



Library Corner

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As Common Core State Standards and other state standards have become a primary focus for schools, the curriculum is being modified. We realize that you as librarians are not solely responsible for purchasing classroom materials but are often asked to help identify reliable vendors. Your experience in book purchasing is a valuable resource to those who are looking to purchase classroom sets. Schools invest in quality bindings because they are looking for long term cost savings.

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reference and textbook material. Ask about any title and we will provide pricing and delivery information.



The Higher Power of Blue

There's no denying that Pete the Cat has struck a chord with so many that he is in danger of starting a symphony. Everyone — regardless of age, gender, geography, and cool factor — no sooner sees Pete the Cat than they are immediately a fan. "I wish I knew why Pete has been so loved," remarks Pete the Cat creator James Dean. "I know that I have loved all my cats and especially the little black kitten I named Pete." Dean muses that "Maybe some of the love I feel for my cats comes through the art — my work is very honest in that way."

In spite of Pete's fame, James Dean never aspired to be a niche artist. "I did not really want to paint my cat and become labeled as a 'cat artist,'" he explains. "I really wanted to do art that I felt good about and not just paint something because I thought it might sell." Pete was actually a bit of a catalyst for James Dean and now he is glad he decided to make a painting of his cats. "It is a joy," he simply states.

Pete the Cat has lived so many lives beyond the usual nine that he has now become immortal. "I remember things that Pete did while he lived and those continue to inspire me," Dean confides. "Pete would try to drink my coffee in the mornings. He would stick his nose in my cup." That memory became the first "cartoon" image of Pete as the artist imagined that Pete could hold a coffee cup in his paw. Dean confirms that "Pete drinking coffee is still one of my favorite subjects." Today, the artist lives with five cats who constantly provide fresh inspiration.

But how did Pete become blue? Dean acknowledges that the original Pete was actually black. "I did not want a black cat because I thought they were bad luck. How wrong I was!" And why blue? "Blue is my favorite color and so I made Pete midnight blue." The author notes that one quality of the color blue is that you can see your own cat in the painting. "Pete becomes more universal." He slyly adds that, "I also find it interesting that people who do not really think they like cats tell me they like Pete!"

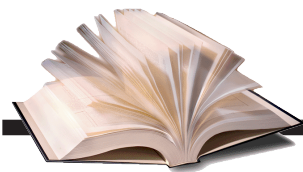
In his newest book, *Pete the Cat and the New Guy*, Pete makes a new friend who happens to be a platypus. "Platypus was an idea that my wife Kimberly was thinking about," says the author. "She was actually thinking of making a book about a platypus character and I talked her into letting me use her idea for Pete's friend."

Everybody wants to be Pete's friend. An especially creative teacher librarian recently sent James Dean a video of her teen special needs class reading *I Love my White Shoes*. "I started crying almost immediately as I watched the video and I cried through the whole thing." Best of all, Dean and the students got to meet each other when he visited the high school in May. "The love that teachers give to children is amazing--teachers are wonderful!" exclaims the author.

Teachers and librarians are wonderful just like blue cats named Pete.

Interviewed by Ellen Myrick, June 2014





Book Reviews

by Ellen Myrick

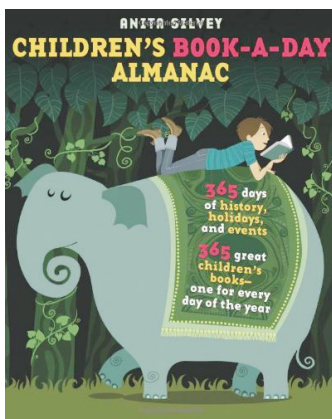
Children's Book-a-Day Almanac, by Anita Silvey. Published by Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 400 pp.

Anita Silvey's *Children's Book-a-Day Almanac* is an ideal companion for anyone who loves the world of children's books. Each day of the year includes a short essay on the book of the day plus informative sidebars with author birthdays, books tied to the date in history, and, of course, further suggested reading. Silvey reads broadly, reveling in the classics but also waxing poetic about newer works. Additionally, she is careful to include something for every age in each day's page whether in the main essay or in the sidebar.

While she often tips her celebrated hat to the established literary months such as Black History Month, Women's History Month, Poetry Month, Latino Book Month and so forth, she also explores less renowned days and birthdays.

The book begins with Esther Forbes and Johnny Tremain in honor of the baptismal anniversary of Paul Revere on January 1 in 1735. Esther Forbes suffered from a form of dyslexia which manifested itself by a lack of consistency in spelling and an inability to use established punctuation. She was already a Pulitzer-Prize winner for a biography on Revere when she turned in her manuscript for her first juvenile book, *Johnny Tremain*, full of misspellings and dashes in lieu of periods and commas. Revered editor Grace Hogarth intimated to the author that while she loved the book, she would have to standardize the spelling and punctuation. "Oh, my editors always do that!" remarked the author. Thus, from the first page of the Almanac, the reader is assured of being served delicious tidbits while digesting important insights into the creative process.

February 4 is Thank a Mailman Day and Silvey uses the occasion to celebrate the phenomenon of *Flat Stanley* and give the origin story of the character and his name. April 14 is marked as the date of Charlie Parker's first recording for Decca so the Book of the



Day just has to be *Charlie Parker Played Be Bop*. On February 16, she tells us of Raina Telgemeier that "Few writers have given better advice to young readers" than the *Smile* protagonist, "The more I focused on my interests the more I brought out the things I liked about myself." The connection to the date is National Children's Dental Health Month.

We also learn about Anita Silvey's life in books. On February 6, an appreciation of Scott O'Dell reveals that Anita considers him to be the most impressive author she has ever worked with. On June 22, Anita pays homage to the sesquicentennial of the Civil War through Patricia Polacco's *Pink and Say*. She notes that there should be a statute of limitations on how many times you cry while reading a book. On May 3, during Children's Book Week, you know that she should highlight something spectacular so she shares that when she asks what book of the last 15 years seems poised for classic status the overwhelming response is *Holes* by Louis Sachar. And what is the book Anita gave as a gift to visitors between the ages of 10 and 14 for many years? Joan Aiken's *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* as revealed on September 14.

Perhaps my favorite is November 21 and *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* in honor of Elizabeth George Speare's birthday. She only wrote five books yet Speare won two Newbery Medals and one Honor. My favorite fun fact? *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* received a rare unanimous vote on the first ballot for the Newbery that year.

The well-organized appendices detail the primary children's book awards both nationally and internationally as well as lists by titles, authors, books by type, and books by age. The *Children's Book-a-Day Almanac* is truly an indispensable resource for anyone who has ever asked — or been asked — what to read next.

For more reviews of adult books visit the Library Corner section of our Web site, www.btsb.com and select Professional Shelf.

Author Trivia — Fall 2014

Which Newbery-winning author is the grandparent of punk rock star Courtney Love? Our Author's Showcase, a database of information about over 1000 children's authors and illustrators, has the answer. Visit the BTSB Bookstore online at www.btsb.com and do a keyword search using BTSB number 349470 to find the answer to the above question.



2014 BTSB Scholarship Winners Announced

The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) has announced this year's recipients of the BTSB Scholarships. They are:

- Sylvia Aguinaga of Los Angeles, California plans to attend San José State University.
- Omar Ramirez of Chicago, Illinois plans to attend San José State University.
- Callen Nicole Taylor of San Francisco, California plans to attend San José State University.
- Elissa Sperling of Dover, Massachusetts plans to attend

McGill University.

Each recipient will receive a \$7500 scholarship to go to graduate school in library science and prepare for a career in children's library services. This makes over 80 BTSB Scholarships that have been awarded since the program began in 1985.

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For more information about the BTSB Scholarships, contact ALSC at 800-545-2433 or at www.ala.org/alsc. For a complete listing of our BTSB Scholarship winners go to the About Us section of our btsb.com website and select Scholarships.

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- Streamlined search
- Same booklist functionality
- Tools for teachers and librarians

And more!



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