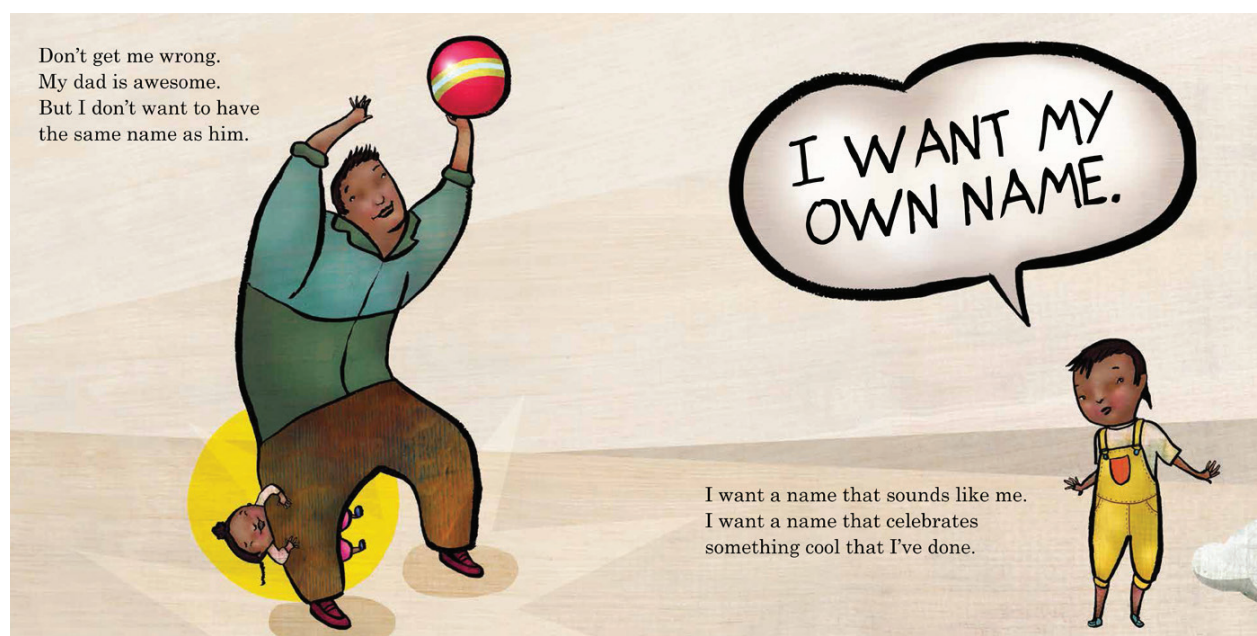




CK Reporter of the Week  
Grace McClung, Denver

## YA writer turns to younger readers



When I asked renowned young adult author Sherman Alexie why he decided to write a book for children, his response was what one would hope it would be from all authors:

"I want to write books that make kids hungry for more books. I hope that my book becomes the gateway drug."

Alexie believes that his newest book, a picture book for young readers, "Thunderboy Jr.," can live up to those wishes.

"Thunderboy Jr." is about a young boy and his search for identity.

He grows up in a close, loving family, and despite his appreciation of it, he grows tired of living in the shadow of his father, Thunderboy, simply because he was given the same name.

He would rather be named after an accomplishment in his life that showcases his own unique talents and abilities.



Sherman Alexie Photo/Rob Casey

This journey is portrayed by beautiful and thoughtful illustrations by Yuyi Morales that made the family come to life in color.

Along with these illustration, the story carries themes of being yourself and discovering what make you, you.

It also reflects the American Indian custom of having a birth name and then earning a new name through a special experience or achievement in the transition to adulthood.

"Thunderboy Jr." is a book that is both simple and sophisticated, perfect for new and also for experienced readers. Each reader will get something

different out of it.

Alexie's inspiration for this book is the people who have come to him and told him that a book he has written was the first book they ever finished.

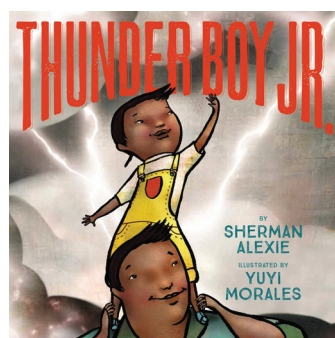
Although he has written novels and short stories for adults as well as poetry and film scripts, Alexie is best know among young readers for his hybrid book, "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian," which is about his own life in high school.

"I've really, really been inspired by the positive response of teen boys who were reluctant readers," he says.

He hopes his work will reach more readers and hook them into a deep love for books, because he believes that reading is a very valuable thing.

"Oh, it saved my life," he says. "I mean, literally saved my life; I'm not talking about metaphors. I'm talking about literacy itself is what saved me from poverty, and that each book I read increased my chances of survival."

What can reading do for you?



By Brooklyn Webb,  
13, a CK Reporter  
from Littleton

## Series starter isn't perfect, but has plus sides

The world is full of monsters, ghouls, demons, vampires, etc. Not just this world, but Earth and specifically, a little town just outside of Boston, Massachusetts, called Gallows Hill.

Max happens to live in this town.

Max, the main character in "Max Helsing and the Thirteenth Curse," by Curtis Jobling, often misses or is late to school because he is a monster hunter.

He is a fair hunter, though, and tries to be kind to whatever he hunts.

He hunts monsters because his entire family, all the way down to his first ancestors, also hunted monsters. You could say it is in his blood.

Sometimes he wishes he wasn't a monster hunter, but at the same time he knows he is saving the world.

The monsters have to be hunted because they are not kind.

The ghouls tend to eat dead corpses (*gross!*), vampires suck blood, and other creepy monsters like forest guardians are hidden but deadly.

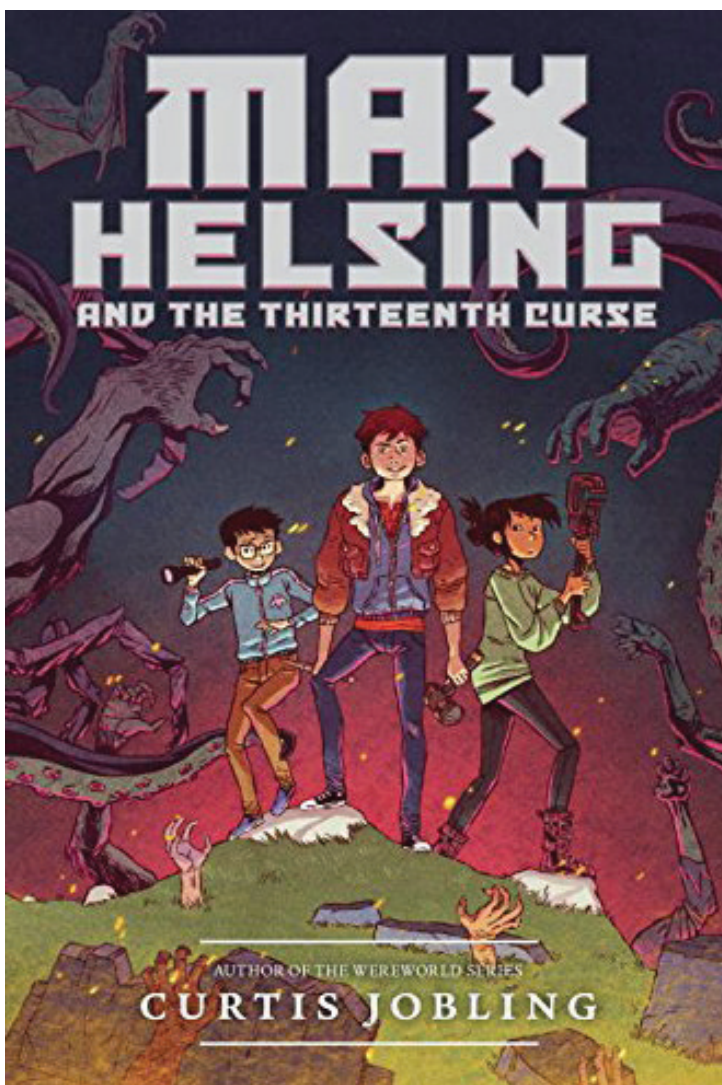
There are some exceptions.

For example, Max gets a puppy as a birthday gift, a hellhound, which is actually a demon dog that shoots fire from its mouth when it grows up.

At first, Max didn't like him because he didn't like having a monster in the house, and it was ugly.

However he does grow to like the puppy. You'll find out why when you read the story.

This was an easy-to-read novel that had a lot of excitement. You easily become addicted to the



story.

I'm a visual reader and the author gave enough details about the characters so that you can create in your mind what you think everyone looks like.

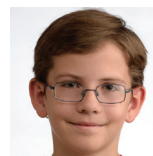
I wish they would have talked more about in the beginning when Max saves a Goth from a vampire.

It was a very exciting part of the book, and it sucked you in (*like a vampire!*), but then the story just stopped and moved on to something else.

I wanted to know what happened to the Goth afterwards. It was OK though because the story was still exciting, and it didn't ruin the experience.

I recommend this book for ages 8 and above because I think anyone younger would not understand the plot as it is more complicated. It is also 320 pages and includes some violent scenes.

I think it should be a stand-alone story and not part of a series because the storyline doesn't really set you up for sequels, but it is being called the first in a series, so we'll see.



By Jack Vanourek,  
10, a CK Reporter  
from Littleton

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# Baseball only one part of the story in ‘Soar’

“Soar,” by Joan Bauer, contains a quote that shows what people care about in the baseball crazy town of Hillcrest, Ohio: “If you don’t win here, then nothing else matters.”

Jeremiah Lopper is a twelve-year-old baseball fan who lives in St. Louis.

Unlike most other baseball fans, Jer doesn’t want to be a baseball player; his dream is to become a coach.

Of course, a couple years ago, he had the dream to become a pro baseball player, but that dream was crushed before he knew what was happening.

He needed a heart transplant.

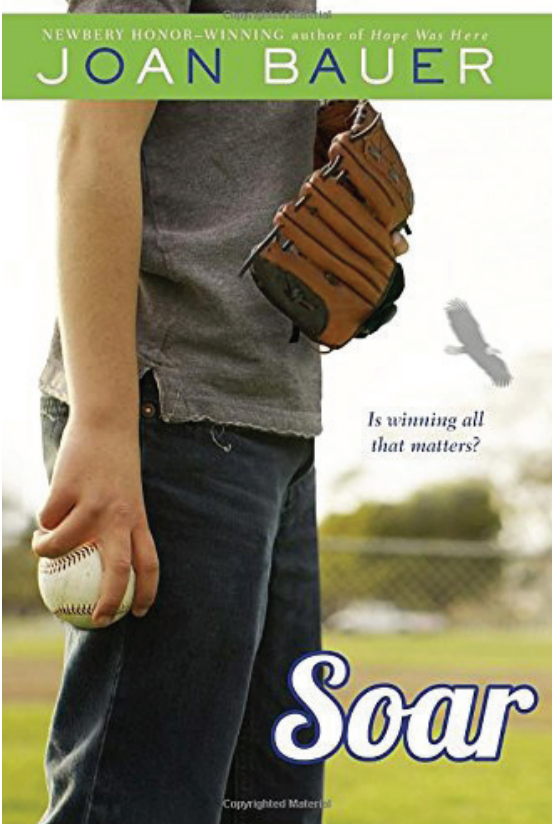
This changed his life forever. He could no longer run, or play baseball.

He was stuck in St. Louis taking pills every day, playing with his robot Jerwal, and listening to the Cardinals game.

But then, Jer’s dad has to move to Hillcrest for a couple months to help fix some new robots.

The Hillcrest Hornets are known all across the state because of their star pitcher. They have won six championships.

After Jer convinces the doctor that he is okay to move to Hillcrest, the drama begins.



Right as they reach Hillcrest, Jer notices that something is wrong.

The middle school doesn’t have a baseball team. They have teams for all other sports, why not baseball?

While Jer is trying to figure out the answer to that, and possibly start his own baseball team, a tragedy strikes followed by the arresting of the Hillcrest baseball coach.

“Soar” is a really good book that expresses many different emotions.

It starts off happy and exciting, but things tone down quickly after the tragedy that will transform Hillcrest forever.

I would recommend this book for kids who love baseball, because it has some baseball in it, and it represents what can happen to a great baseball team.

Even if you do not love baseball, however, you might still find this book interesting because it is about perseverance, and how to overcome many tragedies.



By Mreedul Gupta, 11, a CK Reporter from Highlands Ranch

# Nigeria turns to comics for teaching history



American schools have learned that graphic novels are a good way to get kids to read and that non-fiction in a graphic format can be a good addition to their regular history books.

But what if those were the kids’ only history books?

Nigeria is a nation in which there are many people from many different cultures, who often don’t know each other’s history and traditions, and don’t always get along well.

Their differences are painful, which may be one reason the country’s education department does not require that history be taught.

However, others feel that the only way Nigeria can be united and successful is if young people learn each other’s histories and cultures.

Imagine, artist and writer Oriteme Banigo thought, if a kindly, wise old man could come along and help young people learn about the histories and cultures of this large, diverse nation?

A group of Nigerians formed Panaramic, a company to publish and distribute comic books that would help fight illiteracy while promot-

ing positive things about Nigeria’s history and culture.

Now “Okiojo’s Chronicles” is sold as a comic book at “Sweet Sensations,” a chain of popular fast-food restaurants, is published in newspapers and is available online as an inexpensive download.

In the comics, the wise elder, Okiojo, solves quarrels and answers questions for modern young Nigerian kids, all the time teaching readers about the various peoples of their nation.

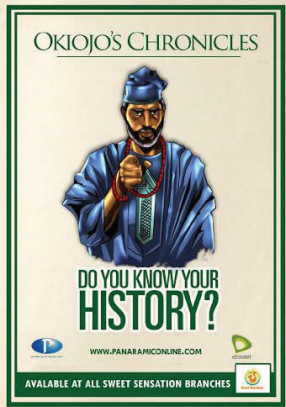
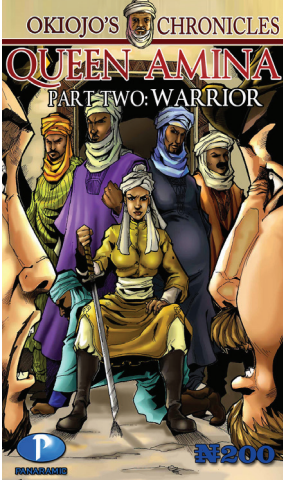
Some of it is pure history, telling of the origins of the Yoruba, Hausa and other cultures that make up Nigeria’s mosaic.

But legends are also part of those histories, and so some of the stories are about characters like Oduduwa, the founder of the Yoruba people, who was likely a real person but who, like our own Davy Crocket or George Washington, didn’t do all the things people remember him for.

Others are more modern, but still from several centuries back, like Queen Amina of the Hausa, a great warrior leader who lived some 500 years ago.

And other topics in the series are about very painful periods in Nigeria’s history, like when Great Britain came and conquered the nation’s rulers, forcing Nigeria to become a colony.

The publisher and artist hope that learning about the past will help Nigeria’s young people build their nation’s future.



Images/Panaramic

## Sudoku

6		3			
				3	5
	6				1
			2		
				4	
3		4		2	

**Rules:** Every row across, every column down and each of the six smaller boxes must contain numerals 1,2,3,4,5 and 6, one time and one time only.

The solution to this week’s puzzle is on Page 4.



## Brainteaser

**On this date in 1954, the Supreme Court ruled 9-0 that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional, so our answers this week will begin with “B” for Oliver Brown, the parent whose name was first and so gave the case the title “Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka.”**

1. Australian hunting weapon. Not all of them are designed to return.
2. Only Western Hemisphere nation where Portuguese is the official language
3. Short-legged, burrowing animal, related to weasels; It’s the mascot of the University of Wisconsin
4. The trombone, tuba and trumpet are all in this orchestral family.
5. He tried to start a rebellion against the government at Harpers Ferry to free the slaves.
6. This deer was first in a book, then the star of a 1942 Walt Disney animated feature film.
7. Even when judges have comfortable armchairs in court, they’re said to sit on this.
8. Football term for when several defensive players all rush the quarterback at once
9. Springfield is the seat of this county that forms Colorado’s southeast corner.
10. This mild sausage takes its name from a major city in Italy. (That’s no nonsense!)

(answers on Page Four)

## What kinds of food are healthy? FDA will kindly look again



If you were told to pick a “healthy snack” and there was a Pop Tart, an avocado and some nuts on the table, which would you think you should choose?

Probably not the Pop Tart, but, according to the Food and Drug Administration rules, that would be the healthy choice, and the other two would not.

The people at Kind Snacks didn’t think that made sense, especially after they got a letter from the FDA last year telling them they were not allowed to keep calling their fruity, nutty snack bars “healthy.”

They had to take the word “healthy” off the wrappers of their bars, and they obeyed the law, but they also wrote an appeal to the FDA asking them to think the matter over again.

The problem was that, when the FDA wrote the rules about healthy snacks 20 years ago, they decided how much fat could be in a snack and still call it “healthy.”

What they didn’t think about is that some types of fat are, in fact, quite healthy, like the fats found in nuts, in fish and in some types of vegetables.

Kind’s snack bars don’t contain salmon, but they do contain a lot of nuts, and the company argued that they were, indeed, healthy, especially compared to some snacks that are low-fat but full of highly processed, vitamin- and mineral-poor ingredients.

Last week, the FDA agreed Kind could call its bars healthy, and said it would take another look at the rules and try to come with better guidelines.

photo/Kind Snacks



# Beyond These Pages!

## Hot Links to Cool Sites!

### NASA's Space Place

<http://tinyurl.com/ckspace>

### NIE Special Report

<http://tinyurl.com/ckniereport>

### Headline Geography

<http://tinyurl.com/ckgeography>

### Pulse of the Planet

<http://tinyurl.com/ckpulseplanet>

## How to become a NextGen Reporter!

<http://tinyurl.com/colokidsreporter>



## To read the sources for these stories

Okiojo's Chronicles

FDA rethinks Kind Snacks

go to <http://www.tinyurl.com/ckstorylinks>

# Freehand

Editor's Note: "Freehand" begins in 1813, a few miles from New York's northern border with Canada.

## Chapter One: Scrimshaw

"Well, Dan, they tell me the Russians have cut off Bonaparte's supplies and winter is turning against him."

"Yep. There's the newspaper," Dan MacKenzie pointed to the wall by the door George Davis had just walked through, where the single sheet was tacked up for all to read.

His stepson, Caleb, kept sorting nails into bins at the back of the trading post. He liked to listen to the men talk about war, but he didn't dare to join the conversation. He was supposed to be working, not talking.

Davis looked at the small print and then pointed to a column, "There it is!" he agreed. "Boney's in retreat with the Russian hounds nipping at his heels. How old is this paper?"

"Two days. It came down from Ogdensburgh with a load of coffee and some tin ware. You need any coffee, George?"

"Not beans," Davis said, "but I'd have a cup. It's starting to snow again." He took a tin cup from the shelf by the stove and filled it from the pot.

"Soon as Bonaparte's finished, the British will send their army over here and put an end to Mr. Madison's adventure," Davis said.

"If you want to be English, George, just move across the river," Dan MacKenzie responded. "You won't even need a boat; it's frozen solid. Just load up your sledge and go."

"I'm proud to be a Yorker," Davis said. "I just wish Little Jemmy had left well enough alone. Everything was fine until he started this."

"Maybe here," MacKenzie admitted. "But what's happening out in the Ohios and what's happened to our ships isn't right and you know it, unless you really are on the wrong side of the river."

The door opened again and another man came in, stomping the snow from his feet and shaking it from his wide felt hat.

"Well, look who's out wandering in the wilderness," Mr. Davis said. "What do you think of the war, John?"

"What war?" the man said, and Caleb smiled to hear him tease the others. It was John Gabriel, a Mohawk trapper who brought his furs to the MacKenzies' store.

Since the war began, the Mohawk were supposed to stay at St. Regis, but the families needed food and other supplies, and they knew the trader at Fordsburgh wouldn't tell anyone, as long as they brought him good furs.

The trapper dipped one shoulder to slip the ash splint packbasket from his back.

"I heard you were sending people to Washington to talk about getting into it," Davis said.

"I'm not sending anyone anywhere," John said. "I'm trapping muskrat and beaver. And a nice otter, Dan. Wait until you see it!"

"Have the British recruiters come back to St. Regis since the militia ran them off?" Mr. Davis asked. "I've heard there are Mohawk fighting alongside Tecumseh out west."

"Look at this," John Gabriel replied, taking the damp, snowy scrap of blanket from the top of his packbasket and lifting out the thick, dark otter pelt that had been tucked underneath.

Caleb was glad John Gabriel was here. He hadn't come in a while and Caleb needed another look at his powder horn.

He went to the back of the store where his coat hung on a peg. As he put it on, he patted the pocket to make sure there was a piece of paper and a pencil there. Then he walked to the door, grabbing the ax as he passed the stove.

"I'm going to split some stovewood," he said to his stepfather as he stepped outside. It wouldn't do to let him know he was really going outside to draw.

He stepped off the porch of the trading post into the gathering snow and walked to the hitching rail where John Gabriel's horse stood. The powder horn was there, next to the leather sheath that held the flintlock rifle.

The scrimshaw powder horn was a gift from one of John Gabriel's uncles, who fought in the Revolution on the British side. Mohawk uncles were especially kind to their nephews.

The horse turned its head to look at Caleb as he came close to the saddle, its breath coming in two steaming streams and its eyes wide, wondering if this boy was going to climb up. Then, as Caleb gently ran his fingers over the horn, the horse shook its mane and continued watching the store's front door.

Caleb had studied the horn before, examined the carved pictures that covered its smooth, grained surface. There was a deer and hunter, and a sailing ship, and a clapboard house with bushes by the door. And there were smaller pictures, and names and dates.

Those were what he wanted to copy. He'd drawn the bigger pictures already in the sketchbook he kept hidden in the hayloft, the book where he made pictures when he should have been working.

Caleb squinted as he ran his fingers over the carvings, then he leaned the ax against the hitching rail and took out the paper and pencil. The smooth leather skirt of John Gabriel's saddle made a good drawing board.

He'd lost himself in the tiny carvings and had nearly covered the paper with drawings when a rough hand landed hard on his shoulder and the horse flinched away, nearly as startled as the boy.

"Splitting wood makes noise," his stepfather's angry voice said. "If you weren't wasting time, I'd have heard you."

by Mike Peterson, c. 2012- illustrated by Christopher Baldwin, c. 2012

For a teaching guide, go to <http://tinyurl.com/ckserial>

## Sudoku Solution

6	5	3	4	1	2
2	4	1	6	3	5
4	6	2	3	5	1
1	3	5	2	6	4
5	2	6	1	4	3
3	1	4	5	2	6

## Brainteaser Solution



(see Page Three)

10 right - Wow!

7 right - Great!

5 right - Good

3 right - See you next time!

1. boomerang 2. Brazil 3. badger 4. brass 5. (John) Brown  
6. Bambi 7. bench 8. blitz 9. Baca 10. bologna

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