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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH ANNOTATIONS

* Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
R Recommended.
Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
NR Not recommended.
SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.
C.U. Curricular Use.
D.V. Developmental Values.

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New Titles for Children and Young People


Because of her mother’s hospitalization, Alice (the narrator) and her brother Adam are sent to stay on the farm near Oxford where Mother had spent her childhood holidays. Alice loved the place; Adam, afraid of some animals, was less pleased until he started working and found he enjoyed it. Both were fascinated by Hunger Moss, a dangerously boggy piece of land that held a ruined tower. It was there they met Reuben, and Alice found it mysterious and intriguing that Mother had once had a friend by the same name, whom she’d met secretly in the same place, and who had disappeared. Because England goes to war, local families take in city children, and it is partly through that fact that Alice gets to know Reuben’s imperious great-grandmother and solves the mystery of her mother’s lost friend. The story is nicely knit, capably written, and structured with good pace and some suspense.

D.V. Fear, overcoming; Friendship values


Annabelle, thirteen and in her last year of junior high, is one of four girls who plan to work together to win a newspaper contest for an essay, and they decide to get an interview with a popular television star. Unfortunately, the young man eludes them. They do eventually meet him and, to their surprise but probably not the reader’s, since there are broad hints, he proves to be that nice boy who’s fallen in love with Annabelle’s older sister. The quartet’s adventures are a bit on the silly side, but the cheerfulness of the story and the breezy dialogue compensate for the insubstantial plot and the stereotypical characterization.

C.U. Science


Printed in two columns, lavishly and usefully illustrated with photographs, diagrams, and flowcharts, this is a clearly written text with broader scope than most books on the subject written for children. Ardley gives some historical background and discusses the impact of computer technology on our society; he describes the ways in which computers operate and are programmed; he distinguishes between different kinds of computers and computer languages; he notes the many applications of computers in business, medicine, and other fields. A glossary and an index make accessible the considerable amount of material in the book. Ardley has also produced a simpler book that can be used by somewhat younger readers, *Using the Computer*, which suggests activities that show how a computer works.

Gussie, who tells the story, is unhappy because her mother’s gone off to help Grandmother, her small brother seems to her a nuisance, and her father is preoccupied and uncommunicative. Gussie is forgetful, slovenly, and always in trouble with adults for small transgressions. Only when there’s an accumulation of disasters does Dad come through with a hug and some comforting words. End of story: at an extended family party, Mom appears. There’s no plot, and not too much cohesion in this anecdotal story, which is adequately written but relies on its humor for appeal; since the type of humorous incident seldom varies, the story seems repetitious.

D.V. Father-daughter relations


In an ingenious combination of book and craft, the wide pages of a spiral-bound book are so devised that the outer halves of the pages contain press-outs and can then be separated, leaving the insides of the pages to form a book. The cover folds back to fit the smaller size; a dust jacket is provided. The child then has a separate book plus the paper models of the ark and its inhabitants. The text is attractive, framed and printed in large type, and illustrated with bold, occasionally busy, paintings. An English import, this should be a popular gift book, and because of its format, it’s a step ahead of most toy books.

C.U. Religious education


First published in Germany, smoothly translated, and illustrated with drawings, diagrams, and several pages of color photographs, this is a comprehensive and informative book about selecting and caring for tropical fish. The text, printed in two columns, gives very specific advice about providing needed elements in the aquarium water to ensure proper nourishment and to replicate the elements in the natural habitats of various fish, and it also gives advice on provision of the equipment and accessories that make an aquarium attractive and functional. This very useful book concludes with a brief bibliography and an index.


One of a series of small, square books (the others are *Georgie and the Little Dog*, *Georgie and the Ball of Yarn*, and *Georgie and the Runaway Balloon*) about the cheerful little ghost of whom Bright has written often before, this tells a modest story through simple prose and simply drawn illustrations. Unobtrusively, it illustrates thoughtfulness, helpfulness, ingenuity, and friendship; it has a mild humor and animal characters to appeal to young listeners. Seeing a nest precariously situated on a thin branch, Georgie and his friends (a cat and an owl) look for the perfect container in which to catch the nest and its eggs. He finds and uses it—the farmer’s big straw hat. When the birds hatch and the hat’s returned to its owner, the baby birds wonder why the man is using so cozy a nest on his head.

D.V. Animals, kindness to; Helpfulness

The pages of an oversize book are filled with several drawings each; a typical page has upper and lower case letters, the word “airport,” a picture of machines on the field, and two boxed pictures in which Alexander aims an arrow at an apple, and Arthur plays an accordion. All words beginning with “A” are in boldface type. Children who are familiar with the Babar stories may enjoy meeting familiar characters; for others, the fact that “B” is for an elephant, Babar, and “E” is for elephant may be confusing. The animal characters should appeal to young children, and any book that supplies letters and words is useful in teaching the alphabet, but this does have weakness in the choice of some words that are not in the most familiar form, such as tugboat rather than boat, or van rather than truck.


Written with straightforward simplicity, illustrated by scratchy line drawings and diagrams, this is a book that answers questions children may have about the mechanics of yawning, hiccups, passing gas, stomach growls, and other noises made by the human body. The writing is explicit and the tone is matter-of-fact. The book should satisfy curiosity and it may even make children less self-conscious about processes that they cannot control and that are perfectly natural.

C.U. Science


Jake had been sent to Alaska by his macho father after the teenager had attempted suicide; living with his father’s old friend Doc Smalley, Jake has begun to feel more self-confidence. In part that is why, when his friend Danny Yumiat dies, Jake decides he will take Danny’s place in the Last Great Race, the dog-sled run from Anchorage to Nome, over a thousand miles. During the race, Jake becomes friendly with Danny’s sister, who is also running the race for Danny. Although there’s a bit too much sugar in the ending (Dad, understanding at last, makes amends) the book is, in the main, solidly plotted; it has characters that are believable if not drawn in great depth, and it has strength in the pace and setting.

D.V. Father-son relations; Intercultural understanding; Self-confidence


Charlie, who tells the story, is in sixth grade; he has some good friends, he’s the only child of kind and thoughtful parents, he has no problems at school, and he’s decidedly unhappy because he’s so ordinary, so invisible. So Charlie looks for ways to be a hero—like getting a home for an orphan (the orphan says he doesn’t want to be adopted) or rescuing someone in a boat (it’s Charlie who has to be rescued) or solving the mystery of a dead body (a sleeping drunk). This pleasant, low-keyed story of a boy who’s kind and appreciative of others has no great dramatic moments, but it has small satisfactions, a good balance of home/school/play, and adequate characterization. Not exciting, but realistic and mildly funny.

D.V. Family relations; Kindness

This frothy mystery is written from the viewpoint of Sebastian, the English Sheep-dog who lives with John Jones, a young detective. John is baffled by the fact that, although the Bosworthington Museum has had a break-in, nothing appears to be missing. It is Sebastian who sniffs out the answer to the mystery: a Professor Idelmann has been stealing bones from a skeleton of a woolly mammoth, substituting fakes, and carefully planting the fossil remains to get credit for marvelous finds on a dig. The writing is light and humorous, the story marred by the inclusion of a stereotypical mother (John’s) who has nothing to do with the plot and by the fact that Sebastian several times puts on clothes and is taken for a person, but readers should enjoy the action and humor.


An orphan of nine, Jeff insists he won’t go home with his uncle and cousins (Mary Rose is ten, Jo-Beth seven) when the grandmother with whom he lives has to go into the hospital. While Uncle Harry is taking Grandmother to the hospital, Jeff runs away. Feeling responsible, Mary Rose—who has guessed Jeff’s rowed to a nearby island where there’s a shut-down amusement park—snatches a pedal boat and follows. Because there are two criminals on the island, digging for buried money, there are several dangerous episodes: Jeff is tied up and left in a shed by the two men, and the girls are trapped in a frightening ride (Tunnel of Terror, hence the book’s title) when Jeff manages to turn on some machinery. There’s also the resident caretaker, who baffles the criminals by filling in a hole they’ve dug; like a French farce, people run around and just miss seeing each other. Eventually it’s sorted out, the sheriff is told and comes to the rescue, the thieves are caught, and Jeff is forgiven by his uncle. The plot is improbable in toto, but no part of it is impossible, and there’s plenty of danger and action for thrill-lovers. The writing style is competently breezy, but the story ends with a serious discussion in which Jeff is persuaded to shed his fear that it’s dangerous to count on someone’s love—he had run away convinced that, because his parents had gone on a trip and not returned, his grandmother was also abandoning him.

D.V. Cousins; Resourcefulness


Molly, whose family had come from Europe the year before, was unhappy at being teased about her accent and appearance by her classmates. When she was asked, as part of a class project, to bring a doll dressed like a woman Pilgrim, Molly turned up with a clothespin doll her mother had carefully dressed in her own image. It looked Russian or Polish, a classmate scoffed; what did that have to do with the Pilgrims? The Pilgrims had taken the idea of Thanksgiving, the teacher said, from the Jewish celebration of the Harvest that they’d read about in the Bible. Molly’s mother was right, she added, “Pilgrims are still coming to America.” It was just as Mama said: like the first settlers, they had come to escape, to worship in their own way, to live in peace and freedom. Molly tells the story with poignant simplicity; the black and white illustrations have strength despite the awkward handling of figure drawing. The story could serve well as a focus for discussion of prejudice.

C.U. Thanksgiving
D.V. Interreligious understanding

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Profusely and beautifully illustrated with some striking paintings and line drawings, this new edition of a children's classic is a translation authorized by the Collodi 4-6 Foundation to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the book's existence. The text here has a more contemporary language pattern, and the translator has anglicized some words: Mastro Cherry is now Mr. Cherry; Geppetto's nickname, Polendina, is now Old Corny, etc. Basically, the story is unchanged, the tale of a puppet who becomes a boy because of his kindness to his creator-father; the mischief and magic are still there to appeal to readers, and some of them may find this edition more readable. All of them will find it, surely, more appealing visually.

D.V. Consideration of others; Truthfulness


"I myself had two separate encounters with witches before I was eight years old," the story begins. "From the first I escaped unharmed, but on the second occasion I was not so lucky." Thus begins the tale of the small orphaned boy on holiday with his grandmother in Bournemouth. Grandmamma had told him all about the ways to recognize a witch (they are all bald and wear wigs, they keep their gloves on even in summer, they pretend to be nice, ordinary women, and their mission in life is to exterminate children) and yet there was no way he could escape their potion: DELAYED ACTION MOUSE-MAKER. Still, once he was turned into a mouse, there were ways he could take revenge . . . and the story ends with mouse-child and Grandmamma planning a campaign to turn all the witches in the world into mice. There's humor in the story and in Blake's drawings, but the writing is often cloying because of whimsy, despite the humor and the consistency of the fantastic concept.


In a sequel to *Nothing's Fair in Fifth Grade* (reviewed in the July, 1981 issue) in which Jenifer wrote about her unhappily fat friend Elsie, Elsie is the narrator. Slim now, Elsie has the usual assortment of freshman problems: being jealous about the handsome upperclassman she's dating, adjusting to a teacher who's a strict disciplinarian, worrying about her old friend Jack and his poor academic record. She's also in conflict with her often-irascible mother, and often at odds with her younger sister. This isn't strong on plot, or highly original in the situation it explores, but DeClements does a fine job of analyzing and developing the complex emotions of an adolescent, the relationships are perceptively drawn, and the dialogue is natural.

D.V. Mother-daughter relations; Sisters


This is a fat little book, a bit over three inches square, with a single picture and a one (very occasionally two) word caption on each page. The pages are heavy board, the paintings are of good quality (workmanlike rather than attractive) and make for easy identification. In sum, a very useful book that should be appealing to very young children. This is one of a series called "Block Books," and the other titles have the same kind of appeal-of-the-familiar: *The Farm*, which is primarily composed of pictures of animals; *My Toys*; and *My First Book*, in which the pictures are of everyday objects: keys, comb, tricycle, telephone, book, etc.
Escaping from a gang of tough girls who have repeatedly assaulted her and who have this time taken a valued pen, thirteen-year-old Nita takes refuge in the library. There she finds a manual on wizardry, and she learns some spells that bring her in contact with another apprentice, a younger boy named Kit. They evoke an intelligent, impish white hole (who appears as a tiny bright light) they name Fred. Together the three go to Manhattan to find a book that will help all wizards preserve the world against the powers of evil, and Nita also hopes to find her pen. Thus begins a series of fantastic adventures—and here the book bogs down, in part because it loses its realistic base, and in part because the adventures become so intricate and protracted: for example, vicious taxis are fought off by a friendly Lotus Esprit (“Even the bloodstained cab, the pack leader, looked away . . .”) who also pursues an iron horse down Forty-second Street. Lots of magic, lots of action, some humor, but the long and often repetitive sequences and the abrupt back-to-reality ending weaken the story.

Bright pictures in cartoon style feature three Muppet characters who should make the book more appealing to Sesame Street fans. The text, which has a slightly uncomfortable juxtaposition of facts supplied through dialogue and interjections from Grover, Ernie, and Big Bird (usually about other Sesame Street characters) gives information about equipment and procedures at the firehouse and at fires in the city; it also briefly describes the work of fighting fires in the country, fighting fires at the waterfront, and fighting forest fires from the air.

In three interesting biographical sketches, carefully researched and capably written, Faber explores the relationships between three famous women of the nineteenth century and their less well known sisters. The three pairs are Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charlotte Cushman and Susan Cushman Muspratt, and Emily and Lavinia Dickinson. The author is perceptive in her analysis of the relationships between the sisters, explicit in distinguishing between fact and conjecture, and scrupulous in attributing no dialogue that has not been verified in primary source materials. A bibliography of sources, with notes, and an index are provided.

D.V. Sisters

Mike, the narrator, and Hank are the detectives in the Two Guys Private Eyes Detective Agency, and they are asked by Suky (Susannah) to help solve the mystery of the vanishing seeds stored by Gus Grabmore in the abandoned factory where Suky and others are illegal residents. Grabmore has threatened to call the police if the mystery isn’t solved, since he’s trying to corner the market. There’s some humor in the text and in the line drawings, but both are weakened by exaggeration; Fife’s assembled a weird cast of residents, including the elderly “Jellies,” secretly making the product for which the factory was once famous. After a good deal of unproductive ado, it’s discovered that the bottom of the storage vat has rusted and that ants are...
Curls and a hair-ribbon are the only things visible in the first pages that show a child sleeping in a dim, quiet room; a door creaks, and—bit by bit—a scaly, fanged green monster appears. It comes closer, looms larger, and then, from another door another monster emerges. "Don't wake the child," the first says, as they approach the bed. The child wakes and sits up . . . and it's a baby monster, just as green and scaly. "Pleasant dreams," says mother monster, and "Goodnight, Mom and Dad," the story ends. Most children gravitate toward monster stories, and this one is an amusing variant in which the pictures (a bit busy with detail but nicely conceived and composed) tell most of the story and make the few words used all the more effective.


An oversize book with exceedingly bright illustrations of comic book quality, this has balloon captions, printed words like "Bwing, Bwong, Bang" and "Bam Bop Bam" in addition to the text. The characters are animals. Captain Swifty, a lion in partial uniform, and his pal Calico (a cat) are rebuked by a fish for the noises they make; the fish tells them to make a joyful noise if they must make noise. Instrument by hand-made instrument, a band is gathered. The story ends with huge Genie Bear emerging from a ketchup bottle to complain about the noise. Endpapers show the animals, their instruments, and more of the bam/foom/rattle/plink noises. Contrived, slight, and visually of poor quality.


Meticulously drawn black and white illustrations, given a soft effect by the use of parallel lines rather than strong outlines, add to the effectiveness of a text that is clear, direct, authoritative, and informative. George describes the way a particularly stressful day of intense heat followed by a cloudburst affects the creatures of the Sonora Desert. Her text has cohesion and focus in part because she makes two Papago Indians (mother and child) and a wounded mountain lion the main characters, in part because the dramatic quality of the setting and the natural events bind the people and animals together.

C.U. Science


Brisk little line drawings illustrate an excellent collection of songs, many of which serve also as games, finger plays, or learning devices. Glazer explains, in his preface, that he has chosen the material in the book to reflect a young child's interests, vocabulary, and speech patterns. Also addressed to adults is a section on "Using This Material," which explains that a few nonmusical games are included. The songs have been astutely chosen and are grouped under such headings as "A Child's Day," "The Playground," and "Favorite Fingerplays," making it easier to locate material for specific purposes or occasions. It is unfortunate that the book, because it does not lie flat, cannot be used at the piano.
Max Murphy, a high school junior and the narrator, is in love with Justine, a Cajun belle, but becomes deeply involved with the new girl at school, Burke, whom he dubs the “Snow Cone.” Poised, elegantly dressed in expensive (and unusually inappropriate) clothes, Burke is a world-famous violinist who adores her father, is bitter about her mother, and gets hysterical if a male touches her. Max has his own problems: he wants to be a mime, but his father scoffs and issues an ultimatum: if Max should drop out instead of going to UCLA, he’s on his own. Then there’s Rabbit, Max’s running mate and an illegal immigrant from Mexico, whose mother is so ill that they return to Mexico rather than face U.S. hospital authorities. Among the weaknesses of the book are the fact that it is overcrowded with characters and sub-plots and that some of the characterization seems exaggerated and some of the dialogue (Justine’s and Rabbit’s speech patterns) self-conscious; among the strengths are the fact that the writing style has good flow and pace, that much of the material is humorous and good-humored, and that many of the problems and relationships are those with which adolescents are often deeply concerned.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Fears, overcoming


Prefaced by an introductory note about nature myths and followed by several pages of scientific facts about the sun and the moon, this comprises a dozen stories, adequately retold, from the folklore of many peoples. Sources (Aboriginal, Maori, Cherokee Indian, Mexican, etc.) are attributed for each tale; although the adapters have adhered to the oral tradition fairly well, they occasionally fail to be quite clear. The format, double-page spreads in which rather busy paintings surround and frame the print, would be more effective if the print were not occasionally hard to read because of background color.


Like many sports biographies, this emphasizes the long years of dedicated practice, the need to give up many of the leisure time pursuits of most children and adolescents, the move from the first, nervous public appearance to the intense focus of the seasoned (if still nervous) performer. The authors have a winning combination of dramatic sense, capable style, and the acuteness of observation achieved by a participant—plus the glamor of an internationally famous and popular skating star, and of other stellar figures in the world of figure skating.


A merry, stout-hearted tinker, Esteban decides that he will try to win the thousand gold reales offered by the owner of a Spanish castle to anyone who can drive its ghost away. Esteban knows that other brave men have tried and have been found dead in the morning, but he assembles provisions and enters the gloom of the great hall. A warning voice, “I’m falling!” precedes the limbs, torso, and head of a ghost who tumbles piecemeal down the fireplace where Esteban is cooking a hearty meal. Put together, the ghost tells Esteban of his sins, which must be expiated by digging up
some treasure; this done, the ghost disappears, and Esteban collects both the ghost’s bag of gold and the promised reward. Nicely textured pictures in subdued tones have vigor and humor, and the story is told with zest, a well-structured tale of a pudgy, amicable hero.

D.V. Courage


Spectacular as Lena Horne’s career has been, it is rivalled in drama by her personal life: torn from her grandparents’ home with its stability and culture to tramp about the country with her mother (an unsuccessful actress) and badgered by her Cuban stepfather, she had an unhappy first marriage that ended with her husband keeping one of their two children. Always a political activist, she was on the Red Channels list of banned artists; her marriage to a white man (a marriage that was a long and happy one) brought further problems. Horne struggled throughout her career to improve the image of blacks in the roles she played, and her story is one of battles and triumphs. This has a more even quality in the writing style than some of Haskins’ recent biographies, and he writes with a candor that is, like his appreciation of the beautiful Lena Horne, controlled.


Although it incorporates some rhyme, this is not a poem but a monologue addressed to a cat, with a pattern of alphabetized first words in textual sentences. “Lick, lick, lick your snow white paws.” “Maybe he will and maybe he won’t.” “Nosey cat needs to know everything,” and so on. The pictures clarify and animate the text; repetition of a starting letter on some pages (“Paper bag to poke and pull and pounce upon”) may encourage young children’s interest in the alphabet.


An adventurous mouse, Boswell takes Pouf, an even smaller mouse, on his back and investigates the toy castle in the attic of an old house. When he loses Pouf and tells the others, all the mice rush to the castle and find that the flat tin figures of knights, acrobats, even the king and queen, come alive at midnight. All of the action of the story takes place during the slow tolling of the twelve strokes of the clock: because it was Pouf who removed the ring from the Queen’s finger, he has to fight the dragon on her behalf; he kills the beast by screaming, “No,” and just then the last note of the clock turns all the castle figures back to tin—but not before Sir Pouf Lion Heart is knighted. After they return home, the mice find a sack of seeds and some of the castle tapestries outside their door. Boswell says he’ll never go back to the castle but Pouf knows some day he’ll see his friends again. The story lacks a natural flow, but the combined appeals of the mice, the magic, the toys, and the medieval castle, pictured in lively if occasionally awkward black and white drawings and full-color paintings, should have a strong appeal to children.


Set on an Illinois farm in 1837, this is the story of Isaac, a youngster who knows he’s not always responsible but hopes his father will recognize his potential. Ike longs to go with his older brother Jacob and Pa when they drive hogs to Chicago; although
an injury keeps Jacob at home, Pa brusquely refuses Ike's offer of help. Ike steals off after Pa has left and, with the pig he'd raised from a runt, Porker, follows. After several days of some hardship and adventure, Ike catches up with Pa; he's scolded and sent back, but for the first time Pa shows that he appreciates Ike's determination and courage. This gives a convincing picture of frontier life and is adequately written; while the characterization is believable, it has little depth; the pace is slow, perhaps because the plot is overextended.

D.V. Father-son relations; Self-reliance


Jessica, the narrator, is fifteen in this sequel to *To See My Mother Dance*; she has several problems: her imperious grandmother becomes ill and has to go to a nursing home, her friend Peter (who reluctantly confesses he's a hemophiliac) is injured in an accident, her best friend is having stepmother problems, and Jessica feels she ought to go away to school in order to give her father and stepmother a chance to be alone together. As is true of the first book, the characterizations and the nuances of relationships are capably handled; also true, the plot seems diffuse, more a series of situations than a cohesive narrative.

D.V. Friendship values; Grandparent-child relations; Stepparent-child relations


A family secret is revealed and the ghosts of an unhappy colonial ancestress and her husband are appeased when Amy and her friends deduce from clues and sightings what the tragedy of the Griffin legacy is. Amy, thirteen, has come to stay with Grandma and Great-aunt Matilda in the old homestead in a Massachusetts village, and Amy is baffled when a minister (ghost) chides her and is hard to convince that she is not her ancestress, Lucy, whom she strongly resembles. Her friends Ben and Betsy are convinced when they, like Amy, see Lucy's ghost; with the help of clairvoyant Aunt Matilda and her two friends, Amy pieces out the odd conversations she has overheard between ghosts or with them, and solves the puzzle. This is a deft blend of fantasy and realism, it has good pace and structure, a controlled narrative flow, and considerable historical interest in the unfolding of the lives of Amy's ancestors during the time of the American Revolution.


The minimal text, in large print, consists entirely of descriptions of how various animals carry or walk with their young: "Mother cat carries her kittens in her soft mouth . . . Mother Koala's cub rides on her back . . . Baby hedgehogs follow their mother in a nice straight line." Set against a broad white double-page, the paintings are accurate, meticulously detailed, and wonderfully sensuous in texture. This is a fine first nature book for very young children.

C.U. Nature study


In a fantasy set in Greenland, a boy of twelve is delighted at the prospect of going on a hunting trip with his father. Panipaq and his father, Peter, set out for a summer
hunting camp with shared anticipation—but Panipaq cannot bring himself to kill a seal or an auk; he is troubled by visions of the ancient people of his tribe, the Inuit, and although he is teased by his cousins and makes Peter angry, Panipaq is convinced that the spirits of his ghost vision are incensed and must be appeased. Only the old storyteller of the tribe, Inuk, understands, and his tales of the spirits help Panipaq when, during one of his visions, he goes beneath the sea to encounter the mighty magic of Neqivik. Peter’s flouting of the old beliefs almost brings a tragic end, but when Panipaq surfaces from the icy water in which he had been long immersed, Peter admits, “You couldn’t have survived that long under water without some kind of help, Son,” and adds, “I’m sorry for not having believed you, Panipaq. You have been a brave man this summer, and I’m proud of you.” The book gives an effective picture of cultural conflict among the contemporary Inuit of Greenland as well as of some of the cultural patterns, but its focus is on the legendary; as a fantasy it is slow-paced, the realistic matrix vying for attention rather than serving as a base for the fantastic. The writing style is on the whole capable, although occasionally an awkward phrase like “The dogs had dropped the wind from their teeth . . .” appears.


Testa’s paintings, clean and bright against ample white space, are dramatically effective; the poetic text of this book from England is affective but may be too static to appeal to some children. A leaf falls in autumn, bemoans with other fallen leaves the joys of the past: being visited by caterpillars and watching butterflies hatch, hearing the friendly gossip of ants, listening to a nightingale. The leaves envy the evergreen but the evergreen says, “Though you lie here in the ground/your adventures are not over/in time, in time/in tree and flower you will be found/as you will discover.” Spring comes, the trees bud and flower, and the admiring evergreen waits again for the season in which he’ll show “his own dark green fire.”


Emma, visiting her Aunt Di and working at Marland Hall, is not the first person to see the ghost, but she is the first who is determined to unlock the mystery of why the ghost is so unhappy. Talking to local residents, puzzling about clues, and using deduction, Emma decides that she must help the ghost (by now Emma knows who it is) and that it will take the joint efforts of the others who had seen it. Nothing if not persuasive, Emma organizes a night vigil in front of an old painting of the ghost and her mother, with startling and effective results. Lillington’s done a capable job of meshing realism and fantasy; Emma is sturdy, bright, and believable and she’s almost matter-of-fact both about her encounters with the ghost and about the detective work on its behalf. The writing has an easy flow, the dialogue is natural, the characterization is competent, and there is an underplayed love story to give a bit of variety.


Four small, square books with heavy board pages have intriguing collage pictures of two small mice in often-static albeit handsome pages. The same message is printed on the back covers of all four books, a note to the effect that children may not know the “right answers,” but that right answers aren’t important. If, however, the concepts of who-what-when-where are important, it is a weakness that some of the pages don’t seem to pose a question, unless—for example—“when” is translated as “what
time of year is it?" Unusual in artistic appeal, but not in concept, the books should be enjoyed for their point-and-say value.


Although the quality of some of the photographs makes it difficult to see some of the parts referred to in pictorial captions, this is on the whole a most useful book, explicit and detailed, that makes it possible for a reader to learn new skills and save (perhaps even earn) money by doing repairs (replacing cracked hoses) or routine upkeep jobs (replacing air filters) on a car. As with a cookbook recipe, each section is prefaced by a list of tools and parts needed, and each is given a difficulty rating. There are repeated safety warnings (motor off, parking on level ground, cool engine, etc.) and suggestions that, for some jobs, it is best to have adult supervision, but the text is written in so straightforward a style that adult readers should find the book acceptable for their own use.


Caroline is eleven, the brother with whom she squabbles is thirteen, and they live in Manhattan with their divorced mother. The two are happily adjusted; this is not a story about divorce, but a humorous tale of a child’s mistaken suspicions about a neighbor. Caroline has found a discarded letter to the man who lives in the apartment above hers, and it says ‘The woman’s terrific. . . . Eliminate the kids. You can find a way.’ She’s convinced her life is threatened; the man proves to be an author, his correspondent a literary agent, but even readers who spot this probability should enjoy the antics of Caroline and her best friend as they play detective. This has less depth than most Lowry books, but it’s just as clever, just as smoothly structured.


Although this volume is one of a series called ‘‘Origins,’’ first published in England, it does not describe the ways in which the earliest peoples discovered how to bake bread, although it does contrast modern wheat farming and the simpler methods of the recent past. The authors use a fictional framework in which the children of a convenient family discuss the kinds of bread they can buy; visit a bakery and are given explanations of the steps in commercial baking; talk about grain, growing and milling wheat, and the nutritive qualities of bread; and make their own bread. This gives useful information, but the writing style is dry, the fictional framework seeming only an encumbrance since it is used for long and stilted lectures. A brief glossary and index, both on one page, are included.


Twelve-year-old Jerry, whose divorced mother had just married a man with three children, didn’t want to stay with three kids he resented while Mom was on a trip, so he ran away, arriving at his grandparents’ home only to discover that it was deserted and that – the furniture showed – it now clearly belonged to other people. That’s the setting for a slow-moving albeit well-written story about Jerry and an older girl, Hanna, who helps him, after the acquaintance ripens into friendship, make a decision about his future at some cost to herself. Because he’s been hurt while climbing, Hanna (a lonely, self-sufficient girl who had been hired to look after the house in the absence of its owner) takes care of Jerry, knowing that if he goes back to his mother she will lose the boy who has come to seem like a beloved younger brother. The
situation is believable, the relationship touching, and the characterization competent, but the slow pace is a weakness in the book.

D.V. Friendship values; Stepparents, adjustment to


Peering through the window of a deserted house, Chrissy thinks she sees a form that looks like a baby doll, bald and diapered. She goes in the house and follows where the doll's voice leads, learning that the doll is a ghost. Always drifting away from Chrissy, the doll says, "I'll be your doll if you show me you're brave," and when Chrissy is brave enough to reach out to touch the shadowy figure, the doll hurtles downstairs and into a box and out of the house. When Chrissy opens the box on the lawn, there is a real baby doll for her to love. The photographs have excellent shots of a handsome interior, but they are so contrived as an accompaniment to a slight and not very persuasive plot that the book seems, in toto, an insubstantial trifle.


Three stories about Fox for the beginning independent reader are illustrated with framed line drawings, tinted in shades of orange and green, animated and comic. In the title story, Fox and his friends wreak such havoc by racing their shopping baskets in a grocery store that he has to mow the lawn—not use the bicycle (wheels) as he'd planned. In "Fox and the Grapes" he conquers his fear of climbing to share in the grapes his friend Millie has as she perches high in a tree; in "Doctor Fox" he learns that the little sister he's pampering has been playing on his sympathy. All child-oriented, amusing, and easy to read.

C.U. Reading, beginning


Bright, stylized collage pictures, primarily of animals, are on tightly-bound double page spreads. Brown Bear answers the title question with "I see a redbird looking at me." Redbird, queried, sees a yellow duck, etc. This covers the primary and complementary colors (although orange is shown, it is not mentioned) and uses a mother and children as a bridge to achieve the full circle, as the goldfish sees a mother, who sees children; their response to "Children, children, what do you see?" is "We see a brown bear, a redbird, a yellow duck," and so on. The pictures are bold and effective, the text has a game quality, is tangentially and minimally instructive, and has little substance.


Board pages in the accordion folds of a leporello have comic cartoon style pictures against the background of which the text of a slight story is printed. To show his friend the cat that he's brave, Bat Child goes to stay in a well-tenanted haunted house. Meaning to frighten Bat Child, the cat makes noise outside the house and is chased away by the many ghosts, bats, and mice who live there. Bat Child comes home and his friends give him a party. The last board flap is designed to be cut in quarters, and these become cards with pictures of one character on each card; the child is urged to collect these. The story is weak, the illustrations not Mayer's best work; the appeal is chiefly that of a toy book.

A giraffe, a hippopotamus, an elephant, and a turtle decide to play the imitative game, "Simon Says." The first three do well at each action but jeer at Turtle because he can't do any of these; when it's Turtle's turn to choose, he spots the tiger who's been increasingly evident (to readers) in the preceding illustrations, and shouts "Hide!" It is little Turtle who, biting the Tiger's tail, saves his friends, and they are all apologetic for the way they've jeered at him. This has a message, not too minatory, about good sportsmanship and individual abilities, but it's a brisk if not substantial story, and the comic pencil drawings should amuse children.

D.V. Helpfulness; Sportsmanship


Text and photographs are carefully integrated in a book that describes some of the western world's most popular breeds of pony. The writing style is simple and direct, with a one-page index giving access to the breeds that are discussed in topical arrangement. The pictures should especially appeal to horse lovers; the pictures of gentle, sturdy ponies may well attract a pre-reading audience as well.


The humorous story of a girl with occult powers, *The Ghost Belonged to Me* (reviewed in the July, 1975 issue) introduced Blossom, in a fantasy set in 1913. In this sequel it is a year later, and the outspoken, pert protagonist is in disfavor at school ("There are better ways of getting attention than dabbling in the occult," her teacher says.) Working on a class project, a Halloween festival, Blossom is in a deserted house reputed to be haunted when she's catapulted seventy years into the future, into the room of a boy who at first thinks she's part of an Atari game. Readers should enjoy a Blossom-eye view of our time, as she and Jeremy work out the problem of how she can get back to 1914. She does. Somehow Peck fuses the occult powers, the time-slip, and the 1914 milieu onto a successful whole, and the cheerful candor and practicality of the main character make the story enjoyable.


Since the types of jobs within the United States Merchant Marine are so varied, the author explains in a preface, the text focuses on the officers and crew of one vessel, an American President Lines containership, who explain their training and give advice. What they have to say is supplemented by the author's comments on getting proper documentation, joining the maritime union, taking advantage of programs offered by union-operated schools, etc. After a chapter on the history of the service, and another on the preparation for the entrance of men and women into it, the text focuses on types of jobs. It closes with information on opportunities for leisure time activity, health care and safety at sea, shoreside operations, and sources of additional information. A glossary and an index are appended to a book that is carefully organized, crisply informative, and very useful for vocational guidance.

C.U. Vocational guidance
Waiting for their teacher, who'd dropped into a pub after a ball game, four children from Hawkwood Comprehensive School are horrified when he comes out with a man from the exclusive Greycoats School and tells them a tetrathlon match has been arranged. Swimming, riding, target-shooting, and running. The Greycoats boys have tutors, their own horses, and swimming pools. The four Hawkwood boys have none of these, no experience, and little desire to be shoved into competition. After some preliminary training, the teacher gives up—but Nutty doesn't. Nutty's a girl, and her determination is fierce; she coerces, threatens, wheels and deals, and becomes one of a new team that trains on its own for several months, at the end of which the tetrathlon takes place, several adults having been coaxed into training the nervous quartet. This is a natural for film: the four Hawkwood contenders are tough, colorful characters (and their speech reflects this) and they all have hearts of steel and some soft spots; there's distinctive characterization, plenty of action, lots of humor, some moments of sentiment, and the story has an appealing plot and a breezy writing style.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Courage; Perseverance


Alanna, yearning to be a knight and have adventures, proposes to her twin brother that he go to the convent sorcery school she was supposed to attend and she go to the king's court and—pretending to be a boy—train as a page. This first of a projected series should win easy converts: it has the appeals of chivalric training, of Alanna's masquerade as "Alan," and of the high magic that Alanna and others learn and practice. Alanna makes enemies, gains protectors and friends, succeeds remarkably at archery, swordplay, wrestling, etc. She saves the life of the prince, Jonathan, who becomes one of the few who know her secret (high probability of a future romance there) and knows that their shared first adventure will not be the last. Save for an occasional phrase that seems too contemporary for the setting ("Then try this on for size") the writing is smooth and spirited.

D.V. Courage; Perseverance


Tinted pink and green, vigorous comic drawings with a free use of line illustrate a story simply enough written for independent readers, but slight enough to be best allocated as a read-aloud book. The story has a chain-of-events structure that begins, "The moon went down and woke the sun. The sun glowed pink and woke the rooster," and so on; the animals' noise wakes a boy, who catches fish and cooks them for breakfast. The smell wakes the boy's parents, who appear in a kitchen cluttered with spilled ingredients and used implements and most of the animals, while the boy waves a cheerful "Good Morning!" The cause/effect theme should appeal to children; while the story is slight, it has a sunny tone in both text and illustrations that is pleasant.


Soft pencil and wash drawings illustrate a gentle story that captures both the familiar routine of bedtime-stall and children's fascination with stories about them-
R selves. Pomerantz uses italics for the dialogue that sets off the (Roman type) reminiscences by Daddy about some of the things Posy did when she was little: making wishes, helping Daddy make a decision, and—one that should especially appeal to children—going on a first shopping expedition, boldly planned, on which courage failed and Posy became embarrassed and mute. Mommy and Daddy, as depicted here, share tasks and child-care.

D.V. Father-daughter relations


Line drawings, tinted with tones of red and blue, illustrate a collection of valentine poems. Prelutsky, as always, is careful about rhyme and meter; his poems are light and humorous, occasionally barbed, and full of situations and actions that will be familiar to young readers—like having to make a paper heart smaller and smaller when you cut it freehand. Not impressive, but entertaining, especially for those readers who react with embarrassed giggles to the sentimentality of Valentine's Day.

C.U. Reading, beginning; Valentine's Day


In three short stories, Hattie decorates her birthday cake with a catsup frosting while Mommie's out of the kitchen, she chops off some of her hair and is embarrassed until the new boy on the street says it looks neat that way instead of in curls "like all those other dumb girls have," and makes such a fuss over a newly-lost tooth that she's left out of the class picture. The text is written with breezy simplicity and humor in a light style that's echoed in the black and white illustrations. The book should appeal to young readers because of the humor and the familiarity of the situations.

D.V. Social behavior


Drew's family makes a living by street performances in Baltimore, and while he enjoys playing and singing, he is not completely happy with the free-wheeling lifestyle, he's distressed because his sister threatens to leave home (and does), and he's miserable because his father is, although not unkind, aloof and unresponsive. It is the old song "Greensleeves" that transports Drew in time; he finds he's in Elizabethan London where, in repeated visits, he makes friends with Symon, an apprentice musician, who's the only person to whom Drew is visible. It's in part due to Symon's advice that Drew is able to talk to his father. This time-shift story has a competent style and adequate characterization, but it lacks a smooth integration of the fantastic and realistic elements; each is of itself interesting, but the fusion seems contrived. The other weaknesses of the story are the pace, which is deliberate and seldom relieved by any heightening of tension or suspense, and by the fact that the seventeenth century episodes are used almost tediously to give information about the setting.

D.V. Father-son relations

Another yeasty tall tale about the ingenious painter, inventor, and manipulator, Xenon Zebulon Yowder, again illustrated by the ebullient, scraggly sketches that are this author-illustrator’s trademark, is just as funny as its predecessors. Here Mr. Yowder, while painting signs for a Missouri River steamboat, conceived the idea of putting sails on a wagon, since the westward-bound covered wagons moved so slowly. On his contraption’s maiden voyage across the plains there were local dignitaries who, as the windwagon went faster and faster, howled their wish to be let off; but there was no way to stop and all aboard suffered with Mr. Yowder as the vehicle flew into soldiers, Indians, and a herd of stampeding buffalo. This ingenious extravaganza has action, humor, and a bland style that’s in nice contrast to the nonsense of the plot.


Profusely illustrated with line drawings of good quality, this comprehensive reference book will probably be used by younger children as well as by readers who can understand all the polysyllabic words of the text. Integrated into the alphabetical listing of bold-face entries for species are entries such as eggs, evolve, eyesight, parental care, intelligence, et cetera. The material is cross-referenced, crisply written, and broadly informative, giving facts about anatomy, habits, classification, location of fossil remains, meaning of scientific names, and the era in which the dinosaur, or the animal often mistakenly classed as a dinosaur, lived. A location index, by country or—in the United States—by state, is appended, as is a list of books for further reading. Over three hundred kinds of dinosaurs are listed and described in this excellent source of information.

C.U. Science


The story is set in Providence, Rhode Island in 1962 and is told by Betsy Bergman, a shy, quiet high school student who clings to her best friend, Bernie, and who is surprised and pleased when handsome Kenny Klein asks her for a date when they are at a meeting of young people at the temple. Unfortunately, Kenny shows his anti-black prejudice; Betsy, who has participated in a drive for food to help civil rights workers in the south, becomes incensed and breaks the date. Later she takes part in a protest march and is taken to jail but is held only briefly when a friend’s mother, a lawyer, intercedes. Betsy eventually goes to Washington, having successfully urged her mother to accompany her, hears Martin Luther King speak, and feels the impact and hope of the occasion. The book gives a believable picture of one young person’s involvement in the civil rights movement and a touching picture of the way in which devotion to a cause can bring a reclusive individual to active participation; it has firm depiction of characters and their relationships, but is weakened by a slow start and by an uneven pace.

C.U. Social studies

D.V. Devotion to a cause; Intercultural understanding

Every summer over four million seals travel, some of them thousands of miles, to the Pribilof Islands to breed and mate, a migratory pattern believed by scientists to have begun about thirty million years ago. Scott describes the ways in which the bulls establish territorial rights, fighting each other for the females who arrive later; he discusses courtship, mating, care of the young, and other aspects of this huge colony of fur seals; he describes the careless slaughter—now stemmed—that once threatened extinction of the species. Save for some water pictures, the photographs are remarkable in their clarity; the text is outstanding for the vivid and authoritative picture it gives of the seals' life cycle and behavior patterns.

C.U. Science


In a sequel to the stories about Chester that began in 1960 with *A Cricket in Times Square,* both author and illustrator adhere to the standards of excellence and the appealing qualities that attracted earlier readers. Here Chester loses the stump in which he has been housed when a hefty person sits on it. All his animal friends offer hospitality, but their homes are not right for Chester, and it is through the diligent efforts of Simon Turtle and Walter Water Snake that the cricket finds quarters he loves. It's the lively style, the strong characterization, and the humorous dialogue that give the book substance and sparkle.

D.V. Friendship values


Terry, the narrator, is delighted when her Dad marries Marilyn, but she's not so sure about Marilyn's dog, Hoover. Hoover knocks over the ladder so Terry can't get out of her loft bed; Hoover makes off with one of Terry's new hiking shoes; Hoover is banished to the doghouse, and Terry imagines what it's like to be a stepdog and have to share Marilyn's attention and not be able to talk about it. She unchains Hoover and brings him into her room to sleep (he does not knock over the ladder) and from then on, Hoover and Terry are friends. The story is told in a light style, but it has depths of warmth and significance in treating adjustment to a new relationship. The pictures are of adequate quality, not technically or aesthetically polished, but realistic and animated.

D.V. Jealousy, overcoming; Stepparents, adjustment to


Take a giant step backward and remember all those nurse stories in series that appeared a generation ago. Each had a pretty student nurse, a handsome doctor or intern, a tough supervisor, a crisis in which the nurse showed compassion/knowledge/initiative in helping a patient, etc. There was always a romantic ending, there was always a thawing on the part of the tough supervisor. Well, here we are again. Andrea is a nurse-in-training, and she's specializing in pediatric nursing, and all the pattern of the old series is in this book, and presumably in this series (*Monica Ross: Maternity, Elizabeth Jones: Emergency, Gabriela Ortiz: Crisis Center Hotline,* and more to come.) There has been an effort made in this series to reflect our
pluralistic society, and there are some concessions to feminism, but the book as a whole is old-fashioned and trite in conception, with stock characterizations, often gushy dialogue, and a poor writing style, with a repeated use of such grammatical errors as "she sprung at . . ." or such cliche phrases as "... the house she and Big Andy called home," or "She had what it took to be a nurse inside, where it counted." The love affair goes at a slow pace, although it's the core of the story, with Andy reacting like a young adolescent in her pouting responses, and has the standard soppy ending. "Joe's kiss took Andy far beyond Paradise."


Bright, black, and beautiful, twenty-year-old Abby falls deeply in love with Carl Lee, and is defiant when her father forbids her to see him. When tragedy strikes (Abby's beloved aunt is murdered in gruesome fashion by her crazed husband) Abby's father sees how gentle and supportive Carl Lee is, and accepts him. Carl Lee, meanwhile, has had a fight with his father and left home; he discovers that his father has died and been buried in the woods by the Cherokee woman who, he learns, is his mother; Abby, in turn, comforts him in his bereavement. As a love story, this is appealing, and the characterization is strong. What weakens the book is the often-ornate phraseology of what is basically a competent writing style: "A tortured wind hummed disturbingly in Strong's voice," and one episode in which flowers spring up wherever a cat walks.

D.V. Education, valuing and seeking; Death, adjustment to; Parent-child relations


Randy Duke's the narrator—but that isn't his real name, and that's his newest problem. A college student, he is miserably self-conscious about his identity, not because he's adopted, but because he's lost three fingers of his left hand, and he had been the most promising left-handed pitcher in a major league tryout. He's filling in at a summer camp, he wants nobody to know who he really is, and he almost loses the girl he's fallen in love with because somebody does find out about Randy, tells her, and she runs away because he's lied to her. Randy searches for her frantically, ashamed because she has been so open with him about her past. This is far from the usual camping story; although counselors and campers have problems, they are not camp-induced but intrinsic to the array of well-differentiated characters. It is, oddly, almost a three-way love story, since Randy and his girl both love one of the children who returns their affection and who helps Randy in his search. The happy ending is believable, the writing style sparkles with intellectual sophistication, and the story is imbued with a persuasive warmth.

D.V. Friendship values; Handicaps, adjustment to


Ever since second grade, when a classmate had killed a butterfly Josh was watching, he had carefully hidden his interest in nature, had pretended liking to clown and fight so that he'd be accepted. Now, in fifth grade, he is bored by the simplicity of the science lesson, tired of pretending to be macho and of hiding his real interests. He walks out of school, begs his mother and stepfather (the latter being sympathetic) to let him stay out of school for a time. They agree to give it a try, and Josh begins working, helping a man who saves and tries to heal injured wild creatures, and in the course of his work Josh learns a great deal about himself. The story has little drama,
and an uneven pace, but the style and dialogue are competent, and the attraction of a
warm, supportive family relationship and Josh's love of animals should appeal to
readers.

D.V. Animals, kindness to; Stepparent-child relations

0-316-91490-8. 47p. $12.95.

This is presumably based on the film (same title) on sexual abuse made by Wachter
and illustrated by Aaron, animator of the film, whose crayon drawings are awkward
and angular. The value of the book is that, in four stories, the text explores the
dilemma of children to whom an older person makes sexual overtures or advances. In
each case, the child is hesitant to talk about it; in each case the boy or girl does talk
about it and gets sympathetic advice and help. The advice always stresses the im-
portance of telling someone, of not keeping it a secret through embarrassment or fear
of reprisal. The text is simply written in a flat style; there is no violence, abusive
language, or physical punishment depicted; the stories tend to be dull and repetitive,
but the book should be useful, especially for those parents who feel uncomfortable in
taking the initiative and who might prefer to read the book aloud to their children.

C.U. Health and Hygiene; Sex education


A superb craftsman, Westall presents in this collection of eerie tales a marvelous
variety of style, mood, and subject, from a hilarious story about a plaintive woman’s
passion for handsome Count Dracula to the sinister tale of a cat that assumes human
qualities and precipitates a murder. In these and other stories the author shows his
versatility by suiting style to mood and by creating memorable characters within the
brevity of the short story form.

Willson, Robina Beckles. *Merry Christmas: Children at Christmastime Around the World*;

The softly colored paintings, especially effective in interior scenes, are slightly
sentimental, artfully composed, and nicely laid out in relation to the text on each
page. Willson begins the text with a simplified account of the Nativity, then devotes a
page or two to separate countries, describing some of the special ways in which the
holiday is celebrated there. Interspersed throughout the book, at appropriate places,
are carols, recipes, and instructions for making decorative objects. A pleasant book,
this is weakened by the fact that at times general material is included in a section of
one country, or by the brevity (six lines in the page on Greece) of a section. There are
other books on Christmas customs the world over; the appeal here is more in the
illustrations than the text.

C.U. Christmas
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Michael H. Stone, Special Problems in Borderline Adolescents from Wealthy Families
Jonathan Cohen, Learning Disabilities and the College Student
Max Sugar, Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents

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The Experience of an Educator in the Public Schools
Jack Greenstein
Foreword by Kevin Ryan

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READING FOR PARENTS

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Avery, Jody, ed. Expectations, the annual publication of the Braille Institute, is available free to any English-speaking blind child in grades three through six. This 35th edition of the anthology can be obtained by schools, libraries, and organizations serving blind children from the editor, Braille Institute, 741 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90029.


Parker, Robert P. and Davis, Frances A., eds. Developing Literacy: Young Children's Use of Language. International Reading Association, 1983. 189p. $10.00; $7.00 for individual members.


