Book Reviews!
Imagine growing up in the must unlivable place in the middle of nowhere. Living in the middle of nowhere plus bullies, high school dropouts, and “intense poverty rates”. Well two friends grow up in all these conditions and go through everything together. The only source of entertainment in this small town is dirt bike racing. Bo, the main character, always gets bullied by one of the “best” racers, but his friend is way better than the “best”. On one severe occasion the bully, Gus, makes Bo eat a cholla cactus and his best friend Rossi saves him by trading her bike to stop him from eating it. Bo cannot believe that Rossi would do this and it’s his mission to find a way to par Rossi back or get her bike back from Gus. Will he be able to do it?

I really recommend this book to anyone who values friendship and enjoys reading about sopping bullies. This book teaches a very good lesson that everyone is equal and you don’t need to try and be big for a bully, you can be yourself and fight back. I liked this book and would definitely read it again.
All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

All the light we cannot see by Anthony Doerr is a beautiful illustration of good and evil. All the light we cannot see shows there is no right side of history. Following Werner and Blind Marie-Laurie, it is set in France and Germany during World War two. All the light we cannot see is magnificently written like the baked goods of literature. The novel is written so poetically and smooth, you simply fall in love with the words. The way Doerr combined the stories was very fluent and graceful. The first book I can truly say paints a vivid picture. Doerr illustrates the events in liquid gold without descriptive words and colors, but metaphors. Winning a Pulitzer Prize in 2015 this is my favorite book I’ve ever read. At first when I read it I put it down and it took me months to read the first chapter but after picking it up for the second time I couldn’t put it down. I would read this book and read it again right after and again, it is the most beautifully written book I have ever read.

A Heart wrenching novel of the daily lives of both and struggles of the time. Marie-Laurie lives in France when she turns twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris. Marie and her father flee to the city of Saint-Malo, where Marie-Laure’s isolated great uncle lives in a house by the sea. With them
they carry what might be the museums most valuable and dangerous jewel, which carries a curse the possessor will live forever but misfortune will surround them.

In a mining town in Germany, Werner, an orphan, grows up with his younger sister, entertained by a radio they find that brings them news and stories from places they have never seen or imagined. Werner becomes an expert at building and fixing radios and is enlisted to use his talent to track down the resistance. Interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, the author illustrates the ways, through even the worst situations, people try to be good to one another.
This book is about a girl named Sam who has currently been struggling with her OCD. She had a group of friends that treated her poorly which she did not deserve but doesn’t know how to deal with them. She has a therapist to help her deal with what she’s going through and always boosts up her confidence. Sam had just met this girl, very mysterious actually, they had started to talk but they both ended up revealing many secrets. Some unwanted and dark but the truth would be out sooner or later. Together they will soon learn they both needed each other. They were “destined” to be friends, the world will become better for both of them.

I would personally like to recommended this book because of how touching it is. Acceptance is key, it deals about how to control and be happy with the way you are and the journey to
reaching acceptance. It teaches you that being perfect means absolutely nothing if you have no self-love. Just like how we struggle in life we must learn that sometimes there won’t be anyone to pick you up from the ground and tell you it’s going to be okay. Self-love is important for someone’s mental health. By the end of reading this book you will see how wise a person can be when they overcome their struggles in life and become strong both physically and mentally.
Book Review: Diary of A Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney

Diary of A Wimpy Kid is a graphic novel that’s written by Jeff Kinney, and is the first part of a series of novels that if you haven’t heard of, you’ve been living under a rock. It follows a normal sixth-grade-boy named Greg Heffley and his various experiences through middle school, alongside his best friend, Rowley Jefferson. I think the book is really good, though not as good as other books in the series (in my opinion, Cabin Fever is the best). The book is very funny and relatable for middle schoolers but it’s never cringe-worthy, unlike other books that are similar (*cough* a lot of Sunshine State Readers *cough*). The book is also an extremely quick read. It’s 217 pages long, but there’s not a single page where a picture doesn’t take up half of it, and the font is big. It takes about an hour, if not less, to read any of the Diary of a Wimpy Kid books.

I’ve read a lot of books aimed towards the same Young Adult audience, and a lot of them aren’t good at all! They’re not only way too cringe-worthy, but also excruciatingly boring. Yes, Diary of a Wimpy Kid is extremely short in comparison to other books, but at least it’s funny (I’ve always found it hilarious that Manny gets in trouble for nothing while Greg gets in trouble for literally everything; such as when Manny draws on his door and Susan and Frank find it funny and cute). While I’ve read the whole series
maybe fifteen times in my life, it’s never uninteresting (and yes, I’ve read the whole series about fifteen times in my life, mostly because I have no life and they are very, very easy to read). Conclusively, Diary of a Wimpy Kid is a really good book I recommend reading.
24 Hours in Nowhere

Written by: Dusti Bowling

In this novel it is about Nowhere, Arizona where Gus an intelligent 13-year-old lives with his grandma in their trailer that he calls a swamp. Gus is hoping to go to college and get out of this town that nobody ever visits that is nowhere special and nowhere anyone wants to stay. Gus’s life is difficult already plus, with Bo Taylor the local bully always piking on him he can never truly be free from Nowhere, Arizona. Gus was being forced to eat a prickly cactus by Bo Taylor when Rossi one of the best dirt bike racers in their town showed up to save him. Bo Taylor had suggested a deal with Rossi her bike Loretta for this 13-year-old she doesn’t even know. Does she give her lovely and prized Loretta up to Bo Taylor?

To repay Rossi for saving his life and trying to get her most prized position back he makes a deal with Bo Taylor to go not one of the mines and get enough gold to get back what Rossi had lost. Gus knowing that Bo Taylor will not make it easy for him chose the one mine that everyone who has went into never came back out. Dead Frenchman Mine. Gus takes his journey with fellow friends Jessie Navarro, Matthew Dufort, and even Rossi herself has joined this adventure packed story. Will Gus go into the mine? Does
Gus get back what he had lost? Will he make it back out alive? Read this sunshine state book that’s adventure packed and comedic to find out these answers for yourself.

By: Cheyenne Jacoby
Book review: Slider (by Pete Hautman)

By: Stephanie Wall and Sarah Ramos

The book ‘slider’ is about a teenage boy, David, and his fantastic ability to eat food. “Where do you put it?” is what his mom always asks him. He has some theories as why he is not really big, considering all the food he eats. David can eat an entire sixteen-inch pepperoni pizza in four minutes and thirty-six seconds. This is incredible to his mom and his family. But, there are still many people that dedicate their lives to eating as fast as David, and even faster. Meanwhile, David’s endless eating is used as a hobby. One of his eating idols was selling his half eaten hot dog from a past competition and he decided to bid. David was so excited and wondering why no one was bidding for what he thought, was a piece of history. The bidding was between him and another person. He set up auto pay to the max being 20 dollars. When he comes back, he finds out that he put the decimal point in the wrong place and accidentally won the bid with 2,000 dollars. He used his mom’s card and has to find a way to make up that money before his mom’s visa bill comes in. His brother, Mal has autism and David takes care of him a lot of the time. His family does not like to label him as autistic and his mother has high hopes that he will soon be able to talk, like some autistic kids cases she has read about online. Bridgette is his sister and her boyfriend is Derek. They are
both at college and David refers to them as “the droids” because they remind him of Star Wars characters, some way or another. David is on a mission throughout the book to see how he can make 2,000 dollars ASAP and will try anything. He believes his ability to eat so much can get him some money, but will that be enough. Maybe he could try a job? An eating competition? He has millions of options but will any of them get him the money he needs in the time he has.

The author of slider is Pete Hautman. He makes the book in a way so many different types of audiences enjoy it. The book has humor, like David’s friends, sadness, like his brother, and is suspenseful because it has the reader wondering whether he will meet his goal or not. He is a teenager, so the book could be fit for other teenagers, but it also can be fit for anyone who wants an intriguing and funny book. I recommend “slider” to any reader that loves the style of Pete Hautman’s writing or wants a “fantastically funny” book to read.
The Giver by Lois Lowry

The Giver, written by Lois Lowry, is a young adult novel that mainly focuses on a utopian society. The book shows the reader how a world cannot be perfect and for a society to function well there has to be positive and negative things. The story takes place in a society that made an attempt to create a utopia, or a perfect place, in which people have many guidelines to follow and are unaware that they are being controlled. The community members have no knowledge of color, feelings, or emotions are their privilege to make choices was taken away. The main character, Jonas, is about to turn twelve, meaning that he is getting the job which he has to do for the rest of his life. Many surprises and adventures await for him and he starts to realize how wretched his society is. The Giver shows Jonas memories of the real world and helps Jonas throughout his journey. Not only does he learn more about release, but he also wants to make a change since he is aware of the cruel things his society is making.

The Giver is an easy book to read and you can get through it really fast since the chapters are short. The book keeps you entertained and you will want to keep reading it. The plot of the story is really interesting and it makes you think about what are the risks of trying to reach a perfect world. If you like books that have adventure, comedy, romance, and suspense, you are definitely going to like this book. You might feel like there is a lot going on at the same time but in the end everything makes sense. If you really like the book there are three more sequels available.

-Arianna N.
Personal Narratives!

We all have a story to tell.
The day is April 16th, 2019 and like every day I woke up at six to give Apollo his pills, feed and walk Dexter and Apollo and then get ready for school. Apollo has epilepsy which means he has seizures if he gets too hot or nervous, so he has pills to keep them at bay. School was boring like most days, though the trip back home by bus was somewhat soothing, the bumps and rumbles of the bus were relaxing unlike the yelling and screaming from the kids in the back. I was almost home when I got a notification on my phone, I checked to see who it was my mom, the text read, “Apollo’s been throwing up this morning, so be sure to watch him closely tonight.” My first thought was, “he got into the trash again and ate something he wasn’t supposed to.” Any time someone isn’t watching him he is always trying to or doing something bad, for example after we went to a before Christmas dinner, mom, Aarron and I, we ended up bringing home leftover ham and we left it on the counter, we all left the room for a less than a minute and when we came back, Apollo had the entire pork, bone, plastic wrap and everything half way down his throat. Aarron was able to get the most of plastic wrap and bones out of his mouth but the next day my entire room was covered in poop, it was on, the walls the carpet, and the bed, it was a mess, but it was funny.

When I got home I said “hi” to everyone, including the dogs, afterwards I put my things down and started on my homework. An hour later it was time for mom and Aarron to leave. The night went well, Apollo hadn’t thrown up and everything was normal, until I heard Apollo’s collar ring strenuously, right then I knew he was entering a seizure. I stayed as calm as I could, I
had already witnessed him seizing many times before so I knew what to do. I called mom and
told her what was going on, mom kept a calm voice and told me to wait and see if it would die
down, instinctively, I over to his pill dispenser and looked to see if I had missed one of his two
daily doses. When I looked inside I felt my heart skip a beat, what I saw were two full slots, I
had missed an entire days’ worth of medicine.

I told mom and obviously she was furious, she then said words I will never forget “do
you want a dead dog on your conscience Angela.” She wasn’t trying to be mean, just trying to
get it through my head that Apollo could die if he misses his pills. Aarron couldn’t make it on
time so mom rushed home as fast as she could, meanwhile, Apollo has not stopped seizing and
the only thing I can do is get him off the couch and onto the tile, I feel absolutely helpless, like I
should be doing something, but what can I do? Mom gets to the apartment and rushes in furious,
Apollo stumbled his way into the hallway, by now he had had about two or three seizures in a
row and was now entering another. Mom told me to grab a towel so that it would catch his bodily
waste and cushion his head because he started seizing next to the floorboard, all we could do was
stare at him as he curled into a ball and barked inaudibly, kicking his legs as though he was
running on his side.

Mom tried calling Aarron so that he could take Apollo to the vet since mom didn’t know
any of Apollo’s medical history, so she felt he should take him. Mom then said words that cut me
like a dagger “if we don’t take him now he’s not going to make it...” my breath caught in my
throat, but I tried my best to stay strong. Aarron wasn’t able to leave without mom taking his
place so mom and grabbed a blanket and we picked him up hog style and ran out to the car, we
placed him gently on his side on the seat of the car. Mom realized she forgot her keys on the
table so I basically Olympic sprinted back into the house and grabbed the keys. Right about now
I realized I wasn’t wearing shoes, but right then and there it didn’t matter, I ran back out and locked the door, I think, and Olympic sprinted back to the car.

Once we were on our way to mom’s job, something inside me cracks and I can feel tears in my eyes, I swallowed down my fears and my tears and held the blanket Apollo was in, in one hand and gripped it firmly, I placed my free hand on the side of his torso, feeling his matted fur between my fingers, his body feeling as if you were to hover your hand a few inches over a lit stove. We finally got to mom’s job and Aarron came down and switched spots with mom, right as we left he realized mom had accidently taken Apollo’s pills, which Aarron needed so that he could show the vet what type of pills he took, so we turned around and waited for mom to come back down. Mom came as quickly as she could, spitting out a quick apology before we sped out of there and to ASH. I felt even worse with Aarron in the car, this was his dog. I stared at Apollo in the darkness as he seized, stop lights and street light being the only source of light, I begged him in a whisper “please hold on…please…I love you”, some tears flooding out as I talked to him.

The car smelled of urine, Apollo’s head laid on my lap, saliva seeping through my pants and a little bit of blood, he bit his tongue, I stroked his unusually rough fur, his panting rapid, all I could do was repeat myself, hold his head up and stare at him. We had to stop at so many stop lights and stop signs and when we got to the Walmart plaza, where ASH is, we couldn’t find the section it was in, we kept entering the wrong ones. We were almost there when I heard Apollo starting to choke, there were nothing I could do, I was already holding his head up, my heart and mind started racing, I begged him, pleaded him to just hold on for a few more minutes, just a few more. We parked and Aarron immediately got out, one of the ladies who worked there came out when she saw us pull in, Aarron told her everything as they rushed to the back right side of the
car, were I was sitting with Apollo. When they opened the door, for a second something came over me, for a second I thought “Don’t touch him, let him stay here with me don’t take him away.” But then common sense kicked in and I let her take him.

We all rushed in and a lady ushered us to the main desk, the lady carrying Apollo rushed into the ER. Everything felt as if someone clicked fast forward on a movie, Aarron was given paper work to fill out while Apollo was being cared for, the same lady who came out to get Apollo, ran out and asked Aarron if he would like them to start CPR, Aarron said “anything you can”. I’ve fully lost track of time but it only felt like seconds when she came back out, slower paced, and with a sorrowful look, she said to us words that rang in ear, “I’m sorry… the CPR didn’t work…and Apollo stopped breathing. “Everything around me faded, nothing mattered, everything else she said was static to my ears. My hand flew to my mouth and I finally shattered, my eyes blurred, I felt the tears swell over and run down my cheeks. Aarron tried to respond and his voice broke, I had never heard or seen Aarron hurt, it was more painful to know that I was to blame for his pain.

My hand stayed glued to my mouth, in a way still trying to keep things in, everything aches and my mind is like crashing waves of accusing thoughts and hate filled slurs to myself, how could I have ever let this happen, why did I let it get this far, I loved him why did I do this.

The lady at the main desk told us to help ourselves to water. Aarron asked if I’d like one. I stayed silent and shook my head “no”. He grabbed one for himself drank some, a lady came out seconds later and told us if we wanted to, we could go in and see him one last time. I didn’t want to see him not like that, not now; Aarron said he wasn’t going to make me. Looking back on this I wish he had, I still regret not seeing him. I shook my head no. I was able to croak out “I don’t want to go in there.” so he went in by himself.
Aarron walked out holding Apollo’s collar and holding a straight, emotionless face. His expression, tearing me apart. We walked out together and I sat on the bench outside, he went around the corner to make some calls, his voice breaking as he called his mom to tell her what happened tore me into bits. I couldn’t stand to be there so I walked over to the car and stared up at the waxing gibbous moon, usually the moon was able to soothe me, tonight it did nothing, it just sat there in a starless sky looking beautiful on such an ugly night. I opened the car door and sat down inside, now that I was alone I let everything come to the surface, I beat myself up, I let all the words and names I was calling myself out and I let them sink in.

A call connected to the car and it was mom, Aarron must have been trying to call mom so I hung up, the second time it came in I answered, my voice unclear and chocked, she asked what happened and I said that they had told us Apollo stopped breathing I said he wasn’t ok. She told me to hang up and transfer the call. I did as I was told and sat there the storm never easing. A few minutes later Aarron came to the side of the car I was sitting in and opened the door helping me out, he hugged me and my mind struggled to understand, why after all that I did, why. I hugged him back and croaked out “I’m so sorry” repeating myself like a broken record. He noticed when we pulled away that I wasn’t wearing shoes we laughed together for a second but I did nothing to lighten the mood.

We both walked over to the bench and sat down in silence, my breathing uncontrollable, I can’t control my breathing when I cry, Aarron tried to help me breathe correctly but I didn’t really work. Aarron went inside for a short time and came out with a paper for cremation and a bill. We both got into the car and Aarron called mom and somehow put on a forced tone of happiness, throughout the call and the drive home I stayed silent, I still didn’t want to talk, so much yet so little was going on inside my head. Once we got home, I felt blood stained when
Dexter ran up to us, so happy and uninformed, I patted him guiltily yet with love. Aarron decide we should go for a walk together, the walk didn’t make things better or worse but it was nice. On the walk Aarron said he didn’t blame me, I was glad but it still didn’t change the fact that I still did.

We got back and a few minutes later mom had come home, I had been sitting in silence deep in my thoughts of nothingness, mom hugged me and it pulled me out for a second, she told me not to blame myself, the hug and words were warm but the words didn’t faze me. I went to bed a few minutes later, Apollo was dead on April 17th, 2019 in the early morning.
Poetry!
"God, I cried"

Murderous nightmare
Nothing stayed put
Innocents will get shot,
I see men crying,
Nervous, exhausted
Some will sleep forever

I see wounds,
Hot blood
"Good grief" I cried
"Less pain!"
Resolve, I'll live through it
God willing, protection and
Benediction
God's truth, I'm exhausted.

From "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh"
The Flare

The band will play, and I'll be there to hear it.
flag-blown patriotism, hot blood

taken with spring fever and thinking it
blood lust

long and steady, steady and long
heart of the army, head proud

feeling the tremor, salt sweat
and leather

Muted thunder
hot blood

In silence he listened to his own heart
pervade away...

a solemn time and a solemn night

cocksSure immortality strengthened

with bayonets fixed like eternal lightning

one part humble and one part proud

the peach blossoms fell on the drum

I was the drummer boy at Shiloh.

-Lauren G. B
Heart of Army

Solemn face. Solemn eyes
Battles wrought, a Blind Plunge
Protection and benediction

A drum, two sticks, no shield
Flag blown patriotism
Why, it's the drummer boy, isn't it?

A damn fool questioned
Are you ready for battle?
Heart of Army,
a muted thunder.

"The drummer boy of Shiloh," by Ray Bradbury, a retelling of a historical fiction tale.
The Rhythm of Shiloh

By Arianny Núñez

Blossoms fell, the army was marching,
marching to the drummer boy’s beat.
And at the very back of the army,
marching was a boy with bravery.

The Little Drummer Boy of Shiloh.

With his head proud,
and jaw resolute,
marching in the Orchard grass.
The army,
Joby,
and the general were all marching
in Owl Creek.
Just he could see The Other Side.
Soldiers marching as well.
Joby could see no other Drummer Boy,
and Joby wasn’t knowing if how
he could sense the bravery
within them...

With the army...
The general...
And within Him as well...