

This autobiography by a courageous and intelligent young Pakistani girl should be required reading of all students studying the modern Middle East. Malala Yousafzai grew up promoting a woman's right to an education in Taliban-ruled Pakistan. Her experiences have been reported by *The New York Times* and *BBC*, but this autobiography gives her the chance to tell her story in her own words, and teens will appreciate her authentic voice. The prologue opens on the day on which Malala was shot, and then backtracks to her early life. Malala describes her father's quest to start and maintain a school for both boys and girls, and his activism inspires her to be an outspoken voice in the movement for women's education, which causes her to become a Taliban target. The climax of the story occurs as Malala describes the day on which she was shot and her last moments in Pakistan before being moved to the United Kingdom for treatment and safety. This book gives critical insights into the lives of teenagers in the Middle East, and (hopefully) highlights how students in the United States take for granted the opportunity they have to attain an education.

**92; Biography**

**Lindsey Myers, Peters Township High School**

**Rowell, Rainbow. *Eleanor and Park*. New York: St. Martin's, 2013. 978-1-2500-1257-9. \$18.99. 336 p. Gr. 9-12.**

Every once in a while a novel comes along that makes one look at the world just a bit differently; *Eleanor and Park* is one of those gems. Set in a small town in 1986, the story begins with Eleanor, with her wild red hair and Goodwill inspired outfit, unable to find a seat on the bus. Everyone moves to take up space or tells her to sit elsewhere. Then Park, responding to her unease, moves aside and tells her to sit by him. This begins the unlikely courtship between the two: one a poor girl from a dysfunctional family; the other a half-Korean with a loving family unit. The story is told in the alternating voices of Eleanor and Park, offering welcome insights into the thoughts of both, as their relationship unfolds and encourages readers to understand multiple perspectives. The setting of 1986 offers a sense of nostalgia for simpler romantic times, such as when Park painstakingly spends an evening making Eleanor a mixed cassette tape of his favorite songs. It is a privilege watching the pair grow closer amidst difficulties in Eleanor's home life. Hopefully through this novel, readers will learn how to develop empathy and attempt to seek out the stories behind the numerous faces and unique personalities they meet in school every day.

**Historical Realism**

**Lindsey Myers, Peters Township High School**

**Kuklin, Susan. *Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2014.**

**978-0-7636-5611-9. \$22.99. 192 p. Gr. 9-12.**

In this new nonfiction text for young adults, author Susan Kuklin shares the stories of six different teens' experiences of navigating their understanding of gender and what it means to be transgender. Kuklin writes their stories in their own voices, providing a layer of authenticity to the text. In some cases she also includes pictures of the individuals before, during, and after their changes. The teens discuss issues they had with parents, peers, teachers, and administrators, and what resources they used to learn more about what they felt and experienced as they grew up. Some of the stories are graphic in nature, but teens who are struggling with their identity will appreciate learning that others have felt similarly. Kuklin also includes a glossary of terms, information about health centers associated with transitioning, and a question and answer session with a physician from the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center. *Beyond Magenta* is a valuable resource for students in high school who are questioning their gender and/or struggling to decide how they can best live their lives and be happy with themselves.

**306.768 Gender Identity, Sexuality**

**Lindsey Myers, Peters Township High School**

**Rowell, Rainbow. *FanGirl*. New York: St. Martin's, 2013. 978-1-2500-3095-5. 438 p. \$18.99. Gr. 9-12.**

Being a freshman in college is hard enough. But being accused of plagiarizing, kissing her roommate's boyfriend, and fighting with her identical twin sister makes the college experience go from bad to worse for Cather Avery. At least Cath has her tens of thousands of fans of her Simon Snow fan fiction story "Carry On Simon". When she digs into her advanced fiction writing class she's even surprised to find out that she has a story to tell. Just as Cath starts to adjust to life in college, she has to come to terms with all the chaos that's going on back home, and for many reasons, sorting out her family life proves to be much harder than Cath ever anticipated. Rainbow Rowell subtly sheds a light on anxiety attacks, avoidance, and bipolar disorder in a way that lets her readers feel like she is explaining experiences instead of teaching lessons about mental health. *FanGirl* is a very real depiction of what adjusting to college life is like for many new students and is a book to be enjoyed by those who are starting college or plan to in the future.

**Realistic**

**Laura Ward, Fox Chapel Area High School**

**St. John, Cheryl.** *Writing with Emotion, Tension, & Conflict: Techniques for Crafting an Expressive and Compelling Novel.* Blue Ash, OH: Writer's Digest, 2013. 1-59963-758-8. 245 p. \$17.99. Gr. 9 and up.

One of the things that Rainbow Rowell's Cath struggled with when writing her Simon Snow fan fiction was moving the plot forward in tense, emotional love scenes with Simon and Baz. If only she had St. John's *Writing with Emotion, Tension, & Conflict*. In addition to giving great advice about writing emotion, tension and conflict, St. John gives helpful pointers on writing dialogue and setting. Plus, the author includes writing activities for young writers to practice what she teaches. The book's straightforward approach and the author's stories about her vast experience of writing, being reject, and accepted in the writing world is sure to ease budding author's worried minds. This is a great guide for those seriously interested in pursuing a career as a fiction writer.

**808.3 Authorship, Creative Writing**

**Laura Ward, Fox Chapel Area High School**

**Salerni, Dianne K.** *The Caged Graves.* New York: Clarion, 2013. 978-0-547-86853-0. 329 p. \$16.99 Gr. 8 and up.

Verity Boone is originally from Catawissa, Pennsylvania, but when her mother dies at a young age, her father, Ransloe Boone, decides to send her to Massachusetts to be raised by relatives. When she is courted by Nathaniel McClure via mail, and he proposes to her, she returns to the small farming community. Verity goes to the cemetery when she gets home and discovers her mother's grave is enclosed in a cage, along with the grave of Asenath Thomas, her mother's sister-in-law. Determined to find out why, Verity sets about uncovering mysteries of the past. Witchcraft, grave-robbers, and Washington's lost payroll from the Battle of Wyoming are all elements of this intriguing story. Is Nate really the man that Verity believed him to be? Will her mother's journals help her find out what really happened to her mother? All of the questions end up answered in this satisfying read. This title could be paired with many different nonfiction titles on any of the subjects listed above.

**Historical (Revolutionary War)**

**Kathryn Gilbride, North Pocono Middle & High Schools**

**Markle, Sandra.** *The Case of the Vanishing Honeybees: A Scientific Mystery.* Minneapolis: Millbrook, 2014. 978-1-46770-592-9. 48 p. \$22.00. Gr. 6 and up.

This story opens in 2006 when a beekeeper checks his hive to find that thousands of worker bees have disappeared. Markle then investigates the possible causes of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) including overwork. Although there is not a clearly defined reason for CCD, Markle does explain the scientific process behind determining the cause, and there is a great deal of hope that it can be prevented in the future. She also goes into detail regarding how bees affect our daily lives in terms of pollination. She gives some bee basics and includes many color photographs. Scientific terms are used throughout the book, but they are explained to the reader in context as well as gathered together in a glossary. This book can also be used with a younger audience, as young as grade two, but as an independent text or in conjunction with *The Caged Graves* it is recommended for middle school and high school students.

**595.79; Insects**

**Kathryn Gilbride, North Pocono Middle & High Schools**

**Searles, John.** *Help for the Haunted.* New York: William Morrow, 2013. 978-0-06-077963-4. 362 p. \$22.99. Gr. 9-12.

Sylvie Mason has dealt with the mystery surrounding her parents nearly her entire life. After all, her parents have given their lives to helping haunted souls. When Sylvie's parents get a midnight call from her older sister to meet at a church, shots are fired as Sylvie waits in the car. As the only eyewitness to her parents' murder, Sylvie must discover the truth behind her parents' career, the light in her basement, and the haunted souls her parents have tried to help. An Alex Award winner for 2013, this book will appeal to mature readers with a taste for the spiritual world.

**Mystery, Thriller**

**Nicole Starner, Biglerville HS/Upper Adams MS**

**Deraniyagala, Sonali.** *Wave.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013. 978-0-307-96269-0. 227 p. \$20.45. Gr. 9-12.

Imagine losing your entire family in one single day, and you yourself come away unscathed. That is exactly what happened to Sonali Deraniyagala as a tsunami wave flooded her vacation town in Sri Lanka. After losing both of her parents, her husband, and her two sons, Sonali had no will to live for months after the wave. She tried every method possible to forget what happened. She refused to leave her room; she would not allow herself to believe her family might be alive but refused to believe they were gone. She refused to take sleeping pills, but then drank and took as many pills as possible. Eventually, Sonali learned to live with the daily reminders of a past she could never have back, while at the same time, she learned to keep her family close in her heart. Since this is a true story, readers get a glimpse into the life of someone who has lost so much and the thought process of grief. Sonali does not hold back her feelings even as she describes thoughts that many would condemn. A powerful inside look at what life is like during and after a natural disaster, students will be captivated by such devastating circumstances and the power to overcome.

**954.9303; Memoir, Natural Disasters**

**Nicole Starner, Upper Adams MS/Biglerville HS**

**Sepetys, Ruta. *Out of the Easy*. New York: Philomel, 2013. 978-0-3992-5692-9. 352 p. \$17.99. Gr. 10 and up.**

Bookshop keeper by day; brothel maid by night; such is the life of Josie Moraine in 1950's New Orleans. The daughter of a prostitute, Josie has been on her own since the age of twelve and receives most of her guidance from Willie, the madam of a French Quarter brothel. Everyone thinks that Josie will follow in her mother footsteps, which would be easy, but Josie does not want her mother's life and is fighting tooth and nail to get out of New Orleans. Josie thinks about crossing the line to blackmail a prominent businessman and brothel visitor to assist her in her acceptance to Smith College. Just when her situation is looking up the reappearance of her mother's mobster ex-boyfriend leads to the murder of a wealthy, well known visitor and entangles Josie in the dark side of the French Quarter, much deeper than she ever dared to go.

**Historical**

**Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School**

**Capeci, Jerry and Tom Robbins. *Mob Boss: the Life of Little Al D'Arco, the Man Who Brought Down the Mafia*. New York: Thomas Dunne, 2013. 978-1-2500-0686-8. 432 p. \$27.00. Gr. 9-12.**

Alfonso "Little Al" D'Arco was the boss of the Luchese crime family until his imminent assassination led to him getting in touch with the FBI, which ended with over 50 prominent mobsters in prison. After a series of intense interviews, Capeci and Robbins, two mob experts and crime writers, give fascinating and disturbing insight into the history of the New York Mafia. D'Arco was the first acting mafia boss to break the ultimate code and voluntarily share information with the government. This narrative tale exposes political corruption, multimillion dollar drug deals, kidnapping, shocking murders, and the everyday life of a mafia family.

**92; Biography**

**Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School**

**Smith, Jennifer E. *The Geography of You and Me*. New York: Little Brown, 2014. 9780316254779. 352 p. \$18.00.**

Lucy and Owen may have never met if it weren't for an all-city power outage that left them stranded in an elevator together. Lucy, a New York native, and Owen, a transplant from Pennsylvania, quickly realize that their relationship is extremely special. Neither one of them has a lot of friends and look forward to times of 'solitude' vs. 'being lonely'. Something special happens on the rooftop of their apartment building the day of the power outage that will affect them for the rest of their lives. As the two begin their travels across the country and around the world, their true feelings for each other become more obvious. When the time comes for them to reunite, the memories from their first meeting are so strong that they will last a life time! Jennifer E. Smith once again provides a very sweet story of two young people living in a complicated world. Teenage girls are going to love this romantic story and the hope that it offers!

**Realistic; Romance**

**Krista Goodzinski, Riverside Middle School**

**Murphy, Kelly. *Historical Heartthrobs: 50 Timeless Crushes from Cleopatra to Camus*. San Francisco: Zest, 2014. 978-1-9369-7610-2. 224 p. \$17.99.**

*Historical Heartthrobs* provides 50 profiles of well-known and not-so-well known celebrities that were or are considered to be attractive. The ironic thing about this book is that the profiles highlight their achievements, successes, awards, and contributions to society versus their physical appearance, which is generally associated with someone being attractive or a 'heartthrob'. This book would be useful as a secondary resource to middle school students that are working on biography projects or a supplement when teaching specific events that took place in history. Some of the 'heartthrobs' mentioned may surprise readers: Fidel Castro and John Wilkes-Booth. Both men and women are represented in this easy to read biographical, history book, which will hold the attention of many young readers.

**920; Biography**

**Krista Goodzinski, Riverside Middle School**

**Strasser, Todd. *Fallout*. Somerville, PA: Candlewick, 2013. 978-0-7636-5534-1. 272 p. \$16.99. Gr. 5-8.**

Imagine being Scott, the child of the only parents in the neighborhood who build a bomb shelter in their backyard during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In *Fallout*, by Todd Strasser, Scott deals with the conflict that arises between him and his friend Ronny over the unnecessary bomb shelter, until the day the shelter suddenly becomes a life saver! Set in the 1960's, a fictional nuclear war begins and sends the family and a few others into the backyard tomb for safety. Many are left outside, and as the story continues, the rest of the neighbors perish. Later, the families emerge from the bomb shelter to rebuild their lives; if they can. The reader of *Fallout* must pay close attention at first as the chapters alternate between the time in the bomb shelter and the historic events leading up to the nuclear barrage. The actual Cuban Missile Crisis is the catalyst for the plot, and other themes from the 1960s are woven deftly throughout the story. *Fallout* is a suspenseful new coming of age novel from a proven YA author; it is not to be missed!

**Historical (1960s)**

**Susan L. Ennis, Seneca Valley Middle School**

**Marcovitz, Hal. *The 1960s (Understanding American History series)*. San Diego: Reference Point, 2013.**

**978-1-6015-2494-2. 96 p. \$38.60. Gr. 7-10.**

In *The 1960s* from the Reference Point series *Understanding American History*, readers can discover the events and people that shaped an era of unrest and change in the United States. Issues are presented in a neutral way, focusing on factual information rather than commentary. Numerous archival photos and primary source documents illustrate the details of the events. Each book in the series ends with a summarizing chapter, which reflects upon the lasting impact of each detailed event. The Cuban Missile Crisis is prominently reviewed in this excellent nonfiction book, making it a perfect pairing with Todd Strasser's novel *Fallout*. *The 1960s* can be used to introduce the novel as background data or as a companion piece as readers progress through the fictionalized nuclear war. Discussions centering around, "What if there HAD been a nuclear war in the 60s?" should spark debate and critical thinking.

**973.62; American History**

**Susan L. Ennis, Seneca Valley Middle School**

**Strohmeier, Sarah. *How Zoe Made Her Dreams (Mostly) Come True*. New York: Blazer + Bray, 2013. 978-0-0621-8745-1.**

**320 p. \$9.99. Gr. 7 and up.**

This novel is the young adult equivalent to *The Devil Wears Prada*, except it takes place in a commercialized theme park where the teenage employees follow a fantastical hierarchy of princesses, princes, squires, and other minor fairytale characters. When Zoe agrees to spending the summer interning at the Fairyland Kingdom theme park with her cousin, Jess, she expects to be assigned to a lesser role, like Lady in Waiting #4, not assistant to the park manager, or "Queen." As assistant to the Queen, Zoe is on call 24/7 and is expected to put Fairyland first in every situation, from taking the Queen's frilly dog out at two a.m. to tracking every ounce that Sleeping Beauty gains. In her struggles to help her cousin win a \$25,000.00 scholarship, Zoe discovers that sometimes princes aren't so charming and that there is more to the evil Queen than meets the eye.

**Realistic**

**Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School**

**Weisman, Stefanie. *The Secrets of Top Students: Tips, Tools, and Techniques for Acing High School and College*.**

**Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2013. 978-1-4022-8079-5. 268 p. \$14.99. Gr. 9 and up.**

This book is a well-balanced, essential guide to providing students with all the tools necessary to be successful in both high school and college. The author's conversational tone will keep students intrigued, while her firsthand accounts as an Albert Asher Green Prize winner for the highest GPA in her class at Columbia University make her suggestions more credible. Weisman includes advice on taking notes, studying, test-taking, writing papers, and personal methods for staying motivated and on task. Students will appreciate the technology advice and guides for assimilating Weisman's tips into every day studying.

**371.3; Academic Achievement**

**Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School**

**Sullivan, Tara. *Golden Boy*. New York: G.P Putnam's Sons, 2013. 978-0-3991-6112-4 354 p. \$16.99. Gr. 7-12.**

Habo is a thirteen-year-old boy living in a remote village in Tanzania. Born with albinism, Habo faces all sorts of prejudice in his family and small community, but it isn't until the family is forced from their home to another part of the country that they all realize that Habo is in great danger as his hair, skin, and legs are considered good luck charms. Habo runs away to the large city of Dar-es-Salaam in an effort to save himself and protect his family. While in the city, Habo befriends a blind sculptor and his great niece, and it is there at the public library that Habo sees pictures of others with albinism for the first time and learns about his genetic condition and begins to feel hope for the future. This book is a fascinating story of one teenager's desire to matter and be more than a "zero-zero", which is a universal theme for teenagers no matter where they are growing up or what obstacles they face. Author Tara Sullivan also sheds light on this horrifically true plight facing those with albinism in Tanzania today. She incorporates a subplot concerning the slaughter of African elephants and how greed makes some people do such heinous acts. This story is truly heart-wrenching, and one cannot do anything but hope for a brighter future for Habo, the fictional character, and all of those with albinism in Tanzania today.

**Realistic**

**Marian Kohan, Erie School District**

**Hall, Shyima and Lisa Wysocky. *Hidden Girl: The True Story of a Modern-Day Child Slave*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014. 978-1-4424-8168-8. 232 p. \$17.99. Gr. 7-12.**

Shyima was born in Egypt in 1989, and due to a conflict with her family and another family, she was sold to the other, wealthy family to pay off a debt when she was only eight. She ate only one meal a day and took care of the immediate needs of the children. When she was ten, the family moved to California and took Shyima with them. Once in California she is the only slave and has to take care of two households, and then sleep on the floor in the garage. Shyima never plays with the other children, and someone notices that one child in the house is not going to school and just looks different from the others. This kind stranger calls the police when Shyima is almost thirteen. This begins the long friendship between Shyima and Mark Abend who works for Homeland Security and later brings the case of child trafficking to the court on Shyima's behalf. This

memoir reflects the confusion and hurt Shyima endured knowing that her family sold her into a horrible situation, and later to her difficult adjustment to America, foster families, and the public school system. This is a perfect read to help young people see the world through another young person's eyes. Shyima's voice is apparent throughout, and her story is both heartbreaking and uplifting to see where she was and how she is doing today as a young adult.

**362.7; Child Labor, Memoir**

**Marian Kohan, Erie School District**

**Wallace, Sandra Neil. *Muckers*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2013. 978-0-375-86754-5. 274 p. \$16.99. Gr. 8 and up.**

In the town of Hatley, Arizona, the racial tension is at an all-time high. The Mexicans attend one church and the Anglos another. Young men are leaving to fight in the Korean War, and rumors of communist traders are running rampant. The one place townspeople can put aside their differences and join together is on the football field. Red O'Sullivan is determined to lead the Muckers to the state championship since their school will close at the end of the year. Added to the pressure on this young man's shoulders is the strained relationship with his father, an institutionalized mother, and the lingering loss of his brother who died during WWII. To Red's surprise, his good friend Rabbit enlists to fight in Korea. He has already lost his brother to a war and doesn't want his buddy Rabbit to be next. He will put all his strength and focus into football and attempt to lead this scraggy, underdog team to a victory that will put Hatley on the map.

**Historical; Sports**

**Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School**

**McClafferty, Carla Killough. *Fourth Down and Inches: Concussions and Football's Make-or-Break Moment*. Minneapolis: Carol Rhoda, 2013. 978-1-4677-1067-1. 96 p. \$20.95. Gr. 7 and up.**

As American as apple pie, football has long been one of America's favorite pastimes. But has society been putting unwarranted importance on playing through minor bumps or dings to the head? Concussions are serious injuries that have not always been considered detrimental to players. Even when football was first played, the mentality was to play hard and use brute physical strength to walk away from the collisions. The first football casualty took the life of young Von Gammon in 1897, and football was almost banned after his death. Certain restrictions and new rules were mandated instead, allowing the game to continue. What follows his story is an in-depth look at the origins of football and the different injuries that are inevitably a part of the game. With new research focusing on brain injuries and links to chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) as well as dementia, Alzheimer's or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), athletes may find themselves and their favorite sport in the middle of a crisis. McClafferty has managed to expertly weave scientific research into the personal stories of high school and NFL players. While football continues to be a full-contact, pugnacious sport that individuals of all ages are drawn to, at least now they will know the symptoms and steps to take to treat concussions and avoid further injury.

**617.4; Football Injuries**

**Christine Massey, JW Parker Middle School**

**White, Kiersten. *The Chaos of Stars*. New York: HarperTeen, 2013. 978-0-0621-3592-6. 279 p. \$14.99. Gr. 9-12.**

Isadora is tired of being overlooked and ignored by her family, but when one is the mortal daughter of two immortal Egyptian gods, life tends to take a backseat to more worldly issues. Isadora is beyond thrilled when her mother, Isis, takes a threat to her daughter's life to heart and sends her to San Diego to stay with her brother. Even though she is a continent away, Isadora's mother still manages to interfere with her daughter's life, as Isadora finds herself interning at the history museum. Isadora breaks all of her own rules as she begins making friends, or more than friends in the case of her co-worker's cute, Greek friend. When she learns that someone is out to harm her mother, Isadora has to decide whether she can put her hurt feelings aside and save her family.

**Realistic**

**Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School**

**Romer, John. *A History of Ancient Egypt: From the First Farmers to the Great Pyramid*. New York: Thomas Dunne, 2013. 978-1-2500-3011-5. 516 p. \$29.99. Gr. 9-12.**

This first part of a two volume series covers the history of Egypt beginning with the first known settled people in Ancient Egypt, through the farmers of the Faiyum oasis, and ending with the construction of the Great Pyramid. Romer, a well-known British Egyptologist, references major archeological discoveries, debunks common theories, and cites only information that can be scientifically proven, not myths. This inclusive tome includes extensive illustrations, maps, an index, and bibliographical references.

**932; Ancient Egypt**

**Melissa Daugherty, Sharon Middle High School**

**Winters, Cat. *In the Shadow of Blackbirds*. New York: Amulet, 2013. 978-1-4197-0530-4. 387 p. \$16.95. Gr. 9 and up.**

It is 1918, and America is facing terror on two fronts—the horrors of the fighting occurring overseas on the battlefields of World War I, and on the home front panic is sweeping the nation as a deadly influenza epidemic spreads. It seems that no matter where one turns,

death lurks. People rely on folk remedies to protect themselves from the flu and turn to the mystical world of Spiritualism in order to contact those lost in battle or to illness. In this atmosphere, sixteen year old Mary Shelly Black travels to San Diego to stay with her aunt. Soon after her arrival, she receives word of the death of Stephen, her sweetheart who was off fighting in the trenches. Mary, a scientifically minded girl, has never believed in spirits, but is forced to reevaluate her views when the ghost of Stephen begins to appear to her. Stephen's spirit is tormented, full of fear, and muttering of strange bird-like creatures that caused his death. Mary soon begins to doubt the account she had been told of Stephen's battlefield death and embarks on an investigation to uncover the truth. This novel effectively merges aspects of various genres including historical fiction, mystery, horror and romance. An atmospheric element of anxiety pervades the story and heightens the tension as the climax approaches.

**Historical (World War I)**

**Elizabeth Henry, Lampeter-Strasburg HS/MS**

**Barber, Nicola. *Living Through World War I*. Chicago: Heinemann, 2013. 978-1-4329-6001-8. \$27.38. Gr. 7-10.**

The origins and causes of World War I can be difficult and complicated to explain. It is a good sign, then, when author Nicola Barber opens this book with a concise and understandable explanation of the background issues leading to the start of the war. Further chapters outline the early years of the war, including descriptions of battles on both the Eastern and Western fronts, as well as the battle at sea. The latter parts of the war, including the development of more advanced weaponry and the entry of the United States into the war, are also described. Life on the home front (in both Britain and the United States) is discussed, including the role of women, war propaganda, and the treatment of German nationals. Sidebars are utilized to highlight important individuals and events. Archival photos, as well as maps and charts are used to supplement the text. The book closes with a section entitled "What Have We Learned?" which discusses the overall implications of the war, including how the events of World War I are still influencing world events today. This is a good source of information for both report writers and history enthusiasts.

**940.3; World War I**

**Elizabeth Henry, Lampeter-Strasburg HS/MS**

**Zailckas, Koren. *Mother, Mother: a Novel*. New York: Crown, 2013. 978-0-385-34723-5. 366 p. \$20.99. Gr. 11 and up.**

Things are not always as they appear in this dark, realistic Alex Award-winning book. The Hurst family seems perfect: two beautiful daughters, a smart and attentive son, a computer genius for a father, and a mother who left her aspiring position as a professor to educate their son. But when things get a little out of her control, mother Josephine Hurst gets a manipulative hand in the family business. After the oldest daughter Rose runs off with a strange boyfriend, Josephine turns her house into a prison. When middle daughter Violet gets admitted to a psych ward, she has to find a way to convince her father and the rest of the world that her mother is a pathological liar. *Mother, Mother* is an outstanding book that covers many different psychological issues such as eating disorders, pathological lying, and autism.

**Realism**

**Nicole Starner, Biglerville HS/Upper Adams MS**

**Foran, Racquel. *Living with Eating Disorders (Living with Health Challenges series)*. North Mankato, MN: ABDO, 2014. 978-1-62403-245-5. \$23.95. Gr. 7-12.**

The *Living with Health Challenges* series covers many different disorders, addictions, diseases, and other issues teenagers might face themselves. This volume on eating disorders provides the most up-to-date information on the specific types of eating disorders, warning signs and symptoms, and causes and risks factors that lead to these eating disorders. The book makes numerous references to the changes made in the newly updated DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders - 5th edition) and explains why the adjustments were made. Written specifically for teenagers, who have developed an eating disorder or those who just need more information about the topic, this title provides real-life people and situations along with tips, questions, and interesting facts. The book ends with a description of the treatment for eating disorders, along with prevention and ways to help someone else who may be developing an eating disorder. The layout of the book and quick informational blurbs make this book an easy read, and the language used is encouraging and enlightening for such a difficult topic.

**616.85; Eating Disorders**

**Nicole Starner, Biglerville HS/Upper Adams MS**