

Knes Family Library Summer Reading List 2015

Fiction

***The Cabinet of Curiosities: 36 Tales Brief and Sinister*, by Stefan Bachmann and other authors.** Thirty-six eerie short tales, most of which were originally published on the blog of the same name, relate to an imaginary museum of creepy artifacts and are arranged into such thematic "drawers" as love, luck, song, and fairy tales. 488 pages.

***Circa Now*, by Amber McRee Turner.** Eleven year old Circa Monroe has a knack for restoring old photographs. It's a skill she learned from her dad. After her dad dies tragically in a storm she begins to notice something strange about the photos she and her father re-touched—the digital flourishes added to the old photos seem to exist in real life. 276 pages.

***The Detective's Assistant*, by Kate Hannigan** (Lab parent). With the rest of her immediate family dead, Nell has no choice but to try to find a home with her Aunt Kitty, who would rather Nell go to an orphanage. Kitty is busy with detective work for Pinkerton's National Detective Agency, and Nell determines to take part in the adventure and solve some mysteries of her own! Set in the mid 1800's and inspired by the real-life groundbreaking detective, Kate Warne. 357 pages.

***El Deafo (Newbery Honor Book)*, by CeCe Bell.** Cece is starting a new school equipped with her Phonic Ear. If going to a new school isn't bad enough, try going with a hearing aid strapped to your chest and trying to make friends. This is CeCe Bell's graphic novel memoir about growing up deaf and just growing up. 234 pages.

***The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*, by Wendy Shang.** Lucy Wu loves her friends and playing basketball. She hates sharing her room and trying to speak Chinese with relatives who expect her to be as proficient as her older sister. Now her plans for a great 6th grade year are ruined when her great aunt (sister of her late, beloved grandmother) arrives for a months-long visit). 312 pages.

***Guys Write for Guys Read*, edited by Jon Scieszca .** Contains a collection of short stories, drawings, poems, and memoirs from well-known writers of "guy" fiction, written by boys, for boys. Includes pieces by Daniel Pinkwater, Neil Gaiman, Will Hobbs, Stephen King, Gary Paulsen just to name a few. 272 pages.

***How I Became a Ghost: A Choctaw Trail of Tears Story*, by Tim Tingle.** This story is told through the voice of Isaac, a Choctaw boy, who didn't survive the Trail of Tears. He is a ghost who is joined by three friends, a panther shapeshifter, a talking dog and a young girl. They are in search of her sister who was kidnapped by white settlers. This book covers subjects that are often overlooked in history. 151 pages.

***The Last Burp of Mac McGerp*, by Pam Smallcomb.** Mac McGerp is a famous, champion burper and everyone in town is proud of him until a new principal comes to his school. It's a tall-tale battle of wits between Plucky Child and Evil Adult. 117 pages.

***Lenny and Mel's Summer Vacation*, by Erik P. Kraft.** Their big plan for the summer? To do as little as possible. Despite this goal, Lenny and Mel discover “clam clapping,” pesto toothpaste, instant individual swimming pools and a memorable road trip before summer's end. 58 pages.

***Misty of Chincoteague*, Marguerite Henry.** Misty begins her life as a wild descendant of ponies shipwrecked on an island off the Virginia coast. Captured in the annual pony round-up, she is adopted by the loving Beebe family. This is the first of several classic stories about Misty. 173 pages. (This author has written many treasured books about horses, including *King of the Wind* and *The White Stallion of Lipizza*.) 176 pages.

***The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg*, by W.R. Philbrick.** When bad-tempered Uncle Squinton Leach illegally forces Homer's older brother into the Union army during the Civil War, Homer escapes to try to save him. On his way to rescue Harold, Homer has a series of hair-raising, spine-tingling, unforgettable adventures. 224 pages.

***Mr. Chickee's Funny Money*, by Christopher Paul Curtis.** When old Mr. Chickee gives Steven a quadrillion dollar bill (with a picture of James Brown on it), it seems like it can't be real, but then why are feds after him? Luckily he's got his two best friends (one a very slobbery dog), a detective's handbook, and an unusual dictionary to help him. 151 pages.

***My Cousin's Keeper*, by Simon French.** Eleven-year old Kieran wants to fit in at school but he has a hard time when his weird cousin, Bon, shows up both at school and at home. To make matters worse, Bon becomes friends with the other new kid, a girl named Julia who wears cowboy boots. 234 pages.

***The Night Fairy*, by Laura Amy Schlitz.** What happens to a fairy who loses her wings and can no longer fly? Flory, a fierce little creature who is determined to survive, is about to find out. 117 pages.

***Nuts to You*, by Lynne Rae Perkins.** Three squirrels plus one hawk equals trouble. Jed, TsTs and Chai are the best of friends. When Jed is scooped up by a hawk and taken to a different realm, things get a little “squirrely”. TsTs and Chai set off on an adventure to find their friend and run across a variety of setbacks. 259 pages.

Powerless*, by Matthew Cody.** Soon after moving to Noble's Green Pennsylvania, twelve-year old Daniel learns that his new friends have super powers that they will lose when they turn thirteen, unless he can use his brain power to protect them. ***Super, the sequel to ***Powerless*** takes the super-powered kids of Noble's Green on another adventure to save their powers from something (someone) who is trying to steal them. 298 pages.

***Rain Reign*, by Ann M. Martin.** Rose has a hard time and no friends at school, where people find her outbursts and obsession with homophones and prime numbers odd. On top of that, her dad isn't very good at taking care of her. Fortunately, she has a strong sense of justice, a kind uncle, and the love of a good dog to fill her days--until her dog, Rain, goes missing in a hurricane. Great, compelling characters and a heartwarming/heartbreaking dog story. 227 pages.

***The Red Pencil*, by Andrea Davis Pinkney.** Amira has always wanted to learn to read and write but Sudanese girls aren't allowed to get an education. They are raised only to work. When Amira's village is attacked by militants, she is forced to flee to a refugee camp. There she gets her chance to learn in the form of a single red pencil. This book is written in verse. 309 pages.

***Rump: the True Story of Rumpelstiltskin*, by Liesl Shurtliff.** (Local author) In this engaging retelling of the Rumpelstiltskin tale, 12-year-old Rump's mother died when he was born. Neither he nor his Gran learned his full name from her, a big problem since they live in a place where your name is your destiny. Though small, picked on by bullies, and with only one friend--named Red--Rump is pretty tough. He has to be to survive the adventures in store for him, including encounters with witches, trolls, and greedy gold lovers of various species. 264 pages.

***The Terrible Two*, by Mac Barnett.** When prankster Miles Murphy moves to sleepy Yawnee Valley, he challenges the local, mystery prankster in an epic battle of tricks but soon the two join forces to pull off the biggest prank ever. 217 pages.

***Unstoppable Octobia May*, by Sharon Flake.** In 1953 ten-year old Octavia May lives in her Aunt's boarding house in the South. She is surrounded by an African-American community which has its own secrets and internal racism and spends her days wondering if Mr. Davenport in room 204 is really a vampire—or something else entirely. 276 pages.

***Varjak Paw*, by S. F. Said.** When the safe world of his family of Mesopotamian Blue cats is threatened, Varjak Paw's grandfather tells him to leave the house and go into the world "outside" to get help. Varjak's new world is full of danger, but an ancestor appears in his dreams to teach him seven mysterious skills to help him survive and save his family. Readers of the *Warriors* series might particularly appreciate this otherworldly cat story and its sequel, *The Outlaw Varjak Paw*. 254 pages.

***The Way Home Looks Now*, by Wendy Wan-Long Shang.** After a traffic accident, Peter Lee's mother is paralyzed by grief, and his traditional Chinese father seems emotionally frozen. Peter hopes that if he joins a Little League team in Pittsburgh he can reawaken the passion for baseball that all the members of his family used to share and bring them back to life. 250 pages.

***The White Mountains*, John Christopher.** This is the first title in the Tripods series, in which three boys escape from mind-controlling aliens to try to find a way to defeat the invaders. 184 pages.

Other recommended authors of fiction: Johanna Hurwitz (realistic fiction), Polly Horvath (realistic, some fantasy), Roald Dah (fantasy/magical realism), Eoin Colfer (fantasy/adventure), Susan Cooper (fantasy/adventure), Dorothy Hoobler (mysteries), Betsy Byars (mysteries and realistic fiction), Donna Jo Napoli (short mysteries along with several other genres), Andrew Clements (realistic fiction and mysteries) Jean Craighead George (nature/survival), Scott O'Dell (historical fiction/adventure/survival), Joseph Bruchac (Northeastern Native American modern and historical)

Non-Fiction

***Complete Children's Cookbook*, from Penguin Random House.** Well organized and filled with straightforward and appetizing recipes, this book features clear instructions enhanced by color photos for each step of the cooking process. Easy enough for beginners, including a "Before you begin" section that discusses healthy eating, tools and equipment, ways to cook, ways to bake, and cooking rules, this book includes recipes that will also be interesting to more experienced cooks. 304 pages.

***Feathered Dinosaurs. The Origin of Birds*, by John Long and Peter Schouten.** Not only were they the ancestors of modern birds, amongst Velociraptor and it's relatives many actually had feathers! (Will the new Jurassic Park movie get this right?) Innovative illustrations are presented in a field guide format. 193 pages.

***It's Disgusting and We Ate It! True Food Facts From Around the World and Throughout History*, by James Solheim.** Covering historical and modern food eaten around the world, this book is fascinatingly disgusting. You will never look at cheese the same way again. 37 pages.

***Lives of the Explorers: Discoveries, Disasters (and What the Neighbors Thought)*, by Kathleen Krull.** The latest addition to Krull's "Lives of..." series continues her captivating insights into historical personages. As always, Krull manages to make her subjects fully dimensional, rather than lifeless icons of history. Humorous caricatures by illustrator Kathryn Hewitt once again add sly commentary. 96 pages.

***National Wildlife Federation's World of Birds: A Beginner's Guide*, by Kim Kurki.** An inviting and accessible introduction to birds, grouped by habitat: Fields, Thickets & Backyards, Woodlands & Forests, Wetlands, and Deserts. Filled with interesting facts: biggest and smallest bird, fastest flier, deepest diver, songs, where they live, what their nests are like, etc. Brightly illustrated. 80 pages.

***Space Mysteries* (series title), by Michael Portman, Michael Sabatino, or Greg Roza. (This series includes the titles: *What is a Black Hole?, Could an Asteroid Harm Earth?, Could We Live on Other Planets?, How Long Will the Sun Last?, What is a Black Hole?, and more.*)** This series features brief but substantive introductions to each of these captivating subjects. Good color photos and diagrams. 32 pages each.

***Tiny Creatures, the World of Microbes*, by Nicola Davies.** "Right now there are more microbes living on your skin than there are people on Earth, and there are ten or even a hundred times as many as that in your stomach." Davies gives an intriguing introduction to "the invisible transformers of our world." 40 pages.

Other recommended authors of non-fiction: Russell Freedman, Steve Jenkins, Nic Bishop, Roxie Munro, Sandra Markle, Laurence Pringle, Kathleen Krull, Candace Fleming.

Poetry

***Brown Girl Dreaming (Newbery Honor Book)*, by Jacqueline Woodson.** Award winning author, Jacqueline Woodson, shares her life's story through verse. She gives you an insider's view on what it was like to grow up in both the North and the South in the 1960's and 1970's and how she felt "halfway home" in both places. She writes about how she found her voice through writing and how important deep family ties are to her. 320 pages.

***Firefly July. A Year of Very Short Poems*, selected by Paul B. Janeczko.** Noted poet and anthologist Janeczko collects 36 short, evocative poems expressing special moments of the year's seasons. The poetry is complemented by illustrations in watercolor, gouache, and mixed-media by Caldecott honor winning illustrator Melissa Sweet. Though the poems are short, they are strong--constructed by powerful poets. 47 pages.

***The Llama Who Had No Pajama, The Tree That Time Built*, by Mary Ann Hoberman.** These are two great poetry collections by former Children's Poet Laureate Mary Ann Hoberman. *Llama* includes 100 favorite poems on a wide variety of topics. For *Tree*, Hoberman selected science and nature poems, suitable for children, written by children's and adult's poets. The book is accompanied by a wonderful audio CD with readings of 44 poems. 68 pages and 176 pages.

***Lemonade and Other Poems Squeezed From a Single Word*, by Bob Raczka.** Each poem uses only the letters found in a single word. It's hard to describe, but they are fun to read! unpagged.

Other recommended poets: Douglas Florian, Aileen Fisher, Marilyn Singer, Joyce Sidman, Nikki Grimes, Jack Prelutsky, Shel Silverstein, Lee Bennett Hopkins.

Folklore and Legends

***The Glass Mountain: Tales From Poland*, by David Walser, illustrated by Jan Pienkowski.** This collection features eight classic tales from Poland, with illustrations and insights from the renowned illustrator, Pienkowski, who this time is working with stories from his home country. 104 pages.

***Magical Tales From Many Lands*, by Margaret Mayo.** A wonderful collection of fairy tales--some familiar, some not--from all over the world. Beautifully illustrated by Jane Ray. 126 pages.

***Pea Boy: and Other Stories From Iran*, by Elizabeth Laird.** Clearly told stories of fairies and fools, monsters and men, endearing animals, and even a cheeky chickpea are embedded in richly textured and patterned collage illustrations. 61 pages.

***The Serpent Slayer and Other Stories of Strong Women*, by Katrin Tchana.** Eighteen tales of humor, suspense, romance and terror wherein girls and women with courage, wit, strength, and intelligence carry the day. Filled with evocative language and illustrated by the incomparable Trina Schart Hyman. 128 pages.

Other recommended folktales: look for Virginia Haviland's classic collections: *Favorite Fairy Tales Told in...(India/Ireland/Norway/Russia...)*. Also see the treasures contained in Andrew Lang's "color" collections: *The Blue Fairy Book*, *The Crimson Fairy Book*, etc.