



CK Reporter of the Week
Chloe Whiteside, Broomfield

Enjoy nature but leave no trace

Want to save the world? I met with staff members at Roxborough State Park to find out how and to see what they are doing as the first Leave No Trace park in the state of Colorado.

First of all, what is Leave No Trace (LNT)? There are seven principles of LNT:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Roxborough State Park has teamed up with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics to educate visitors about the human impact on the environment.

"Some people don't know how to act outdoors and what the impacts are if they are not environmentally responsible. That's the main focus of the program," said Todd Farrow, park manager.

One of the biggest challenges of this program will be communicating Leave No Trace to so many park visitors.

"Another challenge is that people don't want to abide by the rules, the 'It's okay if just I do it.' The attitude of 'It's just me, I'm not going to create that much of an impact.' That creates a big challenge for us," Farrow said.

It is important for kids to not only learn the Seven Principles of LNT, but also to practice them.



"We want to give them the importance of the LNT principles. We want to make the programs interactive and fun, so they will want to learn more and teach their friends," said Angel Tobin, volunteer and interpretive services manager.

Roxborough State Park is making an effort to teach kids through their various programs.

There is a Junior Naturalist program, and every school group will receive basic LNT principle education.

"Every program will get some level of LNT education," said Mike Thomas, volunteer naturalist.

They also want to get the kids interested in protecting the environment.

Sadly, they are able to show the impact when someone leaves trash or goes on an unauthorized trail.

These behaviors are what they want to change.

"We like to point those things out and engage them," said Sally Anderson, a volunteer naturalist,

"asking them how they would feel if someone trashed their bedroom or backyard. We are trying to get them to see the relationship between them and nature."

Parents can help by leading by example and practicing the principles themselves.

It starts with teaching kids why they're there: If kids are running around like crazy they will not experience wildlife and they will be disturbing other visitors.

Kids need to know how important it is to take care of the resources we do have and to respect wildlife as well.

For more information on Leave No Trace, see the link at ColoradoNIE.com. Or go visit Roxborough State Park in person!



Story and photos by
Bennett Erickson,
12, a CK Reporter
from Centennial

Novel tells unusual story of a very special case

"Brightwood" by Tania Unsworth is a terrific book that follows a little girl named Caroline.

Caroline, however is a special case, as I like to call it. Nobody except her mother knows that she exists. She grew up on the grounds of Brightwood mansion and has never left.

The only human she has ever been in contact with is her mom, but everything changes one Monday.

Her mom, Daisy, disappears.

I wish that the book was just longer.

I liked it so much I wanted more.

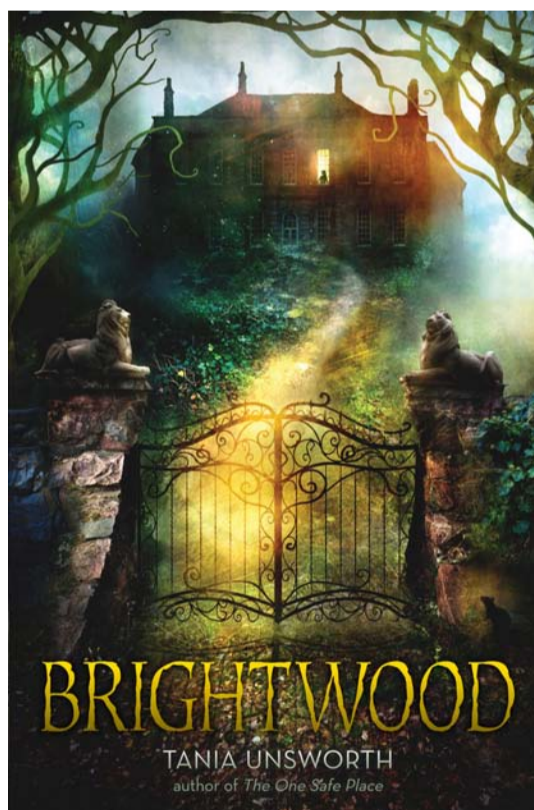
Usually, she goes to the store on Wednesdays and is back by 11:00 to teach Caroline.

But she leaves on Monday and is not back at 11:00, or 12:00, or any other time for the rest of that day.

Caroline grows worried as hours stretch into days, and a mysterious figure appears.

One day, Caroline hears the thrum of a motor and thinks that her mom had come home.

She runs to the window, but the car is not her mom's, as



a middle-aged man steps out, and trouble ensues.

I will not tell you what happens, but it is interesting, involving hunting, a stakeout, and more than a few tricky situations for the young girl.

This is an terrific book, but I wish that we got more follow-up at the end.

I want to see what life is like for Caroline after the main plot is over.

Also, I wish that the book was just longer.

I liked it so much I wanted more.

Tania Unsworth does a great job with descriptions, and you should definitely read this.

This book has no pictures but is descriptive enough to make a picture in your mind and I'd recommend it for kids aged 9 to 15 since, at 260 pages, it might be a hard read if you are too young.

"Brightwood" will thrill anyone who picks it up.



By Jack Vanourek,
12, a CK Reporter
from Littleton

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Video game sculptures accent nature

Since 1951, the Denver Botanic Gardens have been giving visitors a unique perspective on flora from around the world.

And for the past few decades, they have been incorporating art exhibits into their gardens to create a contrast between man-made and natural beauty.

The most recent installment, "Pixelated," is a series of abstract sculptures by artist Mike Whiting.

Whiting, a Utah native, has been working on sculptures like these as far back as 2007.

Brian Vogt, the CEO of the Botanic Gardens, was very excited to see Whiting's work put on display throughout the gardens.

"Art exhibits are a wonderful platform to teach about the power of nature," he said.

Whiting's sculptures, some nearly twelve feet tall, have been all around the country.

While Whiting has explored other media, he is best known for his sculptures, featuring brightly painted animals, people, and other parts of nature, all pixelated to give off a somewhat '80s video game aesthetic.

Every sculpture is made from plates of steel, cut with a 3D laser, and then welded together.

He finishes all of them with several thick coats of automotive or marine paint, to slow down the natural wear and tear on his art.

However, years of being open to the public has worn down some of his projects,

including the addition of some graffiti.

Whiting, however isn't bothered by it. "It adds a new history," he says, "a new visual interest."

Whiting, commenting on his latest show at the Gardens, said, "Taking something virtual and putting it in a real environment really works," referring to the visual contrast between his pixelated animals and the natural beauty of the Gardens.

It is certainly an interesting spectacle to see a fake blockhead deer underneath the canopy of a tree where you might be expecting a real one.

This sensation is what adds to the overall intrigue of the exhibit.

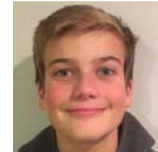
"Pixelated," at the Denver Botanic Gardens, is a creative new take on the contrast between art and nature.

The exhibit is on display all summer at the already beautiful Denver Botanic Gardens, so be sure to stop by and explore the ever-intriguing connection between



Photo/Jeff Boyd

virtual and reality.



By Lincoln Boyd, 13, a CK Reporter from Louisville

'Night Talkies' -- Talk about disappointing!



Discovery Kids "Night Talkies", which supposedly are "fun for night excursions", may seem very cool at first, but they really are misleading.

They are static-sounding and produce low-quality transmission, so it's no wonder there is only a one-year warranty on them!

The Night Talkies make a loud buzzing noise when they're turned on, which shouldn't even happen, and the flashlight is not as

advertised.

One cool feature that I would expect should work is that flashlight, and it only kind of does.

If you look at the back of the box, there is a picture of a couple kids turning on the flashlight and having a good time.

If you look closely, however, you will see that the

light is green.

In real life, it is not.

The flashlight has a dim light that hardly works, for what is advertised as "illuminat[ing] the dark." In fact, its beam is weak.

The range is only about 50 feet or so, so you can't really do anything with them long distance.

Next, "Night Talkies" don't exactly please your ears. The second you turn them on, you hear a noise kind of like a radio without any reception.

Then, to make it all worse, when you speak into it, the other person can hardly hear what you are saying.

The back of the box even advertises "high-quality transmission."

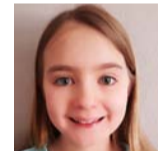
It's not.

The range is only about 50 feet or so, so you can't really do anything with them long distance.

The "Night Talkies" require six "triple A" batteries total, which, if you didn't know, is quite a lot for a toy so unusable.

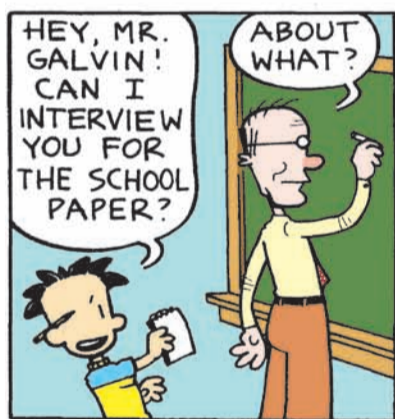
These walkie-talkies are definitely not worth it, and I would not recommend them to anyone, let alone a 5-year-old, which is what the minimum recommended age is.

Do not buy these. They are a complete waste of money and really junky.



By Essie Lamar, 12, a CK Reporter from Denver

Big Nate



Alexa, could you please program some Echo Dots for kids?

If your folks have an Amazon Echo, better known as "Alexa," you've probably already figured out what happens if you ask her why chickens cross roads.

But there are other things you could ask Alexa that your folks might not laugh about, and that she just might tell you.

There are several other reasons kids and Alexa might not be the best combination, starting with the idea that Alexa will make purchases, adjust the heat or air conditioning in your house and do other things that are usually the responsibility of adults.

In fact, if you search YouTube for "Bibi Alexa Shopping List," you'll discover that Alexa will even let a parrot create a shopping list, though at least Bibi didn't figure out how to get her to make purchases.

Not every adult thinks kids should be talking to Alexa at all, but now Amazon has created the Echo Dot Kids' Edition, which, to start with, comes with a colorful rubber belt around it to shelter it from drops.

The Kids Edition comes with a year's subscription to Free Time Unlimited, with kid-friendly radio stations, audio books, games and other features from Nickelodeon, National Geographic and Disney, and it's even programmed to understand younger kids who might not pronounce things very well.

But it won't let you make purchases, and parents can also limit how much time kids spend with Alexa. BTW, if you ask Echo Dot Kids Edition where babies come from, she'll tell you to ask a grown up.

The adult Alexa says they're brought by storks.



Sanctuary offers views of rescued animals

The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Keenesburg is a really fun place and a terrific opportunity to see animals.

TWAS is a sanctuary, not a zoo. The animals here are a wide variety, mainly large cats, bears, and wolves.

They also have some other animals like lynx and foxes.

They perform rescues of many wild animals who shouldn't be pets. The animals are usually starving or in bad condition when they are rescued.

Many animals pace when they are bored, stressed, or traumatized.

Once brought back to health, they will remain in the sanctuary, as they typically have lost their skills to hunt as a result of being in captivity for most of their lives.

I was fond of the Siberian lynx and African servals. They are relatively rare species to see.

The lynx has black tipped ears and a short tail and is



I do recommend visiting but not necessarily for tiny kids because the animals are farther away which might not keep a very young kid's attention.

TWAS has special events throughout the year to keep them funded since they are a non-profit organization.

Check www.wildanimalsanctuary.org for more details about visits and special events.



Story and photos by Ben Vanourek, 12, a CK Reporter from Littleton



a pretty tan color. I saw two of the lynxes fighting.

The serval looks similar to a miniature leopard with orange/tan coloring.

The only bad thing about TWAS is that you aren't very close to the animals, so I recommend bringing binoculars.

They keep the animals in the park by using a combination of wire fencing, used telephone poles and wires.

This creates two layers of fence between the humans and the animals.

You watch them from up high on a walkway. The walkway is up high so that the animals are not stressed, since they don't consider the walkway to be part of their territory.

It takes a bit to really walk it because the walkway is long.

(And take note that there are not many restrooms on the walkway so plan your breaks.)

There are volunteers working there, and you can ask them questions about the animals that live there.

There also is a gift shop. The most interesting thing that they had there were painted and unpainted ostrich eggs!



Girl who sees lies finds herself in a hostile world

"Heartseeker," by Melinda Beatty, is a new adventure novel set in a world based on 17th century England.

Only Fallow (yes, that's her name) is just a small and lonely farm girl, but she has a secret that could get her in a heap of trouble.

She can see colorful lies all around people, and she can never tell them.

When the king gets word of this gift, Only is snatched away from the small village that she has called home all her life.

The king wants to use her talent to sort out the liars in his court, but there is more to these lords and ladies than meets the eye.

One even has some magic of their own.

In this book, the author replicates real-life racism in the king's hostility towards the river folk, the Ordish. Including this in a fictional story can not only portray the author's stance on discrimination, but can teach children that what you look like doesn't matter.

The king hates these peaceful boat-dwellers simply because of where they came from, and their reputation isn't getting better.

Someone is framing them for crimes throughout the kingdom.

Someone close to the king.

Who is it?

This could be compared to the 1960's Jim Crow laws, which pretty much allowed Caucasians to blame anything on African Americans and to hate them because of what they looked like while still being within the law.

In the story, the Ordish are also being used as slaves, much like what was happening in the 1700s and 1800s.

The characters and their actions are very realistic, and you can relate to them in a

"That's what I would have done" way.

This novel is for kids 11 and up, because sometimes the language is a little bit difficult to comprehend. It also might be a bit long for younger kids, at around 330 pages.

Sometimes at the chapter heads, there will be a poem or song relevant to the story.

It is a fun way of foreshadowing the next turn of events.

The characters and their actions are very realistic, and you can relate to them in a "That's what I would have done" way.

This is a fun adventure story, but there is some violence, and some religious themes.

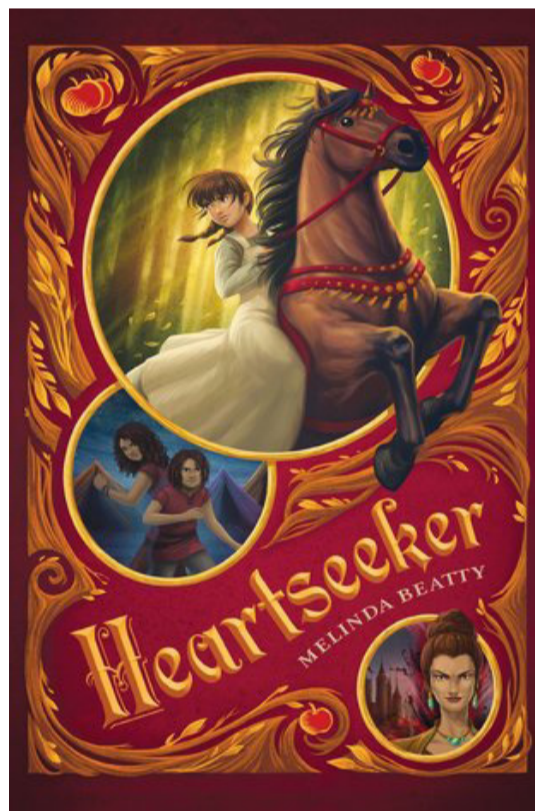
For example, Only's religion is a modified version of Christianity, worshipping the "All Mother" instead of the father God.

"Heartseeker" is Melinda Beatty's first novel, and judging by the cliffhanger, we can expect another book in the "Heartseeker" series.

This would be a good book for a read-aloud, because the fun and twisting plot will keep kids interested.



By Sylvia Goodman, 12, a CK Reporter from Centennial



Sudoku

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

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.



Brain teaser

On this day in 1541, Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto came to a large river he named "Río de Espiritu Santo," but our answers this week will start with "M" for the river's name in the Ojibwe language, "Misi-ziibi."

- How is "Misi-ziibi" spelled in English?
- This Roman god was the messenger of Jupiter.
- A type of domestic cat that has no tail, or only a tiny stub
- The capital of Spain
- Harriet Tubman was also called by this man's name from the Bible, because, like him, she led slaves to freedom.
- The nearest planet to the Sun
- Author of the "Space Taxi" and "Willow Falls" book series as well as "Every Soul A Star" and "Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life."
- Lewis and Clark traveled up this river, which meets the Misi-ziibi at St. Louis.
- The only metal that is a liquid at room temperature.
- This Asian nation is also called "Burma."

(answers on Page Four)

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 learn more about these stories

Wildlife Sanctuary

Pixelated

Echo Dot Kids' Edition

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

Sudoku Solution

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

Brainteaser Solution



(see Page Three)

10 right - Wow!

7 right - Great!

5 right - Good

3 right - See you next time!

1. Mississippi 2. Mercury 3. Manx 4. Madrid 5. Moses 6. Mercury
7. (Wendy) Mass 8. Missouri 9. mercury 10. Myanmar

I Will Come Home

Chapter Eight: A Louisiana Tiger

(Our story so far: Betsy has discovered who had been taking eggs and milk: An escaped Confederate prisoner has been hiding in the hayloft of her barn.)

"Stand back up!" Betsy ordered, but the reb stayed on the floor of the dark hayloft where he'd fallen.

"I can't, ma'am," he said. "It's my ankle. I did something to it and I can't hardly walk at all."

"You can walk well enough to climb down the ladder and get into our hen house," Betsy replied, holding the hayfork nearly in his face. "And well enough to milk our cow and climb back up here."

"That took me near all night, ma'am," he confessed. He looked at the sharp tines of the hay fork. "Could you just lower that fork a little, please? I ain't gonna jump you. I can't hardly even try."

Betsy ignored the request.

"Slide over to the edge and dangle your foot down in the light so I can see it," she ordered.

His tattered trousers barely reached below his knees, and, as he put his foot over the edge of the loft into the light of the lantern, his dirty, bare leg was a sickly yellow. His ankle was swollen badly, an angry purple-green.

"I was running in the dark and I stepped in a woodchuck hole or something," he said. "It caught tight and I fell. Might have busted it."

"You surely did something to it," Betsy agreed, staring at the joint.

"That's why I'm still here," he said. "I come out of the tunnel and seen one of the fellows running ahead, but this happened before I could catch up with him. I reckon they're halfway home if they ain't been caught."

"They haven't been," she said, and realized she shouldn't have told him that. She shouldn't tell him anything. She should turn him in to the sheriff or to the army.

"It's probably not half as bad as it looks," she said. "They'll take care of it back in the prison."

His eyes widened and he scooted back away towards the hay, dragging his bad leg.

"You can't!" he said. "For the love of heaven, don't turn me in. I can't go back there. I'll die! They're all dying in there!"

Betsy didn't lower the fork, but she took a half step back.

"Well, why wouldn't I turn you in? It's rebs like you that got my brother captured and who killed his friends."

"Your brother's a prisoner?" he asked, and Betsy wished she hadn't told him.

"He's in Andersonville," she said, and saw his face when he heard the name. Even in prison, he'd heard about Andersonville.

"Where did he get took prisoner?" he asked.

"Knoxville, just before Christmas," she said. "He was with Shackelford's troops."

"I didn't have nothing to do with anything in Knoxville, ma'am. I've never even been there," the reb declared. "I was in Virginia, clean on the other side of the country. I'm from Louisiana. My name is Silas Dussault. That's a Louisiana name, sure enough."

"I don't care what your name is and I don't care where you're from," she said. "Rebels are rebels. You're all part of the same army."

"By the time your brother got caught, I was in Fort Delaware prison," he said. "I got caught at Rappahannock, with General Harry Hays and the Louisiana Tigers."

"And if I let you go, Silas Dussault, you'll go right back and join up with your Louisiana Tigers all over again," Betsy said, "and this war will never be over."

"I ain't joining up with nobody no more," the reb promised. "I just want to go home, ma'am. I've had all the war I want, I swear."

"Quit calling me 'ma'am,'" Betsy snapped. "I'm only 11 years old."

"It's dark in here," he said. "Alls I can see is that fork in my face. I do wish you'd lower it a bit."

Betsy let the hay fork dip slightly, but kept it ready, just in case. Neither of them said anything for a few minutes.

"My little brother Lucius is just about your age," Silas said at last. "He turned 12 last month, I guess."

"I don't care to hear about your family, either," Betsy said. She started to swing the fork back and Silas covered his head, but she just snapped at him. "Get out of the way so I can throw some hay down for the cow."

He backed up and she took up a forkful and pitched it over the edge.

"I'll bring you something to eat in the morning," she said. "Stay away from our hens and our cow."

Betsy finished pitching down the hay, returned the fork to its pegs and went back to the house without another word, though she heard Silas call a quiet "good night" as she climbed down the ladder.

She was glad Ma and Pa were in bed. She took her dinner from the warming shelf over the oven: a chicken leg, baked beans and a piece of cornbread.

Betsy ate the chicken and beans, then cut a sliver from the wheel of Herkimer cheese, wrapped it in a napkin with the cornbread and hid it in her boots in the lean-to.

She was about to blow out the lantern and go to bed, but she paused for a moment and left it lit while she went to the Bible in the parlor.

A few moments later, Betsy came back into the kitchen with Jimmy's letters and sat at the table to read them by lantern light.

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

ColoradoKids

is produced by
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