

BOOK NOTES

Center for Children's/Young Adult Books

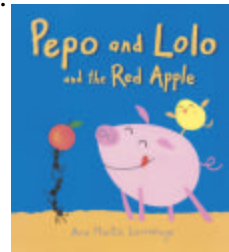
Minnesota State University, Mankato

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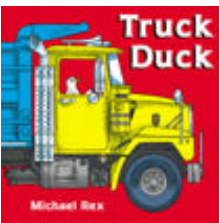
Even though the days are still chilly and rainy in southern Minnesota, the calendar says it's summer. For families with children, the schedule changes. Maybe the pace slows a little, with time for trips to the cabin or visits with relatives. For others, activities such as baseball games and enrichment camps pack the hours. We hope you schedule time for reading as well. Make a visit to a library or bookstore part of your routine. While you're at it, stop in the CCYAB. We're open all summer long, and new books continue to arrive.

This issue will feature a variety of picture books. Let's consider several choices for the youngest "readers" first. Cluck, Cluck Who's There? by James Mayhew ([Scholastic](#)) introduces Hattie the Hen as she waits for the arrival of her chicks. Preschoolers will enjoy lifting the flaps to discover Hattie's three eggs and later the three fluffy chicks. Caroline Church masterfully manages to convey Hattie's changing emotions, not easy when you're dealing with a chicken. Slightly older listeners will enjoy looking for the mouse that follows the activity and appears on each double-page spread. Although the pages are somewhat thinner than stiff boards found in some toddler books, the flaps seem sturdy enough to survive repeated readings, a distinct possibility when children want to revisit Hattie and chicks.

A chick is one of the main characters in two "super sturdy picture books" from [Candlewick](#). Ana Martin Larranaga wrote and illustrated the books about a pig (Pepo) and chick (Lolo). Pepo and Lolo Are Friends introduces the endearing pair. Although one may be better than the other at a particular activity, and they may even get mad at each other, their friendship remains strong. In Pepo and Lolo and the Red Apple, they work together to solve the problem of bringing down an apple from a branch too high for either of them to reach alone. In this adventure, three ants share the spotlight. The uncluttered illustrations and clear colors add to the books' appeal.



Sturdy pages ensure that Truck Duck by Michael Rex ([Penguin](#)) will wear well as toddlers check out various vehicles again and again. Each double-page spread reveals a different form of transportation driven by an unlikely animal. As they look at the clear and colorful illustrations, listeners will absorb rhymes that are read to them. From Rod Cod to Blimp Chimp to Caboose Moose, the journey is on for youngsters who can't get enough of various ways to travel.



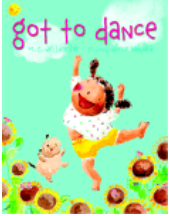
The journey has come to a standstill in Sue Nicholson's Traffic Jamboree ([Penguin](#)). That's probably okay with young readers, though, because they have plenty to do in this heavy-duty board book. All the animals stuck in the traffic jam try to make the best of the situation. Toddlers can feel the sticky bananas of the monkeys in a fire engine, the furry tails of the cats in a limo, and the bumpy bodies of crocodiles on a digger as readers count down toward the one tiny chick crossing the road. Christyan Fox's humorous illustrations add to the fun.

In Roxane Orgill's Go-Go Baby! one very busy baby leads her mother and sister on a high-speed trip through a bustling city ([Marshall Cavendish](#)). This baby has no time for a nap. There's too much excitement as her stroller careens past cars and trucks. Travel by bus, train, and ferry speeds the little group from town to countryside. Steven Salerno's illustrations have a retro feel, which



is reinforced by the limited palette of colors. The variations in type size and placement increase the sense of motion. When Baby finally falls asleep, we appreciate the chance to catch our breath.

Another energetic toddler is the star of Got to Dance by M.C. Helldorfer ([Random House](#)). With Momma at work and brother at camp, the grumpy little girl is left at home with Grandpa. To shake the summertime blues, she turns routine activities into enthusiastic dances that draw in everyone around her. Grandpa turns on the hose and joins in a refreshing sandal-slapping dance. Jiggling on the bus or springing on the bed, she sets her world in motion. Hiroe Nakata's lively illustrations propel us through the pages and exude the joy of movement.



Spending time with grandparents serves as a basis for two books written and illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw for [Bloomsbury](#). In Grandpa's Surprise Jack refuses to let Stanley ride his new tricycle. To cheer up his grandson, Grandpa suggests that he and Stanley build something together. Before long, they have fashioned a go-kart from materials in the shed, and Jack's offer of a tricycle ride seems much less glamorous. When Emma's mother has to go to the office instead of taking her to the beach, Grandma helps reduce the disappointment through imagination and adventure in her own backyard. After a day with water, sand castles, sunbathing and a picnic lunch, Emma concludes that Grandma's Beach has attractions of its own.

Emma isn't the only child to visit the beach in picture books. A little boy heads to the shore with his father in Razzamadaddy by Linda Walvoord ([Marshall Cavendish](#)). The non-stop action includes racing down the sand, building a giant sand castle, eating a huge lunch, and gathering shells. The idyllic vision of a summer outing is told in rhyme that bounces from page to page. Sachiko Yoshikawa's bright acrylic illustrations capture the world that father and son share. Of course there must have been other people on that beach, probably lots of them. But they are intent on each other and the memories in the making.

Yoshikawa's beach illustrations are more crowded in Beach Is to Fun by Pat Brisson ([Henry Holt](#)). Brisson considers many relationships among concepts as a family heads off on vacation. Some concepts are simple opposites such as "Winter is to cold as summer is to hot." Others are more complex as "Gramps is to Dad as Dad is to me." The interaction of illustrations and text is vital in helping readers understand analogies. Such as, "Arm is to swim as wing is to fly."



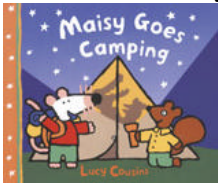
Children who aren't old enough to think through the complexity can still enjoy the action-packed pictures.

Alice Schertle also features a busy seaside in All You Need for a Beach ([Harcourt](#)). A group of young children explore the world of the beach, considering all the components that are necessary. You'll need millions of grains of sand, of course, and waves and seagulls and many people. Schertle's poetry is brought to life by Barbara Lavalley's watercolor illustrations in which children race and splash and have a thoroughly good time.

In Minnesota we're far away from the ocean, but that doesn't mean people don't find plenty of water for summertime outings. Among the favorite pastimes is fishing, an activity shared by a pair of alligators in More Mr. And Mrs. Green by Keith Baker ([Harcourt](#)). Three short stories for beginning readers showcase the amiable relationship between the couple. In the first tale, Mrs. Green can't catch any fish while Mr. Green reels in one after another. Nothing helps until he divulges his secret bait: jellybeans. Another story reveals their different experiences during a walk in the park, but they agree on the importance of a visit to the ice cream truck, a pleasant diversion of summer.



For many people, summer wouldn't be complete without sleeping under the stars. The

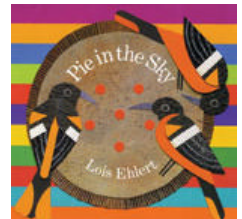


animals in Lucy Cousins' Maisy Goes Camping would probably agree despite some difficulties ([Candlewick](#)). Maisy and four friends plan to spend the night in their tent. Everything works fine as four of the animals enter one by one. However, elephant takes up so much room that the rest pop out and spend the night in sleeping bags. Cousins' bright colors and simple illustrations add to the appeal for young readers, many of whom are probably familiar with some of Maisy's other adventures.

Although elephant's displacement of his friends from the tent was accidental, a bossy cow disrupts an entire group of passengers in Mooove Over! By Karen Magnuson Beil ([Holiday House](#)). The friendly driver knows that his trolley holds exactly 20 passengers and keeps careful count as they enter two at a time. The passengers share the space harmoniously until a large cow, laden with packages, shoves her way on board. She tells one group after another to "mooove over" until she is the only one left inside while the rest of the animals retreat to the roof. Once the driver realizes that he has only one passenger left, he stops to correct the situation. Paul Meisel brings to life the various animals, especially the bossy cow, resplendent in purple dress, straw hat, sunglasses, and parasol. Beil offers some suggestions for math games and activities related to counting by twos for a little summertime (or any time) learning.

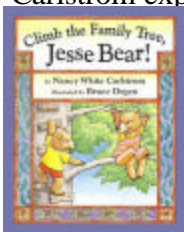
Nancy Elizabeth Wallace portrays another activity that combines fun and learning in Seeds! Seeds! ([Marshall Cavendish](#)). Buddy receives five bags from Gramps in the mail. Each contains a variety of seeds along with suggestions about how to make a collection. As Buddy works with Mama, he learns how seeds grow and starts noticing seeds in some of the foods he eats. Although the action in the book occurs in March, starting a seed collection could occur any time. The textures of Wallace's cut-paper illustrations work well with the photographs of seeds in Buddy's expanding collection.

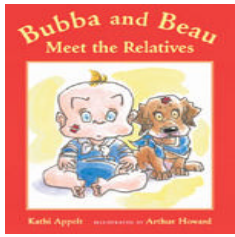
Lois Ehlert's collages incorporate many kinds of materials to follow the development of Pie in the Sky ([Harcourt](#)). The young narrator is skeptical when Dad tells him that the tree at their new house will produce a pie. However, buds turn to blossoms, and blossoms turn to cherries. Many kinds of birds and an agile raccoon share the fruit feast, but there are still enough ripe cherries to make a pie. Ehlert works her usual magic of turning paper, wood, paints, and pastels into butterflies, birds, and trees. She even includes a recipe for anyone lucky enough to secure pie cherries for their own baking.



Summer involves good eating of all kinds, as the neighbors who gather for Marilyn Singer's Block Party Today! know ([Random House](#)). People haul out barbecue grills and set up games. They dance in the street and visit with friends. Only Lola stays inside because she is angry at her friends for not letting her jump rope first. Eventually, of course, she makes her way downstairs to join the fun. Stephanie Roth's illustrations of the lively city block include people of many ages and races who enjoy sharing the day together.

For some people, summer provides a chance for reunions of families as well. Nancy White Carlstrom explores one such gathering in Climb the Family Tree, Jesse Bear! ([Simon & Schuster](#)). Jesse and his immediate family go to Grandpa and Grandma's farm, where many other relatives gather. Children will recognize elements of these events such as the fuss older relatives make and the awkward introductions among cousins who don't see each other often. Stories and photographs help explain the family history to the younger folk. Croquet and boating, hayrides and eating fill the days and evenings. "There's laughing and there's crying and sometimes even fights. But we always find a way Of making wrong things right," Jesse reports. The pictorial family tree before the story begins places Jesse at the top and shows his relation to the others we meet in the story. At the book's end, he is old enough to climb a literal "family tree" on the farm. Bruce Degen's illustrations of Jesse and family will be familiar to anyone who has read others in the series.





Kathy Appelt's family reunion is much less idealized in Bubba and Beau Meet the Relatives ([Harcourt](#)). Mama Pearl and Big Bubba spring into action when they learn that the relatives plan to come to visit. To escape the "stirring and stewing" inside, Bubba and Beau head for the garden with its irresistible MUD HOLE." Predictably baby and puppy end up covered in mud from top to toe. After a quick bath, Bubba is dressed in his scratchy sailor suit to meet the relatives, including Cousin Arlene and her fancy dog, Bitsy. Bubba's pronouncement, "Honey, it was froufrou city" proves accurate—but only temporarily. After all the hugging and kissing and picture-taking, both cousins and their puppies head for the MUD HOLE. The only solution is to fill the bed of the pickup truck with water so that people and dogs can clean up and cool off. Appelt follows the same five-chapter format she had in the first two books in the series. Arthur Howard endows both animals and people with a down-home charm. Another winning entry in an enjoyable series.

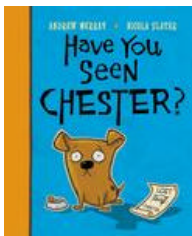
While the puppies in Appelt's book enjoy playing in the mud, E.B. McHenry's Poodlena doesn't even consider getting dirty ([Bloomsbury](#)). High above the city, this gorgeous pink poodle spends hours having her tremendous pompadour fluffed and styled. Only after perfume and powder have been applied does she venture out for a walk. Other dogs race around the park, but Poodlena merely watches. Then, one night a heavy storm turns the park into a sea of mud. Poodlena slips. She falls. Much to her amazement she discovers that running around with the other dogs and even getting a bit dirty is fun! The images of this elegant and very pink poodle are delightful. All that hair!



The dog in Chinlun Lee's book spends his time helping his owner, a veterinarian. Good Dog, Paw! recounts the day in the life of Paw, as he helps soothe animals who come to have April take care of them ([Candlewick](#)). He sings to them with advice that only animals can understand, although his words are translations from the human language that April uses. Every morning and evening, April checks Paw to make sure he is healthy too. The most wonderful aspect of this quiet book is its ability to exude the love that exists between dog and owner. The illustrations portray that affection in the interactions between Paw and April. As Paw tells everyone, "The secret of health is love." April's clinic, and this book, are filled with that emotion.

Stephen Huneck presents a patient's eye view in Sally Goes to the Vet ([Abrams](#)). Sally, a black Labrador, tells readers about her need for care after she runs into a tree stump while playing with her cat friend Bingo. After an examination, including an x-ray, she returns home to rest and recover. The reassuring and simple language should help young pet owners realize that the veterinarian provides gentle and effective care. The oversize format and striking woodcut illustrations make this book a good choice to share with a group as well as a single child. Those listeners might also want to check out Huneck's previous books about Sally.

Although Sally and Bingo are friends, cats and dogs don't always get along successfully.



In Andrew Murray's book, Have You Seen Chester?, Buddy the dog and Chester the cat fight continually until Chester finally leaves home ([HarperCollins](#)).

Their owner, Lucy, is so distraught after Chester doesn't return for days that Buddy starts to feel guilty. The only solution is for Buddy to set out after dark to hunt for the cat himself. Venturing into an alley filled with hissing and spitting cats, he summons the courage to ask for help in locating Chester. Before long both pets have returned home and decided that they can get along. Nicola Slater's eye-catching illustrations smack a bit of old-fashioned cartoons. Bright backgrounds and different type styles and sizes add visual interest.

Even more daring exploits for a dog are recorded by Caralyn Buhner in Superdog: The Heart of a Hero ([HarperCollins](#)). Mark Buehner's illustrations chronicle the transformation of Dexter, a plump, little dog, into a buff action hero. When the story begins, Dex is ignored by the larger dogs and teased by Clevis, the tomcat. After watching hero movies, reading superhero comic books, and studying at the

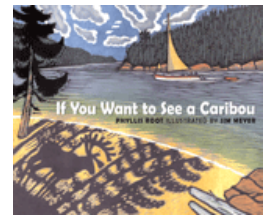
library, he develops a training program. Soon he is muscled, strong, and agile. A caped costume completes his transformation, and Dex undertakes tasks that improve his neighborhood. However, his real test comes when he needs to rescue Clevis from a tree, a feat that brings him accolades, even from the tomcat. Fans of superheroes in movies or comic books will appreciate the Buherners' collaboration.

Denny Hebson provides an even more off-beat view of the world in Robots Everywhere ([Walker](#)). Who would guess that robots' lives are very similar to ours? They go to school, ride the bus, and shop (at Bolts "R" Us). Of course, there are important differences. They have to be alert for rust and use lots of oil to keep themselves in shape. They have springs for hair and sleep under sheets of foil. Todd Hoffman's wacky illustrations include so many apt details that robot lovers will want to visit the pages again and again. He captures the facial expressions and emotions of these metal creatures. Touches such as the hair stylist's use of a blow torch to "blow-dry" metal springs are priceless. One of the places we see robots is at the beach, where an ambulance arrives with emergency oil to help cure rust.



Oh, yes, the beach. That brings us back to summer. In Minnesota, summer more often means time at the cabin than at the seashore. Marthe Jocelyn describes a family's exodus from the city to their cabin where they spend several months in Mayfly ([Tundra](#)). As the three children gaze out the car windows, the landscape becomes less crowded. As Jocelyn skillfully puts it, "The houses have yards, then the yards have houses." The cabin is simple and so are the activities that fill the children's days. The Mayfly is their rowboat, where they spend hours. The "scratches, blisters, sunburn, bruises" of summer are here as well as blueberry pie, marshmallows, and corn on the cob. The return to the city will be familiar too, as summer wanes. Adults and children who have spent such summers will enjoy sharing these experiences through Jocelyn's words and pictures. Those who haven't gone themselves can travel vicariously.

Minnesota author Phyllis Root transports all of us to an island in Lake Superior in If You Want to See a Caribou ([Houghton Mifflin](#)). This text has a poetic quality that captures the remote landscapes familiar to caribou but unseen by many humans. Jim Meyer's color woodblock prints are worthy of framing. This quiet book lets us share an experience we may never have in person. We sense the stillness as we walk over "ground spongy with feather moss."



From the quiet of If You Want to See a Caribou to the noisy energy of Got to Dance!, the books in this issue reveal that summer can be enjoyed in a number of ways. David Bedford reminds us that people need a balance in The Copy Crocs ([Peachtree](#)). Every time Crocodile finds a mud pool or a place to sunbathe, he is soon joined by so many others that he can hardly move. No matter how far he travels, the rest find him. Eventually he manages to give them the slip, only to discover that sitting by himself in an empty pool can get "cold and lonely." When they return, he feels wonderful. However, every so often, he still likes to do things by himself before his friends arrive. Emily Bolam's crocodiles are pink, aqua, and purple, as well as shades of green. The cartoon quality of the illustrations adds to the fun and lightens the message.

Take some time for yourself to visit the CCYAB this summer, or bring your friends with you. You'll all find plenty to read among the new books that arrive weekly.

