Book Talks for the 2024 GSCBA Ballot

Early Readers

**Noodleheads Do the Impossible** by Ted Arnold, Martha Hamilton, and Mitch Weiss

After listening to a story by their Uncle Ziti, Mac & Mac, the noodleheads decided to try to do an impossible feat of their own. But what will it be? Can they count all of the stars in the sky? Will they get too tired trying to walk around the world? How many grains of sand can they actually count? This latest installment of the Noodleheads series is a funny graphic novel for every age.

**Jack Gets Zapped!** by Mac Barnett

In this latest Jack Book, Jack does not want to help out around the house on a rainy day. All he wants to do is play video games. Find out what happens when lightning strikes, and Jack is transported into his favorite game. This is a perfect easy reader choice for fans of video games and silly stories.

**King & Kayla and the Case of the Gold Ring** by Dori Hillestad Butler, illustrated by Nancy Meyers

In this story featuring the mystery solving duo of Kayla and her dog King, Kayla’s friend Asia comes over to play. Asia is so excited to show Kayla her grandmother’s right, that they don’t realize it goes missing until after they come in from playing in the snow. Told in first person from King’s point of view—like the rest in the series—this will appeal to animal lovers and mystery lovers alike.

**Wildflowers** by Liniers
Three sisters embark on an adventure to a mysterious island. From the first harrowing detail of a plane crash to the ultimate solution, readers will see the world of imagination as depicted by the three sisters. Perfect for readers who want a little adventure in their lives, this easy graphic novel is sure to be a hit.

**Yayoi Kusama**, by May Nakamura, illustrated by Alexandra Badiu

This biography tells an easy but detailed description of Yayoi Kusama’s life, from her childhood in Japan to her popularity in today’s climate. Readers will find out how Georgia O’Keefe inspired her to continue drawing, as well as her complicated friendship with Andy Warhol. This would be a great story for children who love art, especially since there are additional facts about creating your own artistic style, careers in art, and famous women artists.

**Training Day** by Raúl the Third, Illustrated by Elaine Bay

All Don toro wants to do is sleep. He does not want to exercise. What is his trainer Pollo to do? Will Pollo succeed in waking up Don Toro for his training session? Peppered with Spanish words throughout, this simple story is perfect for kids who enjoyed Raúl the Third’s “Vamos” picture books but are looking for something to read on their own.

**Fish and Sun**, Written and Illustrated by Sergio Ruzzier

A fish realizes that he is bored. So he floats up to the surface and sees something strange in the sky. It turns out to be the sun, and they become fast friends. This is a lovely and simple story about friendship.

**The Protest** by Samantha Thornhill, Illustrated by Shirley Ng-Benitez

Lily finds out that the local community garden is about to be destroyed. A builder plans to convert the garden into a parking lot. So, Lily and her friends in the community decide to create signs and protest the new plans. This is a great and easy introduction to community activism.

**Tiny Tales: Shell Quest** by Steph Waldo
A slug meets some new friends in the woods. They look just like him, except they have shells. So he looks for anything that he can find that might work as a shell so that he can blend in with them. With word bubble and artwork resembling a comic book, this would be perfect for kids who are a step above Elephant & Piggie, but aren’t quite ready for Dog Man. This is a great story about being OK in your own shell.

**Fiction**

**Amira & Hamza: The War to Save the Worlds** by Samira Ahmed

When Amira & Hamza visit their local Muslim Community Center on the night of a super blue blood moon, they never expected what happened next. They never expected a war to begin between earth and the spirit realm. They never expected that jinn would actually be real. They CERTAINLY didn’t expect to be the chosen ones to stop it. A rollicking adventure story, and a great interplay of Muslim culture, folklore and history.

**Amari and the Night Brothers** by B. B. Alston

Amari’s brother, the super-smart Quinton goes missing, but nominates her for a secret society called the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs, a summer camp for magical kids. She has to test her wits against students who have known about the magical world all of their lives, but there is also an unseen force that is trying to destroy the bureau. Her own secret mission is to save her brother and find out what happened to him and his partner. This story will appeal to anyone looking for an action-packed fantasy story.

**Willodeen,** by Katherine Applegate

Aside from a love of screechers, a scary creature that smells like rotten fish and has quills on its tail, Willodeen keeps to herself in her country of Perchance. This is until she meets Colin, an artist whose father happens to be on the town council. Perchance is also having its own problems: their tourist industry is taking a hit because the hummingbears that migrate through the town are becoming fewer in number. In this great magical story about the excessive use of natural resources, readers will learn how sometimes it takes just one voice to make a difference.
The Year I Flew Away, by Marie Arnold

Gabrielle has the opportunity to emigrate from Haiti to the US to stay with her Uncle and his family in New York City. She is having a difficult time adjusting, and is teased for her accent and broken English by the kids at her new school. On her first day in the US, she stumbles upon a witch who offers her three wishes in exchange for her soul. With every wish, the witch also takes a little part of Gabrielle with her. A great story about fitting in, finding your place, and remembering where you come from.

The Swag is in the Socks by Kelly J.Baptist

Xavier Moon seems content to lead a quiet life, but inside he wishes for the courage to be more outgoing and confident. Beginning on his 12th birthday a series of packages begin arriving in the mail from his great-uncle Frankie Bell containing fancy socks and everyday challenges. Will following advice like: “Wear the socks: I DARE you to see what happens when you do”, lead to a new improved way of life for Xavier? This is an enjoyable read with lots of heart for fans of The Season of Styx Malone and The Parker Inheritance.

Rez Dogs by Joseph Bruchac

Twelve-year old Malian enjoys visiting her loving grandparents at their home on a Wabanaki reservation. However, when the Covid-19 pandemic occurs unexpectedly, she cannot return to her Boston home, but must shelter in place on the reservation. In this beautifully written novel in verse, Malian and her grandparents realize the importance of families helping each other in a time of need. The sudden appearance of a mysterious dog, deeply-rooted Native American stories, the challenge of remote learning on the reservation, and a meaningful school project all contribute to a great reading experience.

J.D. and the Great Barber Battle by J. Dillard and illustrated by Akeem S. Roberts

J.D. takes some extreme measures to survive third grade, including cutting his own hair after a disastrous haircut. When it turns out he actually has skills with the clippers, J.D.’s friends start clamoring for his cool cuts and the local barber feels threatened enough to demand a haircutting “battle” to determine who is the best! With its smattering of pop culture references, this book will appeal to young readers who also enjoy sports and
video games. Positive messages about finding your passion/talent and working hard are emphasized throughout but without feeling didactic. Though short, this book wraps up all its storylines with the exception of one element introduced in the last chapter that makes it clear J.D.'s story isn't over yet. With such an interesting and diverse cast of characters, readers will certainly want to come back and visit them again.

**Billy Miller Makes a Wish** by Kevin Henkes

Billy Miller longs for some excitement in his life. After blowing out the candles on his birthday cake, he makes a wish that something exciting will happen. Moments later, the loud siren and flashing lights of an ambulance rushes past his house. Now he wonders if it’s his fault that his neighbor, Mr. Tooley is sick. This stand-alone companion to **The Year of Billy Miller** continues the story of Billy, his parents and his playful, free-spirited younger sister Sal. This timeless family story unfolds over the summer of Billy's 8th year. Will Billy’s wish for something exciting come true? Through short chapters and sweet illustrations, we follow Billy and Sal through a summer they will never forget.

**Maybe Maybe Marisol Rainey** by Erin Entrada Kelly

Marisol Rainey is an 8-year-old girl living in Louisiana with her mom and older brother. Her dad works on an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico. Marisol has a vivid imagination and likes to name things. For example, the refrigerator is Buster Keaton and the magnolia tree in her backyard is named Peppina. Marisol’s best friend says this tree is perfect for climbing. But Marisol has so many worries and fears it stops her from doing things she might love. With a little encouragement will Marisol overcome her fears and have the best summer ever? Perfect for fans of **Ramona and Clementine**.

**The Last Fallen Star** by Graci Kim

This is a story about two sisters one magical and one non-magical. You immediately thought of Frozen right? Well this is not that story. This is the story of Riley and Hattie who cast a spell that is forbidden during Hattie’s initiation ceremony to share half of her magic with her sister. Well of course things do not go well and Riley finds out her past is very complicated. From here an adventure emerges that will leave you wanting to read the sequel immediately! If you love Rick Riordan’s books you will fall in love with this Korean mythology book!

**Merci Suarez Can’t Dance** by Meg Medina

Hand **Merci Suarez Can’t Dance** to fans of Medina’s first book in the series, **Merci Suarez Changes Gear**, as well as readers who enjoy realistic stories about family, friends, school, and growing up. Follow along with Merci who is now in 7th grade as she
juggles her family and school life, including the upcoming school dance, finding her own place in the shadow of her brother Roli, working with a potential crush in her school’s store, and facing her grandfather Lolo’s developing Alzheimer’s. While this book is a sequel, readers do not have to have read the first book to enjoy the second.

**Candidly Cline** by Kathryn Ormsbee

This coming of age LGBTQ middle grade novel is perfect for readers who enjoy rooting for a character on a journey to self-discovery and confidence. Thirteen-year-old Cline is taking the steps to make her big dreams of being a country music singer and songwriter come true despite her mother’s disapproval. Along the way, she’s figuring out who her true friends really are (and are not), developing her first crush on a girl, and learning to be true to herself and secure in her feelings despite what others may say or think.

**Pax, Journey Home** by Sara Pennypacker

Hand to readers who are curious to know what happened to Pax, his fox family, and Peter after the first book ended. Readers who haven’t read the first book, but enjoy stories featuring animals, friendship, adventure, and suspense will find *Pax, Journey Home* a page turner as well! Told in alternating chapters through Pax’s point of view and Peter’s, the story shares the journey of each. Will Peter and Pax reunite? Will Pax be able to help his sick pup before it’s too late? Will Peter be able to open himself and allow himself to be vulnerable? Read the book to find out!

**Jo Jo Makoons: The Used-to-Be Best Friend** by Dawn Quigley and illustrated by Tara Audibert

Lovable Jo Jo Makoons Azure lives on the Pembina Ojibwe reservation with her mom and kokum (grandma). Jo Jo has two best friends: her cat, Mimi, and her school friend, Fern. When Fern begins to ignore her at lunch time, Jo Jo decides its time to make a few new friends! This chapter book is the first in a series and is perfect for fans of humorous realistic fiction.

**Stuntboy, in the Meantime** by Jason Reynolds and illustrated by Raúl the Third

Portico “Stuntboy” Reeves has the best superpower of all: he protects the people in his buildings by doing “stunts” so that they don’t have to! Keeping his friends and neighbors safe is a breeze, but he must face his biggest challenge yet as his parents begin to fight more often and announce that they’re moving into separate apartments. Portico’s anxiety—which he refers to as “the frets”—get worse. What’s a superhero to do? Illustrations feature prominently throughout and seamlessly weave into the story.
**Cece Rios and the Desert of Souls** by Kaela Rivera

Cece Rios lives in Tierra del Sol, a desert town populated by descendants of the Sun god. She grows up hearing stories of criaturas, spirits who shape-shift into animals. When one of the most dangerous spirits kidnap her sister, Cece must fight to get her back! This quick-paced adventure novel draws from Mesoamerican stories and culture and is a great fit for fans of mythology, folklore, and fantasy.

**Root Magic** by Eden Royce

Jezebel Turner and her twin brother Jay have always been fascinated by rootwork, the Gullah tradition by which their Grandmother and Uncle, Doc, helped to heal those in need. When their Gran passes away, Doc tells them that he’s going to train them in rootwork. While it’s a welcome challenge, the news comes at a time when Jezebel is already dealing with big changes. Can Jezebel overcome both human and supernatural threats?

**Erik vs. Everything** by Christina Uss

While staying with his rough-and-tumble cousins and older sister Brunhilde in Minnesota, Erik Sheepflattener, whose inner Viking motto is Avoid Stuff, must learn to speak up for himself when Brunhilde tries to conquer all of his fears. (From publisher).

**Born Behind Bars** by Padma Venkatraman

In Chennai, India, after spending his whole life in jail with his mother, who is serving time for a crime she did not commit, nine-year-old Kabir is suddenly released and has to figure out how to survive on his own in the outside world. (From publisher).

**Healer of the Water Monster** by Biran Young

A novel inspired by Navajo culture follows the experiences of a boy whose summer at his grandmother’s reservation home is shaped by his uncle’s addictions and an encounter with a sacred being from the Navajo creation story. (From publisher).

**Graphic Novels**

**Otto: A Palindrama** by James Agee

Otto day dreams during a meal with his Mom and Dad, and daydreams that his dog Pip has gone missing. On his journey to find his dog, he goes to the beach, the city, on
safari, to an art museum, embarks on an adventure in cat stacking, and more. This amusing graphic novel is told entirely in palindromes—words, phrases and sentences that are the same if you read them backwards and forwards. The illustrations that Agee has created match the amusement of the text.

**Big Apple Diaries** by Alyssa Bermudez

As Alyssa navigates through 7th grade in a NYC private school, she finds comfort in writing and drawing in her diary. Alyssa’s mother is white and her father is Puerto Rican and at times she wonders what culture she should embrace. Splitting her time between two homes since her parents’ divorce, trying to be popular, and keeping up with her schoolwork are just a few worries she faces in this autobiographical graphic memoir. When tragedy strikes at the World Trade Center on 9/11, Alyssa wonders if her life will take on a new meaning. Alyssa’s heartfelt expression of her feelings and the delightful doodles in her diary will grab your attention throughout this sweet book, perfect for fans of Raina Telgemeier and Shannon Hale.

**Just Roll with It** by Lee Durfey-Lavoie and illustrated by Veronica Agarwal

Having some worries and fears is a normal part of life, and pretty standard when it comes to entering middle school. But instead of facing her fears, sixth-grader Maggie turns to little compulsions like flicking the light switches several times when she arrives home or constantly rolling her 20-sided dice to make a decision for her, even little things like what to eat for lunch. Her family and friends gently show her how her OCD is starting to control her life, so this book serves an empathetic look at how to help those who are struggling with mental illness and the general stresses of life. In addition to this detailed look into the mind of someone going through life with untreated OCD, the book has many other diverse characters and situations, therefore accurately reflects what many middle schoolers see in their own schools and lives. Offsetting the more difficult subject matters are fun and fresh illustrations.

**Fox & Rabbit Celebrate** by Beth Ferry

Fox and Rabbit are thinking about trying to celebrate sparrow’s birthday. Find out how they try to make the world’s biggest pizza, when they don’t have the world’s biggest oven. In the meantime, they meet a new creature named dragon, who has never had a friend before. This cute graphic novel is a joy for animal lovers.

**Sunny Makes a Splash** by Jennifer L. Holm
Most of Sunny’s friends are away at camp and Sunny wonders how she’s going to make it through the long, hot summer without them. Her mother wants her to babysit but Sunny would rather spend time at the town pool. After spending a few afternoons there, Sunny is offered a job at the busy concession stand. After getting permission, Sunny learns how to prepare hot dogs and sell ice cream to visitors. Over the summer, Sunny gains confidence with her new job, begins earning some money of her own, gains some independence and makes many new and interesting friends. This summer is turning out much different than how it started! This humorous and colorful graphic novel is the fourth installment in the Sunny series but can stand alone. This book is perfect for fans of Raina Telgemeier and Victoria Jamieson.

Pawcasso by Remy Lai

Hand Pawcasso to middle grade readers (ages 8-12) who have enjoyed Remy Lai’s other books, and/or who also enjoy stories about animals and books about friendships. Pawcasso shares the story of Joanna (Jo) who stumbles upon a dog running errands for his family and is then mistaken for the pooch’s owner. Jo, who doesn’t deny the mistaken identity, finds herself quickly stuck in a lie (one that helped her gain new friends) but grows out of her control and a town-wide debate over a leash law.

Garlic and the Vampire by Bree Paulson

Hand to readers who enjoy quirky fantasy stories with unexpected twists and books about quests, overcoming fears, and light-hearted stories about unexpected heroes/heroines and friendships! When a vampire moves into the castle next to their farm, Garlic is nominated by her fellow vegetable-person Celery because, after-all, it only makes sense for Garlic to be the one to face him. With a pep talk from her friend Carrot and the kind witch, Agnes, who magically made all the vegetable and fruit folks of the garden, Garlic sets off to confront the vampire! The vampire, though, is anything but what Garlic expects!

The Leak by Kate Reed Petty and Illustrated by Andrea Bell

Hand to readers who enjoy realistic stories and graphic novels about the environment, mysteries, journalism, and youth activism. When outspoken Middle School student and aspiring journalist Ruth Keller discovers black slime in a nearby lake, she quickly makes a connection to potential pollution in the town’s water supply. Determined to learn about and report the truth, Ruthie sets out to investigate her findings and share her
discoveries through her e-newsletter. The graphic novel deals with themes of pollution, activism, and freedom of the press.

**Burt the Beetle Doesn’t Bite!** by Ashley Spires

Introducing Burt, a ten-lined June beetle and the lovable (and huggable) star of this humorous graphic novel for younger readers. Full of fascinating facts about insects and their superpowers, Burt’s story is a fun blend of fiction and nonfiction. Every other bug out there seems to have a special ability except poor Burt, like ants who can carry fifty times their weight and termites who can spray paralyzing venom. But readers soon learn that nobody is a better friend or hugger than Burt with his super sticky legs and happy attitude. Get ready to fall in love with this charming June beetle!

**Katie the Catsitter** by Colleen AF Venable

Twelve-year-old Katie is dreading the boring summer ahead until she realizes the mysterious neighbor who hired her to catsit is one of the city’s greatest supervillains. (From the publisher)

**Non-Fiction**

**Sakamoto’s Swim Club: How a Teacher Led an Unlikely Team to Victory** by Julie Abery

Who would have thought that a group of impoverished children cooling off an irrigation ditch would become Olympic hopefuls? With the coaching and dedication of science teacher Soichi Sakamoto, that is exactly what happened. The children were swimming in the irrigation ditch from a sugar plantation in Maui, Hawaii while that parents worked. The children would get chased away by plantation police officers. Sakamoto noticed this from his classroom window and asked the plantation owners if the children could swim there if he coached them and the owner agreed. Soon they became a group of dedicated swimmers called The Three-YearSwim Club with their sights on the Olympics. This picture book biography is told in sparse rhyming text with cheerful illustrations. An extensive author's note provides historical context. Children in grades K to 2 will enjoy this inspiring true story.

**Child of the Flower-Song People: Luz Jiménez, Daughter of the Nahua** by Gloria Amescus

This picture book biography covers a less-known subject in history whose story is engaging and inspiring. The biography tells the story of Julia Jiménez (known as Luz
Jiménez), an indigenous Mexican woman who started as a curious child and went on to
be a model for many famous Mexican artists, a storyteller, an essayist, and a linguistic
professor teaching her native Nahuatl language. Her various efforts helped to preserve
her culture and language for generations to come. Like the best kind of nonfiction, this
title will leave readers wanting to learn more about Luz Jiménez and her contributions to
art and literature. The book ends with an author’s note containing more information, a
timeline of Jiménez’s life, and a bibliography. The illustrations are done in the signature
style of award-winning artist Duncan Tonatiuh, so fans of his work will immediately
recognize it.

**Dear Mr. Dickens** by Nancy Churnin and illustrated by Bethany Starcliffe

Like many in her day, Eliza Davis loved the works of Charles Dickens, who was
publishing his now iconic stories in his weekly magazine. Eliza was disheartened to
discover, however, that a Jewish character in *Oliver Twist* was described as ugly and
selfish, especially as prejudice against Jewish people was very common. Did Charles
Dickens know his characterizations and words, as influential as they were, could be
harmful? Eliza, choosing to stand up for what she believed in, decided to write him a
letter, and the rest is history.

**Tu Youyou’s Discovery: Finding a Cure for Malaria** by Songju Ma Daemicke and
illustrated by Lin

After spending months healing from a childhood illness, Tu Youyou decided she wanted
to study science and medicine. During a malaria outbreak in 1969, Tu Youyou started a
research group to search for a cure. When Western medicine wasn’t working, Youyou
studied many traditional Chinese medicine books. Could the cure for malaria be in those
pages? How many times will Youyou and her team fail before making a breakthrough?

**Secrets of the Sea: The Story of Jeanne Power, Revolutionary Marine Scientist** by
Evan Griffith and illustrated by Joanie Stone

Naturalist Jeanne Power was an inquisitive French girl who moved to Sicily, Italy after
getting married. She was captivated by the island’s natural beauty and began studying
all of its flora and fauna. Jeanne became interested in sea animals and wanted to see
how they live in the water up close, so she created tanks for scientific observation.
There were not many women scientists during the 19th century, so Jeanne was often
not taken seriously and worse, some men tried to take credit for her discoveries. But
Jeanne was persistent and eventually she was admitted to many scientific societies and
her research was published in many languages. Nature lovers will enjoy this inspiring
and beautifully illustrated biography.
Legacy: Women Poets of the Harlem Renaissance by Nikki Grimes

This fantastic book of poetry shines a light on women poets who have been mostly left out of the history of the Harlem Renaissance despite possessing great talent. Each poem by a Harlem Renaissance poet is paired with a contemporary poem by Grimes written in the Golden Shovel form, which uses a line from the older poem to create a new poem. The poems explore topics such as gender, race, female power and nature. What makes this book really special are the illustrations that accompany each set of poems created by a who's who of African-American women illustrators. Also included are short biographies of each poet and artist and a list of print and web sources. This book is an inspiring treasure.

Unconventional Vehicles: Forty-Five of the Strangest Cars, Trains, Planes, Submersibles, Dirigibles, and Rockets EVER by Michael Hearst and illustrated by Han Jenssen

Curious about tunnel-boring machines, human cannonball trucks or zambonis? If so, this book has you covered. This super fun non-fiction book will appeal to anyone who is interested in bite-sized pieces of information about a wide array of vehicles from the present and the past. Each two-page spread contains an entertaining description of the vehicle, an illustration, the name of manufacturer and date of production plus many other science and engineering facts. This book is a guaranteed boredom buster!

Playing at the Border: A Story of Yo-Yo Ma by Joanne Ho and illustrated by Teresa Martinez

World famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma uses his musical talent to bring people from all over the world together. The title of the book refers to Ma’s performance in 2019 at the US Mexico border which was part of “The Bach Project” which was Ma’s global effort to make connections through music. Swirly illustrations with musical notes connect each page to create a sort of path throughout, giving a feeling of rhythm and flow through Ma’s inspirational life story.

We Must Not Forget: Holocaust Stories of Survival and Resistance by Deborah Hopkinson

This moving book depicts several young Jewish people’s harrowing experiences during the Holocaust. The book is divided into three sections grouped together by countries. Chapters within the sections tell the story of a survivor and their family. Though the author does not shy away from the horrors of the Holocaust, each story explains how the young person survived and what happened to them and their families after the war. Each chapter is illustrated with photos that really bring the individual stories to life.
Additionally, at the end of several chapters is a section called, “Look, Listen, Remember” where readers are directed to additional resources about the individuals such as recorded interviews or letters from their time during the war. There is also a glossary, a timeline of World War II in Europe, and several pages of online resources. This would be a useful book for any student researching the Holocaust or anyone who would like to have a deeper understanding of how young Jewish people were affected by the Holocaust.

**The Wisdom of Trees: How Trees Work Together to Form a Natural Kingdom** by Lita Judge

The Wisdom of Trees tells the story of how trees survive and strive. Beautifully illustrated by Julianna Swaney, the text guides the reader through well-researched information and inspirational poetry, trees that have survived through community for thousands of years. Trees network and help each other survive. Lots of examples of how trees are important for the ecosystem and help the environment are included in this beautifully written text. The illustrations show trees during different seasons as well as how trees help nature survive. Included are author’s notes, a glossary of terms, how long does a tree live, sources and websites.

**Walking Toward Peace: The True Story of a Brave Woman Called Peace Pilgrim** by Kathleen Krull and illustrated by Annie Bowler

Beautifully illustrated, this brief biography introduces readers to New Jersey native Peace Pilgrim, born Mildred Lisette Norman in 1908 in Egg Harbor City, New Jersey. She began her first pilgrimage walk when she was forty-four years old in 1953 which sparked her journey as a peace activist and spiritual teacher. Peace Pilgrim was against war and considered it an evil she was honored as a Visionary Women: Champion of Peace and Non-Violence and was honored as a Visionary Women: Champion of Peace and Non-Violence in 2019. She had speaking engagements until she died in 1981 at the age of seventy-two.

**The Boy Whose Head was Filled with Stars** by Isabelle Marinov and illustrated by Deborah Marcero

Edwin Hubble, namesake of the Hubble Telescope, was fascinated with stars from a young age. Growing up in Marshfield, Missouri, his interests were further fueled by the gift of a handmade telescope from his grandfather on his eighth birthday. Although Edwin first went to the University of Oxford to study law and become a teacher, Edwin kept his eyes to the stars, returned to school to study astronomy, and worked with the largest telescopes in the world. Through his research, Edwin proved the universe was bigger than previously thought and was ever-expanding. With the perfect balance of
history, science, and celestial illustrations, this title will have readers searching the nighttime skies.

**Boardwalk Babies** by Marissa Moss and illustrated by David April Chu

In the early 1900’s, Dr. Martin Couney’s Baby Incubators was a permanent side show at the Coney Island boardwalk for almost 40 years. Originally presented at the 1896 Berlin Exposition for Dr. Budin, Couney brought baby incubators to the United States in 1901 for the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. Baby incubators were such a success in saving premature babies, as well as an educational opportunity, that the exhibit became a permanent Brooklyn installation in 1903. Dr. Couney saved the lives of over 6,000 premature babies – including that of his own daughter! -- until hospitals regularly employed the technology in 1943 and the exhibit was closed.

**Mimic Makers: Biomimicry Inventors Inspired by Nature** by Kristen Nordstrom and illustrated by Paul Boston

Meet ten inventors, scientists, engineers, and designers – including a professor at NJ's Princeton – who have used nature-inspired innovation (aka biomimicry) in their work. From observing sharkskin to help keep submarines clean to designing bullet trains after the aerodynamic kingfisher bird, scientists are taking cues from plants and animals to solve real world problems every day. This book is perfect for budding scientists, as well as those of any age interested in the natural world. Two sizes of text make this a good choice for younger readers who want an overview of the content, and also for older kids who want to delve deeper in the material with the smaller, more detailed text.

**The Great Stink: How Joseph Bazalgette Solved London's Poop Pollution Problem** by Colleen Paeff and illustrated by Nancy Carpenter

While the main focus is on the life of English engineer Joseph Bazalgette, this accessible and often funny nonfiction picture book also provides a look into the history of the London sewerage system. Bazalgette was born in the midst of one of many cholera outbreaks that killed hundreds of Londoners at a time, and devoted his life to making London a cleaner, healthier place. His idea for a more effective sewer system took many years to be accepted, but is credited with saving thousands of lives from cholera and other water-borne diseases. This book is perfect for kids interested in science with a side of grossness, as well as those looking for stories about how one person can make a difference in the world.

**The Floating Field: How a Group of Thai Boys Built Their Own Soccer Field** by Scott Riley and illustrated by Nguyen Quang and Lim Lien
On the tiny Thai island of Koh Panyee there was no extra space to play soccer, so Prasit had to wait for the short time each month when the tide was low enough to uncover a sandbar to serve as a field. Inspired by watching the 1986 World Cup on the island's only TV, Prasit and his friends decided to form a team, and gathered scraps of wood to make their own floating soccer field. Through teamwork and determination, the team goes on to have regional, national, and global success, and is still around today. This book is great for sports fans, and those interested in the power of ingenuity, friendship and STEM.

**Send a Girl!: The True Story of How Women Joined the FDNY** by Jessica Rinker and illustrated by Meg Hunt

This dynamically illustrated and inspiring picture book biography tells the story of Brenda Berkman, a woman who broke an important barrier by becoming one of the first female firefighters in New York City. Never having accepted the idea of some things being just for girls and others just for boys, Berkman studied law, but found it was not her calling. When it was announced in 1977 that the FDNY [Fire Department of New York] would allow women to take the entrance exam, Berkman jumped at the chance, but discovered the test was unfairy biased against women. She successfully sued the city for discrimination, and became one of the first women to join the FDNY, going on to have a long career in firefighting. This book is perfect for kids looking for positive role models and those interested in the history of firefighting.

**Battle of the Butts: The Science Behind Animal Behinds** by Jocelyn Rish and illustrated by David Creighton-Pester

Get ready for the battle of the butts! Readers explore the “posterior power” of ten different animals from across the globe. From manatees who use their farts to help them swim to wombats who mark their territory with cube-shaped poop, information about each creature is shared in a fun and accessible way that is certain to appeal to kids. Beautiful full color illustrations depict the animals and their habitats in rich detail. Readers are encouraged to use a scale to rate an animal's bottom – from terrific tushie to boring backside – and ultimately declare their choice for the winner. This book is ideal for kids who love to laugh while they learn.

**Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre** by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by Floyd Cooper

In the 1900s, African Americans set up a thriving community in the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Segregation and railroad tracks divided blacks and whites. This African American Greenwood District became known as “Black Wall Street” and was successful. Until one day in 1921, an incident led to the black and white communities
crashing together. Two days of unspeakable horror occurred. When it was over, Black Wall Street, the murders of innocent people, and what happened was lost in history until this story was written.

**Jump at the Sun: The True Life of Unstoppable Storycatcher Zora Neale Hurston**

by Alicia D. Williams and illustrated by Jacqueline Alcantara

Zora was a girl who loved to hear stories, tell stories, and catch stories. She would listen to anyone who had a story and if they didn’t have one, she’d make up her own. While some people didn’t approve of Zora’s storytelling and storycatching, her mother did. She told Zora to “jump at de sun.” Zora took that advice to heart and spent her life taking “jumps.” And because of those jumps, we have all the stories Zora caught and shared with the world.