

## **Read Alouds for Grades 3 – 5 (2011)**

Shari Daniels, Literacy Coach, Challenger Elementary, Thief River Falls

**Alvin Ho, Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things** by Lenore Look (2008)

\*Realistic Fiction

Grade 2–4—Second-grader Alvin Ho is determined to make friends, even though he is afraid of any number of things and can't talk—at all—in school. Episodic chapters feature events at home, at school, and in his Concord, MA, neighborhood. Everyday adventures include being left stranded by his siblings during stretching exercises that leave him upside down in a tree, being sent alone to the scary piano teacher's house, and deciding whether or not to hang out with the classroom bully. Although Look resists providing a tidy ending, readers will be sure that Alvin is on the right road when he surprises even himself by suddenly speaking to his psychotherapist. And they won't have to understand the Shakespearean curses that come out of his mouth to know that this time he has a good reason to be afraid. Whether they are fearful or brave, kids will smile at Alvin's scrapes and empathize with his concerns. Aspects of his Chinese-American background are seamlessly integrated into the story and add richness. The book is chock-full of well-placed illustrations. Martin Bridge, make room for Alvin Ho.

\*A perfect read aloud for grades 2 – 4, although second graders would need a lot of prior knowledge and might miss inferring opportunities.

Alvin Ho book trailer

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFX5A\\_4nZEM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFX5A_4nZEM)

**Umbrella Summer** by Lisa Graff (2009)

\*Realistic Fiction

Annie Richards knows there are a million things to look out for—bicycle accidents, food poisoning, chicken pox, smallpox, typhoid fever, runaway zoo animals, and poison oak. That's why being careful is so important, even if it does mean giving up some of her favorite things, like bike races with her best friend, Rebecca, and hot dogs on the Fourth of July. Everyone keeps telling Annie not to worry so much, that she's just fine. But they thought her brother, Jared, was just fine too, and Jared died. It takes a new neighbor, who looks as plain as a box of toothpicks but has some surprising secrets of her own, to help Annie close her umbrella of sadness and step back into the sunshine.

Here is Lisa Graff telling how she came up her idea for Umbrella Summer:

<http://www.lisagraff.com/umbrella-summer.html>

An engaging book trailer to motive kids to read Umbrella Summer:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWJk1Tm5-xU>

**The Thing About Georgie** by Lisa Graff (2008)

\*Realistic Fiction

From School Library Journal

Grade 3–6—This story about the trials of a fourth grader who is a dwarf will entertain and enlighten kids. About to become a big brother, Georgie worries that the baby will grow bigger than he and fulfill his musician parents' hope for a child who can play an instrument. At the same time, Georgie fears that Andy, who's been his friend since kindergarten, likes the new boy better. When Georgie's parents leave him at Andy's house on Christmas Eve, he finds himself being unexpectedly cruel and losing the friendship. Georgie is also assigned to do a project on Abraham Lincoln with Jeanie the Meanie, who puts his name in for the role of the lanky president in a class play. Stuck with the nomination, he's able to give a commanding performance—with Jeanie's help. Andy lets Georgie know he misses him, and his loving parents, who have been somewhat oblivious to his concerns, also come through. Commentary to readers throughout about what Georgie can and can't do is delivered by an anonymous voice, whose identity is revealed as a surprise at the end.—*Tina Zubak, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, PA*

***The Missing: Book 1 Found*** (2008) by Margaret Peterson Haddix

\*Science Fiction

Grade 4–8—Haddix's latest science fiction series starts off with a bang in this nail-biter. A plane arrives at an airline gate unnoticed by radar and most personnel. There are no flight attendants, no pilot, in fact no adults at all, but there are 36 passengers—each seat is inhabited by an infant. Thirteen years later in Ohio, teenage adoptees Jonah and his friend Chip begin receiving ominous messages declaring that they are among "the missing" and that someone is coming to find them. Frightened yet intrigued, the boys begin a search for their real identities with the help of Jonah's younger sister. Their search leads them to a discovery that strains credulity and leads them into danger greater than they ever imagined possible. The story is driven by an exciting plot rather than extensive character development, and the teens act independently of the adults, who appear as "bad guys" or are basically useless. If used in a classroom, the revelation of the babies' identities can be used to kick off a history lesson or two. This book's exciting premise and cliff-hanger ending will leave readers on the edge of their seats and begging for more.—*Heather M. Campbell, Philip S. Miller Library, Castle Rock, CO*

Book Trailer

<http://www.amazon.com/Found-Missing-Margaret-Peterson-Haddix/dp/1416954171>

***The Missing: Book 2 (2009) Sent*** by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Jonah and Chip barely have time to adjust to the knowledge that they are missing children from history when Chip and another boy, Alex, are hurtled back to their rightful time period. Desperate not to lose their friends, Jonah and Katherine grab on for the ride. When they arrive in London in 1483, Chip and Alex finally learn their true identities: the missing princes from the Tower of London! JB promises that if the kids can set history right, they can return home to their present-day lives. But how is that possible if, in original time, Chip and Alex were supposed to die?

***The Missing: Book 3*** (2010) *Sabatoged*  
***The Missing: Book 4*** Coming out in August 2011!!!!

***Savvy*** by Indred Law

\*Fiction

Newberry Honor book

In the Beaumont family, thirteenth birthday's are an extra-special occasion. That's when the Beaumonts discover their savvy – the magic-like ability they and they alone possess. For Mibs' brother Rocket, it's the ability to control electricity. For her other brother Fish, it's the ability to make it storm. And now, on her big birthday, Mibs is going to find out just what her savvy is.

But right before her birthday arrives, her poppa is in a terrible car accident. Mibs's momma and Rocket rush off to the hospital in Salina, leaving Mibs and the rest of her siblings with the church pastor and his fussy wife. Positive that her savvy will be just the thing to save her poppa, Mibs, Fish, their moody little brother Samson, and the pastor's two children escape Mibs' birthday party in a bus headed for Salina – or so they think. When the bus heads in the opposite direction from where Poppa is, Mibs and the others find themselves on a whole different kind of adventure.

Book Trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?=j3PkhjhaSBI&feature=related>

***Chalk*** by Bill Thomson

\*Wordless book/Fantasy

On a rainy day a group of children come across a bag of chalk. One child decides to use it and draws a sun. Magically, the sun immediately appears. The children then realize that this is magic chalk. Each child takes a turn and their drawings come to life as well! This is fantastic until one child decides to draw a dinosaur with sharp teeth. All of a sudden the children are running for their lives across the playground. They duck into a cement tunnel to hide. How are they going to escape? One child takes the chalk and draws a rain cloud with raindrops. The rainstorm returns and washes away the scary dinosaur and all is well. This is a beautifully drawn wordless picture book. The cover is especially appealing. – *Kiss the Book*

***I Know Here (2009)*** by Laurel Croza and Matt James

\*Memoir of author's childhood moves

The narrator's home is in remote Saskatchewan. She lives in a trailer with four siblings and attends school with eight other children. She is the only third grader. Families occupy trailers along a road near a dam under construction. Her father works there. By the end of the school year, the dam will be built, prompting the move to Toronto.

"I don't know Toronto," the girl says. "I know here." And she catalogs what she knows. She counts the homes on her road and describes the wolves at night. She knows the fox behind a trailer, the frogs in her sister's bucket, the man who delivers groceries. She sees her home in a new light. This is not just what kids do; adults do it as well. Nostalgia doesn't require absence: knowing we are going to leave, we imagine having already left. –The New York Times

***Tsunami*** by Kimiko Kijikawa Illustrated by Ed Young (Lon Po Po)

\*Traditional Literature/Folklore

Starred Review. An earthquake, a fire, a tidal wave and selfless heroism, all packed into 32 pages, guarantee that this story will hold the attention of even the most restless listeners. Four hundred villagers are saved from death when Ojiisan, a wealthy old rice farmer on the mountainside, feels tremors, sees the ocean recede and realizes a tsunami is coming. Caldecott Medalist Young's (*Lon Po Po*) collages—elaborate combinations of media ranging from cut and torn paper to photos of straw and bamboo—build steady tension as Ojiisan, disregarding his grandson's horror, sets his ripened rice fields alight in order to lure the villagers to higher ground. The double-page spread in which the monstrous, cresting black wave looms conveys real terror. Kijikawa's (*Yoshi's Feast*) portrait of an old man who acts unhesitatingly against his own interests delivers a forceful message, and the moral does not get in the way of the action. Ages 3–5. (*Jan.*) – Publisher's Review

***Lousy, Rotten, Stinkin' Grapes*** by Margie Palatini Illustrated by Barry Moser

\*Traditional Literature - Fable

This is a retelling of Aesop's fable, *The Fox and the Grapes*, but told in the humorous voice of the animals. "In *Lousy Rotten Stinkin' Grapes*, a delightful third collaboration of author Margie Palatini and illustrator Barry Moser, the old story takes on a new texture as Fox tries to enlist one animal after another in his quest for the tasty treat...Mr. Moser's renderings of the Fox are very funny: We see both the animal's predatory authority and his egotistical foolishness when he is shown launching himself wildly at the grapes from various absurd locations. What really seals this picture book as a bedtime choice for children ages 4-8, though, is Ms. Palatini's lively dialogue...In the end, as in Aesop, Fox stamps away disgruntled. But in this version, the other creatures feast cheerfully on the elusive delicacy that was, for resourceful them, always within reach."--*Wall Street Journal*

***Listen To The Wind*** (2009) by Greg Mortenson and Susan L. Roth (also illustrator)

\*Non-Fiction – Social Studies

\*Starred Review\* Best-selling author Mortenson told his remarkable story in the adult book *Three Cups of Tea* (2006). After getting lost while trying to climb the mountain K2, he found himself in a Pakistani village. This, as it turned out was the beginning of a different journey. Here Mortenson and Roth retell his remarkable story through the eyes of Pakistani children. After being rescued and nursed to health by the villagers, Mortenson wonders what he can do to thank them. Advised by a wise elder to "listen to the wind," Mortenson becomes aware of children's voices, children he has helped teach during his convalescence, and he decides to build them a school. The steep terrain and remote setting present nearly overwhelming obstacles, but finally, the school is opened with great celebration. The picture-book narrative successfully compresses Mortenson's story by focusing on the elements most important to children: the stranger's appearance, the drama of the construction, the happy conclusion. Colorful fabric, cut-paper, and even computer-chip collages portray the dramatic landscape and incredible undertaking. Children will also enjoy an appended scrapbook of photographs, maps, and additional information. Pair this with Shazi Razzak's *P Is for Pakistan* (2007). Grades 1-3. --Linda Perkins

Book Trailer: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f7fMO\\_L1Kg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f7fMO_L1Kg)

***The Scarlet Stockings Spy*** by Trinka Hakes Noble

Illustrated by Robert Papp

**\*Historical Fiction – Social Studies**

Gr. 2-5. Noble, whose ancestor fought in the Revolutionary War, brings that time closer in a picture book for older readers that personalizes the period. The year is 1777, and young Maddy Rose's brother Jonathan has gone to fight with Washington. Maddy Rose is also doing her part for the revolution. She has worked out a simple, clever system to inform Jonathan about ships docked in the harbor: her petticoats and stockings have particular meanings as they hang on the line. Maddy Rose's spy mission is more exciting than dangerous--until Jonathan fails to appear. The many full-page color pictures have the look of well-posed photographs, and the events seem staged to fit the patriotic purpose of the story rather than flowing the way a real remembrance might. For instance, after her brother's death, Maddy Rose cuts up her scarlet stockings for a flag, even though it's unlikely she can spare them--especially as she must continue to use them for spying. Still, this patriotic story with pretty artwork may have wide appeal. *Ilene Cooper - Booklist*

***Saving Strawberry Farm* by Deborah Hopkinson      Illustrated by Rachel Isadora**

**Historical Fiction/Memoir – Social Studies**

Gr. 1 - 5. Like everyone in the small midwestern town, Davy's family is struggling to survive the "mean," hot summer of 1933. Davy is delighted when his neighbor Miss Elsie tips him a penny for carrying her groceries, until he learns that she is to lose her strawberry farm at a bank auction. When another neighbor proposes that the town stage a "penny auction," Davy spreads the word, and, later, it's his penny that starts the bidding low enough to enable Miss Elsie to buy back her own farm. Hopkinson's graceful text, filled with colloquial dialogue, doesn't mention the Great Depression until an appended author's note. But the details in her text and in Isadora's bright colored-pencil artwork bring a sharp focus to the day-to-day hardships, as well as simple pleasures such as making homemade lemonade. Most powerful are the close-up scenes of resourceful Davy and his triumphant crowd. Pair this excellent read-aloud with William Miller's *Rent Party Jazz* (2001) for another view of a community surviving the Depression with creativity and spirit. *Gillian Engberg – Booklist*

***Chalk* by Bill Thomson**

**\*Wordless book**

***The Story of Snow* by Mark Cassino with Jon Nelson, Ph.D**

**\*Non- fiction - science**

**\*Starred Review\*** Pairing particularly clear and engaging explanations with a mix of spare diagrams and close-up photos of snow crystals—all presented in an evocative gray-blue color scheme—this introduction to the white stuff will impart a solid understanding of how crystals and flakes grow in the clouds and how temperature and other factors on the way down further affect the marvelous diversity of their forms. Young readers expecting the customary array of lacy stars won't be disappointed—but the dazzling and detailed close-ups also capture snow crystals in rarely seen shapes, from plates and columns to multilayered forms as complex as clockwork. With never a hint of hyperbole, the authors communicate such a contagious sense of wonder that few readers will be able to resist following the final pages' simple directions for constructing a handheld snowflake observation stage and rushing outside at the first sign of snow in hopes of taking a closer look at one of nature's most beautiful and ubiquitous phenomena. A perfect lead-in to Jacqueline Briggs Martin's *Snowflake Bentley* (1998). Grades 2-4. --John Peters

Slide show of snowflake photos: <http://www.markcassino.com/b2evolution/index.php>

***Thank You, Sara*** by Laurie Halse Anderson   Illustrated by Matt Faulkner

\*Non – Fiction – Social Studies/History

This tale of a little-known historical heroine touts the power of the pen and persistence. With an irreverent tone ("You think you know everything about Thanksgiving, don't you?") and caricatures that play up past Americans' laissez-faire attitude, Anderson (*Speak*) and Faulkner (*The Amazing Voyage of Jackie Grace*) chart the progress of Sarah Hale, whose relentless letters and 38 years of petitioning presidents, secured Thanksgiving's status as a national holiday. A hilarious spread of presidents Taylor and Filmore passing the buck to Pierce (Lincoln finally makes the day official in 1863) typifies the balance of humor and history in this snappy volume. An afterword offers additional delectable facts (e.g., FDR tried moving up the holiday in 1939 and '40 to extend the holiday shopping season. – *Publishers' Weekly*

\*Tons of opportunities for non-fiction writing craft lessons. Use this as a mentor text for non-fiction writing!

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Enjoy!!

Shari Daniels/Literacy Coach/TRF

sdaniels@trf.k12.mn.us