Young AmeriTowne is a place where 4th and 5th graders come to learn about economics and business in a fun way. Sadly, however, many schools outside the Denver metro area either don’t have the money or the transportation to get there. Young AmeriTowne’s mission is to get as many students to experience their program, and so, for this reason, the Young Americans Center for Financial Education, which runs Young AmeriTowne, has created a mobile version of the Towne. Although AmeriTowne has been around for many years, traveling around the state instead of having kids come to Denver is a new concept. AmeriTowne mainly focuses on helping students learn about finances, but, instead of having them in a classroom hitting the books, they get to learn in a fun, hands-on way. Last year, when I was a fifth grader, I got to experience this program. The way my school did it was that they first taught us all the financial and business lessons to prepare us for the whole day at AmeriTowne. When we were taught the AmeriTowne curriculum, we learned real life experiences like applying for a job, working shifts, and managing our money in a “town atmosphere.” The primary goal of the program is to learn the work ethic and financial responsibility. Is it wise to spend more than you earn? We were taught to budget our money so that at the end of the day we didn’t end up with negative numbers! There are a variety of jobs you can apply for. I was lucky enough to get the job I wanted, which was of course! the Newspaper Manager. Not only does AmeriTowne teach you about finances but it also teaches you about government. An example of this is how a mayor is elected and laws are created. All the citizens in AmeriTowne must obey these laws or else they will have some serious consequences! Police officers make sure that citizens are following these laws. Businesses are a very important feature of the program. The mobile version of AmeriTowne offers their most popular businesses, which include The Bank, The Newspaper, The TV Station, The Container Shop, The Medics, The Radio Station, and The Snack Shop. Shops earn their money by selling goodies to their fellow town citizens. Janet Redwine, communications director at the Young Americans Center for Financial Education, said she believes students should be able to see and experience these lessons in person. Not only does this program allow students to learn about different types of jobs, but it also teaches them the value of teamwork. The role of this “portable” AmeriTowne is to let students in faraway schools participate in this fun curriculum. What is great about this addition to the program is that smaller groups of kids can come, 25 to 30 students, from different settings. "A great example is afterschool programs. We offer a curriculum for small groups of students to come in and enjoy this learning experience," says Redwine. Another problem is that schools sometimes struggle to find the money for this, often having to fundraise for the travel in addition to paying for the program, she added. Young AmeriTowne provides a scholarship program for older students and for schools. My school was fortunate enough to attend the facilities of AmeriTowne and it was an experience that gave me a taste of the adult world. With this new version of Young AmeriTowne, more students will now have access to this interactive program without leaving their school.

AmeriTowne becomes portable

Tap into this guide to the world of Roald Dahl

Wonderful, Wicked, and Whizzpopping: The Stories, Characters, and Inventions of Roald Dahl* is a reference book of summaries of Roald Dahl’s stories and how he came up with the ideas. Each page of the book gives a summary of one of his books. Some even contain a mini book for extra insight, like how to spot a witch in “The Witches”, or the Trunchbull’s many rules in “Matilda.” There are also a great many facts in the book, like where Dahl got his ideas and some information on the author himself. It even comes with a letter in the back. I learned lots of things from this book, like that his hip bone was found in his writing shop, and that he worried he would not have good enough ideas for his books. I think this book was very good, but I also found that it was a little easy for me to read, which is why I think the age range for this book should be 8-12 years of age because it may be a little scary for some younger kids yet it is still easy to read. But no matter the age range, I hope anyone and everyone enjoys this book.

Register today! Go to ColoradoNIE.com for a registration form.

Youth Journalism Day

for 4th-8th grade students
Thursday, July 20, 2017
7:30am to 5:00pm
Metropolitan State University, Denver

Student Cost for the Day: $65 (includes breakfast & lunch). Spend the day with professionals learning about story writing, interviews and photography. Call 303-954-3974 with questions.

* CK Reporter of the Week

Ben Vanourek, Littleton

CK Reporter of the Week

Metropolitan State University, Denver

Register today! Go to ColoradoNIE.com for a registration form. Call 303-954-3974 with questions.
In Lisa Bunker’s newest novel, “Felix Yz,” the author reimagines life as we know it. In her novel, a human boy, Felix, gets fused with an alien during a freak accident. “Felix Yz” is a blog of Felix’s personal experience of living fused with a fourth-dimensional being, Zyx, and tells about the high-risk procedure that could detach Felix and the fourth-dimensional being. Within the first few pages, many ingenious and insightful ideas appear that significantly contribute to luring the reader in. As an example, Felix communicates with Zyx by letting the alien being take control of his fingers to type words onto Felix’s computer screen, successfully communicating with Felix. There is also a male love interest for Felix and it truly breaks traditional roles and gives this book some astounding visuals. Vivid figurative language and descriptions give way to astounding visuals. Although the story contains numerous extra details, some are under-explained and dampen the brilliance of this book. There is, however, usage of the R-word in “Felix Yz” that may start to mainstream the use of this unspeakable word because it is in a novel for preteens. Numerous campaigns’ efforts to end the usage of the R-word could be overshadowed by the unnecessary usage of it in “Felix Yz.” Also, a message about disabled individuals is prominent in this novel and it is a demeaning one. In this book, Felix explains how others think that he is mentally disabled, but he is just fused with an alien. “Felix Yz” thus gives the impression that mental disabilities make people seem like aliens. It is derogatory and offensive. It’s definitely not a message that should be sent to the public. Felix Yz is an imaginative novel with good intentions, but it is tarnished by its discriminatory message towards people with disabilities. In my opinion, this book scores 2 out of 5 extra-terrestrials due to its creative direction, but the use of the R-word and comparing people with mental disabilities to aliens is repulsive. I wouldn’t recommend going out of your way to purchase or read this novel.

“Beyond the Bright Sea” by Lauren Wolk will leave readers satisfied after completion with its mystery, suspense, and vivid descriptions. It tells the story of a young girl named Crow who was abandoned inside a skiff as a baby and washed up on an island. From there she was raised by a quiet man she calls Osh, who fled his country for his own safety. He tells about the high-risk procedure that could detach him from his island. As the story goes on, the mystery element builds with chapters that will leave your heart racing. The book has a lot of variety, however, and can also be quite relaxing. The dialogue is very genuine. It feels like you’re seeing the characters with your own eyes as well as hearing them. If you can make it all the way to the end, you will be excited by the conclusion. Overall, this book is a very good read that will probably make you read it all over again.

Big Nate

Happy badger finds way to store food safely

University of Utah biologists wanted to find out how the flying scavengers of the desert dealt with food in winter, and their method was simple. They simply put out seven carcasses of dead calves and set up cameras to observe the vultures and other birds that live on dead animals visiting these free meal sites. But when one of the researchers went out to check things a week later, he found that one of the carcasses had disappeared. Evie Buechley thought perhaps a coyote or mountain lion had dragged the body away, so he began checking the photos on the camera. What he discovered was that a badger had buried the entire carcass by digging tunnels under it so that, as each tunnel collapsed in the sandy soil, the heavy calf sank deeper in. Then, having stashed the 50-pound calf where the birds couldn’t get to it, the badger could sit back and enjoy his generous food supply. And that’s not all: A second calf carcass was later found half-buried by a second badger. University of Utah biologists wanted to find out how the flying scavengers of the desert dealt with food in winter, and their method was simple. They simply put out seven carcasses of dead calves and set up cameras to observe the vultures and other birds that live on dead animals visiting these free meal sites. But when one of the researchers went out to check things a week later, he found that one of the carcasses had disappeared. Evie Buechley thought perhaps a coyote or mountain lion had dragged the body away, so he began checking the photos on the camera. What he discovered was that a badger had buried the entire carcass by digging tunnels under it so that, as each tunnel collapsed in the sandy soil, the heavy calf sank deeper in. Then, having stashed the 50-pound calf where the birds couldn’t get to it, the badger could sit back and enjoy his generous food supply. And that’s not all: A second calf carcass was later found half-buried by a second badger. There’s a stop-action video of the happy hoarder linked at ColossalKIL.com.
Important film for mature history buffs

“The Zookeeper’s Wife” tells the true story of Antonina Zabinksi (Jessica Chastain) as she and her husband, Jan Zabinski (Joshua Leonard), rescue Jewish people from the ghettos of Warsaw, Poland, to hide in their zoo during World War II. After the invasion of Poland by the German army, Antonina and Jan’s zoo is bombed before being taken over by Nazi soldiers. The website didn’t work. When they went to the website of the college where she had earned her master’s and doctorate degrees, they ran into a technical problem. They then did the fair thing and called the new principal to ask her about her educational background. She would play her piano to tell the everyone in the basement whether they should hide, or whether it was safe to come upstairs. Indeed, it seemed to be a real college.

The staff at “The Booster Redux,” the student paper at Pittsburg High School in Pittsburg, Kansas, had an important but not an exciting assignment: Write a story about the new principal at their school. Part of their work, of course, included finding out where she had come from and what she had been doing before she was hired as their new principal. And, of course, to find out about her education. That’s where a fairly normal story became unusual.

After the invasion of Poland by the German army, Antonina and Jan rescued and hid over 300 Jews, with only two fatalities, and those known by the term “ghettos,” meaning places where people, while Antonina was not as sure at first, were not due to their own actions. Over time, she became close to many of the people they helped, and they took in as if they were their own family.

Kids teach lesson: Be honest, do your job

On this date in 1970, the manned Apollo XIII lunar mission was launched, only to return to Earth four days later in a skillful emergency operation, so our answer this week will begin with “A.” Three. In chorus, the vocal range between soprano and tenor is 4. Found at the back of the throat, if they swell, they can block your nasal passages. The other is that good journalism matters, and that responsible reporting is an important job that helps protect a community, even if it’s only a school community. She would play her piano to tell everyone in the basement whether they should hide, or whether it was safe to come upstairs.

Matthew Cassini probe headed for grand finale of its 20-year mission

Meanwhile, Cassini continued to orbit the planet, making a variety of changes to its positioning in order to explore Saturn, its rings, and its moons. Today, NASA engineers will send instructions to Cassini for its last, and most complicated, mission.

Cassini for its last, and most complicated, mission. Cassini will make a final close trip past Titan and then change its path to fly between the rings of Saturn and the planet itself, gathering information on a place that, indeed, no man has gone before. The superintendant praised the students for their solid reporting and admitted he was embarrassed that the adults in charge of hiring the principal had not taken that same time and effort to check her résumé. The other is that good journalism matters, and that responsible reporting is an important job that helps protect a community, even if it’s only a school community.

Mist CK readers have not been on the Earth surface of the moon Titan, the first successful landing in the outer solar system, and began sending data back to Earth. Meanwhile, Cassini continued to orbit the planet, making a variety of changes to its positioning in order to explore Saturn, its rings, and its moons. Today, NASA engineers will send instructions to Cassini for its last, and most complicated, mission.

On October 15, 1997, and arrived on station at Saturn in October 1998, Cassini continued to orbit the planet, making a variety of changes to its positioning in order to explore Saturn, its rings, and its moons. Today, NASA engineers will send instructions to Cassini for its last, and most complicated, mission.

On September 15, Cassini will plunge into Saturn’s atmosphere, sending data until the end.
Stories in the Stars: Sagittarius

The Story
Sagittarius represents an archer, and, for thousands of years, Sagittarius has been an centaur, though it’s not clear which one. But many people say that Sagittarius is the centaur Chiron. Now, most centaurs were not very nice. They were beautiful, half-horse and half-man, powerful and swift. But they drank too much, they had no manners and they behaved very badly.

But Chiron was different. He was wise, and kind, and not only did everybody like him, but people even brought him their finest sons to raise. Chiron trained Theseus, the hero who killed the horrible Minotaur. And Chiron also raised Jason, who sailed all the way to Colchis with his band of heroes to find the Golden Fleece. Chiron, too, was the teacher of Heracles; the strongest of all the Greek heroes, and of Ajax and Achilles, the heroes of the war against Troy.

But he did not just teach young men to fight. He also raised Asclepius, the first doctor, and taught him the art of surgery and how to create healing drugs to help people. He was a great doctor himself, too. When people were injured and no-one else could help them, Chiron would heal them.

But, alas, even the great Chiron had no cure for the poison of the monster, Hydra. When Heracles killed the Hydra, he kept its poison blood to put on his arrows, to make himself an even deadlier warrior. But that was a dangerous idea, because one day, he and Chiron got in a battle against the other centaurs, the evil ones. They won the fight, but somehow, in the middle of it all, Chiron was accidentally hit with one of the poisoned arrows.

Chiron was an immortal and could not die, but the pain from the wound was too much to bear.

And so the wise and gentle centaur did one more kind act. The Titan Prometheus had angered mighty Zeus by giving men the gift of fire. Zeus had wanted fire to be something only the gods had, and so he declared that Prometheus must die.

But Chiron begged Zeus to let him die instead, so that his pain would end, and so Prometheus might live.

Zeus agreed, but he did not just let the great centaur die. Instead, he put him up into the heavens for everyone to see, and remember.

Now, some people say that Chiron is the constellation Centaurus, and others say he is really Sagittarius. But since we can’t see Centaurus in our hemisphere, we’re going to say that he is Sagittarius!

The Stars
You’ll need to find a wide open, dark field for stargazing when you look for Sagittarius, but if you can get a nice summer night without light pollution, this would be a great chance to take out your binoculars and enjoy some interesting things.

Sagittarius lies along the Milky Way, but quite a long way from Cassiopeia. If you face north with Cassiopeia on your left, and Cygnus (The Northern Cross) just about overhead, Sagittarius will be a little more than the same distance away down the Milky Way on your right.

The best way to find the Archer is to forget archery and look for the Teapot instead. The Teapot is an asterism inside Sagittarius that looks just like a little teapot, short and stout. It’s fairly easy to spot and then you can look around for the other stars that make up Sagittarius.

When you look at the Milky Way, you’re looking right through the rim of our galaxy, which is why so many stars seem packed together. But when you look at Sagittarius, you’re not just looking through the rim, but through the rim and then the very center of the galaxy. That means a pair of binoculars will give you some great views if you point them at Sagittarius. There are many things out there to see!

For instance, if you start at star at the top of the Teapot’s handle and draw a line to the star at the top of the lid, then keep going that far again, you’ll be at the Lagoon Nebula, a cloud of gas and stars that you can see on a dark night with just your eyes, but that looks even better through binoculars.

There are more star clusters and nebulae in that area: Go have a look!