

## **GARDEN STATE CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS**

### **Booktalks for the 2015 Ballot**

#### **FICTION**

##### **The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate**

Ivan, a very observant Silverback Gorilla, lives at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade. He has spent the majority of his life in captivity. He was taken from his parents and sister when he was small and lived like a human with his owner, Mack, until he became too large. As a result, Mack decided to put Ivan on exhibit at his mall and he's been there ever since. Ivan's two animal friends are an elephant named Stella and a dog named Bob. One day Mack appears with a baby elephant named Ruby that he bought at a discount to help save his ailing mall. Stella makes Ivan promise that he will do everything in his power to make sure that Ruby does not share their fate. Once Stella passes, Ivan is left to fulfill his promise. It takes a careful amount of planning and one very sensitive girl to raise awareness of Ruby's plight. Can Ivan save Ruby? This Newbery Award winning story is based upon a true story about another Silverback Gorilla named Ivan that resides at Zoo Atlanta.

##### **Sophia's War: A Tale of the Revolution by Avi**

The year is 1776 and the British are occupying New York City. Sophia and her brother William are ardent supporters of America and anti-British. One day while walking home, Sophia and her mother witness the hanging of Captain Nathan Hale for being a spy. This haunting image remains with Sophia for the rest of her life. After William has left home to join the American forces, Sophia remains with her mother awaiting the return of her father. One day, British officers appear at their door and explain that a British soldier will be coming to stay with them as soon as her father returns. The British soldier that takes up residence in the Calderwood house is none other than John Andre. Soon, Sophia is approached by a man and asked to become a spy for General George Washington. Will she agree and risk everything to save America from British rule?

##### **Cinderella Smith: The More the Merrier by Stephanie Barden**

In this charming second novel, Cinderella Smith and her unique lexicon are back. The cliquey Rosemaries are in her class and continue to make life difficult. They make fun of her unique words, her aunt Flora, her little sister Tess and just about anything else that Cinderella enjoys. When her teacher announces that there is going to be school spelling bee, Cinderella is determined to win. The added bonus is getting to choose the theme for a class party. Will Cinderella and her friend Erin manage to keep the Rosemaries from getting to them and win the bee?

### **Iron Hearted Violet** by Kelly Barnhill

Violet is an unattractive princess and believes that “real” princesses are always beautiful. Violet lives with her father, King Randall, and her mother in their palace. She is an only child as her mother cannot carry babies to term. One day, Violet abandons the castle in search of adventure and meets Demetrius, the stable master’s son. Violet and Demetrius become fast friends and explore the castle and its many secrets together. One day, they discover a hidden hallway that leads them to a dusty abandoned library. The room instills fear into both Violet and Demetrius and they vow never to return again. As Violet grows older, she begins to learn more and more about the gods that created her world and wonders what happened to the 13<sup>th</sup> god. Violet is told that there was never a 13<sup>th</sup> god, but the reader soon suspects that she’s been lied to and the consequences will prove tragic.

### **The Year of the Book** by Andrea Cheng

Fourth-grader Anna Wang wishes she didn't have to go to school. Not only does it interrupt from her favorite activity, reading, but her friendships have gotten incredibly complicated. Even though some girls are mean to her, Anna manages to find out what it means to be a true friend.

### **The Legend of Diamond Lil: A J.J. Tully Mystery** by Doreen Cronin

In this sequel to *The Trouble with Chickens*, all search-and-rescue dog J.J. Tully wants is to enjoy his retirement. But, mama chick Moosh and chicks Dirt and Sugar are acting strange. A possum keeps finding its way into the chicken coop, and J.J. has questions about Diamond Lil, the fancy new dog next door. He’ll have to track down the clues and sniff out the evidence to save the day.

### **The Bell Bandit** by Jacqueline Davies

Everything about this trip to Grandma’s house was different: Evan and Jessie missed Christmas at Grandma’s house because of the fire. When Grandma came home from the hospital, she didn’t act like her old self. In the meantime, someone had climbed Lovell Hill and stolen the old iron bell hanging at the top.

Who on earth would steal the New Year’s Bell? And how could Grandma, Mrs. Treski, Evan, Jessie, and their neighbors ring in the New Year without it?

### **The Flying Beaver Brothers and the Fishy Business** by Maxwell Eaton

Life is good for the Beaver Brothers, Ace and Bub. They live on an island full of beautiful trees with their two penguin pals. Life was perfect until the Fish Stix Corporation moves in and suspicious things begin happening to their happy home. Who is in charge of this mysterious corporation and what exactly are these fish sticks made out of? Follow the Beaver Brothers in this offbeat graphic novel as they try to solve the mystery.

### **Chickadee** by Louise Erdrich

One minute a young Native American boy named Chickadee was sleeping peacefully with his family and the next he was being kidnapped by two bullies. This exciting historical fiction set in the 1860's follows Chickadee's courageous journey to reunite with his family. Through the many perils of his quest, he encounters many new friends and finds inner strength. Join him on his exciting adventure to see if he successfully finds his family.

### **Earthling!** By Mark Fearing

Have you ever missed the school bus or gotten on the wrong bus? After moving to a new town, Bud accidentally boards a bus headed to outer space! His nervousness for starting a new school soon turns to terror as he is surrounded by aliens who believe humans to be extremely dangerous. Will Bud be able to survive his new school and make it home alive? Read to find out.

### **Diamond in the Desert** by Kathryn Fitzmaurice

The year is 1941 and Tetsu is just another boy who loves baseball. Then the unthinkable happens. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Tetsu and his family are suddenly shipped to a Japanese American internment camp in Arizona. This beautifully written historical fiction follows Tetsu on his journey as he learns to adapt to life inside the camp. Even though Tetsu feels imprisoned, he and his fellow captives face their new destiny with impressive patience and dignity as they try to return to a somewhat normal life through starting a school and building their own baseball team. When Tetsu's sister gets lost in the desert and becomes gravely ill, he is faced with the choice of family or baseball. This book provides a striking glimpse into a troubling time in our history. The list of relevant resources located at the end of the book help round out his great read.

### **Remarkable** by Lizzie K. Foley

Remarkable is a town where everything is ...you guessed it... remarkable. Everything except for Jane Doe who is an extremely ordinary ten-year old girl. One day a pirate and a set of mischievous twins move to town and suddenly Jane's life becomes more mysterious and adventurous than she ever could have imagined. Join Jane in this quirky and hilarious rollercoaster ride of a story as Jane finds out that she might just be a little more remarkable than she or anyone else ever realized.

### **Lulu Walks the Dog** by Judith Viorst

Have you ever wanted something so badly you would do anything to get it? Lulu is used to getting her way, but when Lulu's parents refuse to give her money, it is up to her to raise her own money to purchase the item she desires. Lulu develops a business plan to become a dog walker, but when her first three clients, Brutus, Pookie and Cordelia prove to be extremely difficult to walk, she is forced to turn to her goody two shoes neighbor Fleishman for help. With several comical obstacles in her way, will Lulu ever be able to raise money for the thing she wants most in this world and make a friend while doing it? This hilarious standalone sequel to *Lulu and the Brontosaurus* is a must read.

### **CHOMP** by Carl Hiaasen

Wahoo Cray lives in a zoo. His father is an animal wrangler, so he's grown up with all manner of gators, snakes, parrots, rats, monkeys, snappers, and more in his backyard. The critters he can handle. His father is the unpredictable one.

When his dad takes a job with a reality TV show called "Expedition Survival!", Wahoo figures he'll have to do a bit of wrangling himself—to keep his dad from killing Derek Badger, the show's boneheaded star, before the shoot is over. But the job keeps getting more complicated. Derek Badger seems to actually believe his PR and insists on using wild animals for his stunts. And Wahoo's acquired a shadow named Tuna—a girl who's sporting a shiner courtesy of her old man and needs a place to hide out.

They've only been on location in the Everglades for a day before Derek gets bitten by a bat and goes missing in a storm. Search parties head out and promptly get lost themselves. And then Tuna's dad shows up with a gun . . .

It's anyone's guess who will *actually* survive "Expedition Survival". . . .

### **Mr. and Mrs. Bunny – Detectives Extraordinaire!** By Polly Horvath

Middle-schooler Madeline is the straight-laced normal child of hippie-parents Flo and Mildred, a.k.a. Harry and Denise. All Madeline wants to do is attend the end of school year celebration at which Prince Charles is scheduled to appear, but first she must rescue her parents who have been kidnapped. Madeline discovers she can understand rabbit, so when it appears that foxes are her parents' kidnappers, Madeline enlists the aid of two rabbit detectives to help with the search. Together the three have many close calls and zany adventures as they try to rescue Madeline's parents. Grades 4 - 6

### **Bliss** by Kathryn Littlewood

Rosemary Bliss's family has a secret. It's the Bliss Cookery Booke--an ancient, leather-bound volume of enchanted recipes like Stone Sleep Snickerdoodles and Singing Gingersnaps. Rose and her siblings are supposed to keep the Cookery Booke under lock and whisk-shaped key while their parents are out of town, but then a mysterious stranger shows up. "Aunt" Lily rides a motorcycle, wears purple sequins, and whips up exotic (but delicious) dishes for dinner. Soon boring, non-magical recipes feel like life before Aunt Lily--a lot less fun. Soon Rose and her siblings experiment with just a couple of recipes from the forbidden Cookery Booke. A few Love Muffins and a few dozen Cookies of Truth couldn't cause too much trouble . . . could they?

### **Fairest of All** by Sarah Mlynowski

Abby and her younger brother Jonas have just moved from the big city to the suburbs, and Abby's having a tough time adjusting to all the changes. Imagine her surprise when she and Jonas are uprooted from their new home and sent into a fairy tale world by way of a mirror in the basement! Having accidentally foiled the Evil Queen's poison apple plot against Snow White, Abby and Jonas guide Snow and her (unconventional) dwarves through a hilarious, twisted version of this old favorite. Will they save the day and make things right?

### **The Cabinet of Earths** by Anne Nesbet

Maya is not happy about moving from California to Paris. She misses her friends and is frustrated with learning a new language. But odd things begin happening to Maya in this new city. A man with purple eyes follows her and her brother. A statue seems to have her face. And long-lost relative start showing up out of nowhere. All these things seem to be connected to the mysterious Cabinet of Earths. This strange cabinet filled with glass bottles, calls to Maya, drawing her into a dark plot that spans generations. Can Maya stop the forces of evil and keep her family safe?

### **Nancy Clancy, Super Sleuth** by Jane O'Connor.

Fancy Nancy is growing up. She's dropped the "fancy" from her name and has a new passion: sleuthing. Nancy is ready to crack some cases with her pink trench coat and bejeweled magnifying glass. (She hasn't grown out of everything fancy after all.) Unfortunately, with loving parents at home, loyal friends, and a great teacher at school, there just aren't any big mysteries for Nancy to solve. But then a prized possession goes missing from Nancy's classroom. Nancy Clancy is on the case and ready to follow the clues. Can she really be a super sleuth or will she jump to conclusions too soon?

### **Glory Be** by Augusta Scattergood

The summer of 1964 is a summer of change in Hanging Moss, Mississippi. It's also the summer that Glory Hemphill will turn twelve. Glory expects to celebrate her birthday as she has every previous year, at the town swimming pool. But this summer Freedom Workers from the north have arrived and they are upsetting the general order of things. When the segregated town pool is closed "for repairs", Glory and her friends suspect there are other reasons. Glory is caught between the deep rooted Southern traditions that are second nature to her and the changes that are coming with the Civil Rights movement. How will Glory navigate in this changing world and how do her friends and family feel about desegregation? Glory is surprised to learn that some of them don't agree with her.

## **FICTION SERIES**

### **Cam Jansen and the Millionaire Mystery** by David A. Adler

Cam Jansen attends a charity brunch with her mother and her best friend, Eric, at a swanky high-rise apartment building in the city. All is going well until the lady of the house, Mrs. Scott, notices that her expensive pearls are missing. The police are called and Cam's photographic memory is called in to help solve the case. Who stole Mrs. Scott's pearls?

### **Ivy + Bean Make the Rules** by Annie Barrows

Nancy, Bean's older sister, is heading off to summer camp and Bean is jealous (although she won't actually admit it). After an unsuccessful attempt at building a tree house, Bean mentions to her best friend Ivy that she wants to do fun things; things that happen in summer camp. So, they

decide to create their own summer camp and hold it in the local park. They proudly name their camp Flaming Arrow. At first, it's just the two of them; however, soon they find that they have a couple of campers with more joining every day. Will camp Flaming Arrow be an overnight success or did the girls get way in over their heads this time?

**Princess Posey and the Monster Stew** by Stephanie Greene

Posey and her first grade classmates are excited about Halloween. Posey's Grandpa is helping with her costume and her teacher is making Monster Stew. Last year in Kindergarten Posey used a flashlight when trick or treating but this year the other kids say that flashlights are for babies. Posey doesn't want to be a scaredy-cat but what can she do to overcome her fears in order to have fun with her friends?

**Babymouse for President #16** by Jennifer L. Holm and Matthew Holm

A Cupcake in every locker! It's election season and if anyone knows what this country . . . er, what the student council needs, it's Babymouse. The only trouble is, everyone else is running for President, too—even Babymouse's locker! Will Felicia Furrpaws turn out the meangirl coalition? Does Babymouse have what it takes to become the voice of the people? Find out in Babymouse for President! Remember, a vote for Babymouse is a vote for cupcakes!

**The Popularity Papers Book 4: The Rocky Road Trip of Lydia Goldblatt & Julie Graham-Chang** by Amy Ignatow

While Lydia's older sister Melody is in Guatemala helping to build houses, Lydia and best friend Julie spend their summer between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades travelling across the country with Julie's Daddy and Papa Dad. They are to help move Julie's grandparents' belongings back east and on the way back home to New Jersey they make many stops. Besides sight-seeing, they visit Lydia's dad, Julie's other grandparents and Papa Dad's sister. Some of the family visits are good and some not so good, but they are all there for each other and have a lot of fun along the way. The accompanying artwork adds even more emotion and fun to the story. Grades 4 - 6

**Horrible Harry and the June Box** by Suzy Kline

All is not well in third-grader Harry's classroom after a substitute teacher confiscates several items from children and places them in the dreaded June Box. Items in the June Box are not returned until the end of the school year, but Song Lee's origami pig is intended as a gift for her visiting grandmother and she must get it back. Usually very obedient, Song Lee takes back her item and Harry tries to cover for her, but he gets in trouble as well. Grades 2 - 3

**Diary of a Wimpy Kid Book 7: The Third Wheel** by Jeff Kinney

In the seventh installment of the Wimpy Kid series, Greg Heffley has more adventures in Middle School. From dance instruction in phys. ed. to one vs. two-ply toilet paper, Middle School is one challenge after another. Things really get interesting when the student council decides to hold a Valentine's Dance. When Greg, his friend Rowley, and a girl classmate decide to go to the

dance together as friends, it is a night of chicken pox, food fights and senior citizens crashing the dance that they will never forget. Grades 4 + up

**Judy Moody and the Bad Luck Charm** by Megan McDonald

Judy has a lucky penny—or so she thinks! She wins a game of bowling, conquers the unbeatable prize claw, and wins a few school spelling bees until losing to Jessica Finch. This means that Judy will not be representing her school in Washington, D.C., but another opportunity arises! The Finches enlist Judy to care for Jessica's pet potbelly pig while she's off spelling her heart out. Will Judy get through pig-sitting without any major disasters?

**Stink and the Midnight Zombie Walk** by Megan McDonald

Stink and his pals at Virginia Dare School are eagerly awaiting the release of the new Nightmare on Zombie Street series book. The school has zombie fever, "of corpse." Stink and friends are making zombie puns left and right as they craft their ketchup-stained costumes and bury themselves in books in hopes of reaching the school's goal of reading one million minutes. Finally, the night of the Zombie Walk arrives. It seems like such fun, but can Stink be sure that there aren't any real zombies hanging around?

**Big Nate Goes for Broke** by Lincoln Peirce

Nate and his pals are sick of Jefferson Middle School winning at everything and they are sick of being bullied by Jefferson students. So Nate is understandably upset when P.S. 38 suffers severe water damage and the students are relocated to Jefferson while the repairs are made. Determined to break Jefferson's seven year winning streak, Nate sets about trying to find something that P.S. 38 has a chance at winning. (Hint: it's not basketball!) They may not be able to beat Jefferson at traditional sports but what about the "Ultimate Snowdown"? Can Nate's creativity win one for P.S 38 or will he freeze up when the pressure's on?

## NON FICTION

**Creep and Flutter: The Secret World of Insects and Spiders** by Jim Arnosky

Giant, fold out pages and larger than life illustrations will bring the world of insects and spiders into your living room like never before. Did you know that since Caddisworms have very little natural protection, they build their own cases out of pebbles, stones, grains of sand and even leaf strips? There are over 108,000 species of Bees, wasps and ants in the world! There are over 145,000 types of moths and butterflies in the world! Guess which has more, moths or butterflies? Moths win by a landslide with 125,000 species. But Beetles win the numbers contest, making up over one third of all insects. Included are some of our favorites like ladybugs and lightning bugs! Discover these and many other fascinating facts in *Creep and Flutter*, a great book by Jim Arnosky.  
(Grade 4 5.3)

**Snakes** by Nic Bishop

More than 3000 types of snakes live on every continent except Antarctica and in all of the world's oceans. Some are the size of shoelaces while the green anaconda of South America weighs in at over 400 pounds and eats caimans and jaguars! Snakes can see and hear but not very well so they use other senses that humans don't have. They can hear vibrations on the ground using the bones in their jaws, and sense scents in their surrounds with their tongue! Pythons can swallow a deer whole (yes with horns and all) and their digestive system can more than double in size to make room to digest the full animal – including bones! With amazing, close up photographs, you can learn even more about the fascinating world of snakes!

(5.3)

**When Dinos Dawned, Mammals got Munched, and Pterosaurs Took Flight: A Cartoon Prehistory of Life in the Triassic** by Hannah Bonner

The earth is over 4.5 billion years old! It took over a billion years for the simplest life forms to appear. Then another 3 billion years after that, the dinosaurs emerged and soon took over the earth during the Triassic period. This book is filled with tons of cool dino facts, silly cartoons, fun illustrations of all kinds of prehistoric life, and best of all loads of goofy jokes that will have you giggling on every page! What was the ridiculously long neck of the *Tanystropheus* (up to 16 feet long) good for? Sneaking up on prey? Standing at the water's edge and catching fish out into the water? Or offering a bridge service between islands for other friendly critters? You can take the Mammal test, visit Queen Dino's court, dance to the insect rap or take a bite of the Extinction Sandwich – don't worry, it won't kill you. These and tons more fun awaits in this Cartoon Prehistory of Life in the Triassic called *When Dinos Dawned, Mammals got Munched and Pterosaurs took Flight*.

(5.3)

**City Fish, Country Fish** by Mary M. Cerullo, photography by Jeffrey L. Rotman

Life under the sea is filled with hundreds of far out species that live in a wide variety of different environments, not too different from life on land. Just like animals on land, creatures under the sea have adapted to live in their environments. For tropical fish living in coral reefs, life is often like city living in big apartment buildings. Everyone has their particular space and job to get things done. For country living cold water fish, the ability to move around and do a wide variety of jobs is essential for survival. Coral reef fish need to be able to move around easily in tight spaces; they brake and swerve fast, like tiny sports cars, while cold water fish need to be sturdy and built for long distance swimming. These are just a few of the ways that city fish and country fish are much like life on the land. They are also much more like each other than you might suspect. Dive into this book and discover more fascinating facts about the world of life under the sea with *City Fish, Country Fish* by Mary Cerullo.

(Grade 2 5.3)

**Chuck Close: Face Book** by Chuck Close

If you had the chance to go to Chuck Close's studio and interview him, what questions would you ask him? This is exactly what a group of 5<sup>th</sup> graders from PS 8 in Brooklyn had the



opportunity to do in this autobiography of the fascinating artist. Some of the questions asked by the students are expected, like “What made you start to draw?” But others are the types of questions that perhaps only children might ask: “Why doesn’t anyone in your art smile?” and “When you were paralyzed, were you afraid you wouldn’t be able to paint again?” This unique offering also includes 12 interactive pages of self-portraits sliced horizontally into three sections, allowing the reader to flip back and forth to create “new” portraits from Close’s originals. This unusual autobiography will capture the imaginations of young readers as they get a glimpse into the mind and talent of one of our greatest artists.

(1.4)

**Noah Webster and His Words** by Jeri Chase Ferris, Illustrated by Vincent X. Kirsch

We all know that book Noah Webster created—what was it called? (Some dictionary or other!) But did you know before that, he’d published two grammar books, a reader, edited a magazine, practiced law, published a newspaper, and helped to found Amherst College. And, it turns out, he was a revolutionary. Many of his ideas were incorporated into the Constitution of the United States. And, he loved to dance! This engaging biography will capture readers with its funny illustrations of bug-eyed colonials, and informative text peppered with dictionary entries for words such as: CON-FI-DENCE [noun: belief that one is right], (something which Noah Webster did not lack!).

(RLA 10)

**Shiver Me Timbers!: Pirate Poems and Paintings** by Douglas Florian, Pirates by Robert Newbecker

Ahoy Matey! Did you ever dream of living the pirate life? Did you imagine a life of freedom from rules? In poetry, Douglas Florian takes you through some of the aspects of being a pirate. You will learn how to dress (Pirates Wear Patches!), how to speak (Pirate Patter), how to act (Pirates’ Code of Conduct) and what to expect for dinner (Pirates’ Meat). It’s not all freedom and bliss, for there is Pirate Punishment. With humorous illustrations to match, you will laugh with this rambunctious, surly group!

(RLA 10)

**Rescuing the Children: The Story of the Kindertransport** by Deborah Hodge, illustrated by Matthew Cordell

In pre-World War II Germany, Jewish families knew it was not safe to stay—but it was nearly impossible to leave the country. This is the amazing story of the brave children who were permitted to travel to safety in Britain, where they had to adjust to a new culture and language far from their homes and families.

(6.2)

**Forgive Me, I Meant to Do It: False Apology Poems** by Gail Carson Levine

For any kid who’s been forced to apologize, and grunted a begrudging, “I’m sorry,” these poems take fake apologies to a whole new level. From a gorilla who “apologizes” for letting Jack slip on a banana peel so he can steal Jill as his girlfriend, to a kid who swipes another’s ice cream

sundae cherry and “apologizes” for replacing it with anchovies, this snarky collection of illustrated poems is laugh-out-loud fun.  
(RLA 10)

**Stay: The True Story of Ten Dogs** by Michaela Muntean, photographs by K.C. Bailey and Stephen Kazmierski

Kate DiCamillo provides the introduction to this inspiring story of ten “hopeless-case dogs” rescued and patiently trained by Luciano Anastasini to appear in his circus act. Luciano was given a second chance after a terrible accident, and he gives misunderstood pets like Penny the cross-eyed dog, a second chance by recognizing and utilizing their strengths in his act. This heart-warming book includes full-page photos of Luciano and his dogs happily interacting and bringing joy to their fans, and helping each other.  
(6.3)

**Bill the Boy Wonder: The Secret Co-Creator of Batman** by Marc Tyler Nobleman, illustrated by Ty Templeton

In a fitting graphic novel format, Marc Tyler Nobleman tells the story of Bill Finger, who worked with Bob Kane to develop the Batman series, but received no recognition and little money for his efforts. Bill wrote and contributed new characters (Batmans’ partner Robin) and new ideas (Batman’s origin story) to the series from 1939 to 1970, but Bob Kane remained the sole by-line on the comic strip. This well-researched biography is both visually engaging and will appeal to kids’ sense of justice.  
(RLA RI 3)

**Dogs on Duty: Soldiers' Best Friends on the Battlefield and Beyond** by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent

*Dogs on Duty* shares stories and photographs of some K-9 heroes. Follow the adventures of MWDs (Military Working Dogs) from WWI to the War in Afghanistan. Find out how a dog’s hearing ability and sense of smell, along with its instinct to protect, make it an ideal soldier’s partner. Labrador Retrievers, German Shepherds, spaniels, and even terriers are welcome to serve. From pups to adult dogs, learn what it takes to be a valued member of our military.  
(6.1)

**Frogs!: Strange and Wonderful** by Laurence Pringle, illustrated by Meryl Henderson

This animal can live just about everywhere, can weigh up to six pounds, and can sound like a variety of farm animals – yes, frogs are strange and wonderful creatures. While most frogs have longer hind legs, bulgy eyes and are able to breathe through their skin, that’s where the similarities end. Discover the surprising abilities of about a hundred of the six thousand kinds of frogs.  
(5.3)

**Alex the Parrott: No Ordinary Bird** by Stephanie Spinner, illustrated by Meilo So

Before Alex, many people believed that most animals, especially birds with their small brains, were not very intelligent. They could repeat and say things, but didn't really understand what they were saying. Graduate student Irene Pepperberg didn't believe it, and set out to prove that birds were highly intelligent. Alex surprised not only the world, but Irene as well, as he not only learned to speak and understand, but could do math, recognize hundreds of words, and identify many shapes, colors, and sizes. Best of all he could actually communicate his needs and wants. (5.3)

**Where Do Presidents Come From? And Other Presidential Stuff of Super-Great Importance** by Michael Townsend

Want to read the funniest best history book ever? Check out Michael Townsend's book about the Presidency. Done in comic book format, it tells the reader how our early government was formed, how the presidency came to be, information about our first president, what the president's job is, the White House, and much more. It should be required reading in every 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. (6.1)

**Brothers at Bat: The True Story of an Amazing All-Brother Baseball Team** by Audrey Vernick, illustrated by Steven Salerno

Ever want to play baseball and have trouble finding friends to play with? The Acerra Brothers never had that problem; they were twelve brothers who started their own semi-pro team in 1938. In the 1940's, six of the brothers went off to fight in World War II, but when they returned they got right back into baseball, playing from 1946-1952, making them the longest playing brother team ever. Throughout all those years, they never forgot the value and importance of their family. (6.1)

**Surviving the Hindenburg** by Larry Verstraete, illustrated by David Geister

When we think of New Jersey's historic places we often think back to the revolutionary days of George Washington. But you don't need to look back hundreds of years to find out what happened in Lakehurst, New Jersey on May 6, 1937. Join Werner Franz, the youngest crew member of the Hindenburg, on his trans-Atlantic historical trip that changed air travel forever. (RI 3)

## **EASY READERS**

**There's a Fly Guy in My Soup** by Tedd Arnold

When Buzz and his family have dinner in a fancy hotel's restaurant, Fly Guy isn't allowed in. After searching through the hotel's trash, Fly Guy smells a wonderful aroma coming from the

restaurant's kitchen. Fly Guy causes some messy mayhem in the restaurant, and in the end, everyone needs a bah!

**Rabbit & Robot: The Sleepover** by Cece Belle

Rabbit is excited: his friend Robot is coming to spend the night! Rabbit has left nothing to chance and has drawn up a list of all the things they will do. First off is making pizza, but Robot only likes nuts and bolts and screws on top (good thing he has magnetic hands). Next on the list is watching TV, but the remote is missing, and Rabbit is panicking! Will Robot find a logical (and rather obvious) solution to the problem? Number three is . . . uh-oh! Why is Robot lying down instead of playing Go Fish? And what is that message reading "BAT" printing out from a slot on his front?

**Katy Duck Makes a Friend** by Alyssa Satin Capucilli, Illustrated by Henry Cole

When Katy Duck and her family get new neighbors, Katy can hardly wait to show off her dance moves. She is ready to curtsy, twirl and leap! *Tra-la-la. Quack, quack!* But when Katy's new neighbor turns out to be a rough-and-tumble boy named Ralph, this dancing duck diva starts to wonder if she and Ralph will ever be able to have fun TOGETHER when their interests are so far apart.

**Tick Tock Clock** by Margery Cuyler, pictures by Robert Neubecker.

Tick tock, nine o'clock. The twins are here to run amok! Meet a pair of spirited siblings who show Grandma an afternoon like no other!

**Pinch and Dash Make Soup** by Michael J. Daley, illustrated by Thomas F. Yezerksi

Pinch and Dash are good friends. When Pinch gets hungry, but is too lazy to make something to eat, or to travel all the way down the street to the Chat and Chew, he goes next door to see what Dash has to offer. Dash is a great cook, but he never uses enough pepper or hot sauce in his soup. Pinch decides to take matters into his own hands and spice things up. But will the soup be delicious, or will the pair of friends have to find something else to eat for lunch?

**Bink & Gollie: Two for One** by Kate Dicamillo and Alison McGhee, illustrated by Tony Fucile.

The state fair is in town, and now Bink and Gollie — utter opposites and best friends extraordinaire — must use teamwork and their gray matter while navigating its many wonders. Will the energetic Bink win the world's largest donut in the Whack-a-Duck game? Will the artistic Gollie wow the crowd in the talent show? As the undaunted duo steps into the mysterious tent of fortune-teller Madame Prunely, one prediction is crystal clear: this unlikely pair will always be the closest of pals.

**Mia and the Big Sister Ballet** by Robin Farley, pictures by Aleksey and Olga Ivanov.

Longing to become a professional ballerina just like her older sister, Mia becomes jealous while on a class trip to the ballet during which her sister becomes so busy that she fails to notice Mia's own burgeoning dance skills.

**The Sneaky Snow Fox** by Patricia Reilly Giff, illustrated by Diane Palmsiciliano.

There's a blizzard outside and Jilli is curled up with a good book. As she reads about the Sneaky Arctic Snow Fox to her dog, Fiercely, the winds begin to howl. Soon, Jilli sees two pointy ears and a fat tail moving through the snow drifts outside the window. Now she knows! It's that sneaky fox from the Arctic who has come to get her and Fiercely! Suddenly Fiercely escapes out the door, and Jilli and her friend Jim run after him. They must save Fiercely from being eaten! Will they make it in time?

**Dixie Wins the Race** by Grace Gilman, pictures by Jacqueline Rogers.

Dixie comes to watch Emma's big relay race at school and is disappointed when Emma tells her she has to sit and cheer and can't race with her, but when Emma trips and falls before the finish line, Dixie must decide if she obeys and sits or runs to help her best friend.

**Bramble and Maggie** by Jessie Haas, illustrated by Alison Friend.

Maggie wants a pony to ride and take care of, and to prepare she's been reading a big book on horse care. Meanwhile, Bramble is bored with giving riding lessons and walking in circles. She's looking for just the right person to take her away from her routine. Is it a perfect match? Maggie loves Bramble as soon as she sees her, but there are some things Bramble has to be sure of. Will Maggie let Bramble venture into new places? Will she protect Bramble from strange objects in the yard? Will she, most importantly, know when Bramble needs her undivided attention?

**Benny and Penny in Lights Out!** by Geoffrey Hayes

It's nearly time for lights-out but Benny just won't settle down — and his sister, Penny, is becoming very annoyed. The moon has gone missing, there's a flashlight to play with, and Benny must go find his favorite Pirate hat . . . inside the dark and spooky playhouse in the backyard.

**Penny and Her Doll** by Kevin Henkes

Penny receives a surprise box in the mail from Gram. The surprise is a doll, and she is absolutely perfect, from her head to her toes. Penny loves her immediately. She introduces her new doll to Mama and to the babies and to Papa. But then Papa asks what the doll's name is and Penny realizes that she doesn't know. She sets out to find the perfect name for her perfect doll.

**Pearl and Wagner: Five Days Til Summer** by Kate McMullan, illustrated by R.W. Alley.

Pearl and Wagner have only five days left in the school year with their awesome teacher, Ms. Star. When Pearl catches a glimpse of next year's teacher, Ms. Bean, she looks *mean*. Pearl imagines they're in for a year of taking spelling tests with super-hard words, doing one hundred jumping jacks every morning, and counting backward--by *sevens*! Pearl announces she's going to stay in Ms. Star's class forever. But is Ms. Bean as bad as she seems?

**Amelia Bedelia Sleeps Over** by Herman Parish, pictures by Lynne Avril.

Amelia Bedelia's friend Rose is having a slumber party. It's Amelia Bedelia's first sleepover, and she's confused. Isn't sleeping boring? Luckily, all the girls in Amelia Bedelia's class are there, and the party is the exact opposite of boring. There are pizzas to eat, games to play, and fingernail polish in all the colors of the rainbow to admire. And when it is time to go to sleep, well, something unexpected happens then, too. .

**Annie and Snowball and the Surprise Day** by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Suçie Stevenson. Annie can't wait to spend a special day with her dad. With her pet bunny, Snowball, choosing the route, the day is bound to be a grand adventure with loads of surprises!

**Mr. Putter & Tabby Dance the Dance** by Cynthia Rylant

Mr. Putter knows what he likes, and dancing is *not* on the list. But his neighbor Mrs. Teaberry has been watching ballroom dancing on TV! She talks the reluctant Mr. Putter into coming along for an evening at the Crystal Ballroom, along with fine cat Tabby and good dog Zeke, of course. The ballroom is full of sparkles-and surprises. What a wonder!

**Happy Go Ducky** by Houran, Lori Haskins, in the style of Jackie Urbanovic

The sun is shining, the grass is growing, and the birds are chirping. Spring has arrived, and Max the duck comes down with a giant case of spring fever. When Irene is gone for the day and leaves Max in charge, things get a little . . . quacky.

**Mac and Cheese and the Perfect Plan** by Sarah Weeks, illustrated by Jane Manning.

Mac wants Cheese to go to the beach with him. But oh, no, Cheese doesn't like the beach at all! Mac finally convinces Cheese that the sea is the place to be. So with their bags packed, the friends set off—only to miss their bus. Can Cheese find a way to give his friend a fun-in-the-sun day anyway?

**Fox and Crow are Not Friends** by Melissa Wiley, illustrated by Sebastien Braun.

Fox and Crow can agree on two things: their love of cheese and loathing of each other. These cagey animals will do whatever they can to outwit their sworn enemy and claim sole possession of the prized cheese they keep finding. But they are too caught up in their plotting and planning to realize they've picked the wrong house to steal from--since the mother of the house is one fed up Mama Bear who knows exactly how to contend with freeloaders.

**Let's Go for a Drive!** By Mo Willems

Gerald and Piggie want to hit the road! Gerald keeps thinking of things that they will need and Piggie tries to oblige, but the best-laid plans of pigs and elephants often go awry.

