

# AVATAR!

## The Art of Storytelling

Teen Writers share their stuff in a special section of Avatar!

This summer, the Youth and Teen Dept. held a writing group which focused on strengthening the skills of young storytellers. Three students were given one picture. With no explanations, they were expected to create a unique story using the picture as inspiration.



Check out the special WRITING GROUP section of this issue of AVATAR! to see the interesting, intriguing and completely different fruits of their labors.

SEE WRITING GROUP SECTION PAGE 6

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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## Teens Win In A Major Mission



### Teen Summer Reading Program Has Three Big Winners

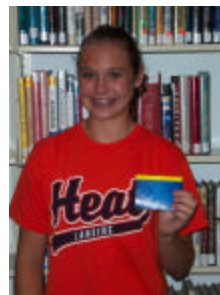
The 2007 Summer Reading Program, themed MISSION READ, was a great success on many levels. The teens participated in droves—which means a lot—and they got the goods to show for their effort.



Not only did everyone who participated win the cool weekly prizes—which ranged from

free food and shakes to gooey aliens in alien eggs— but three people who wrote book reviews won the three Major Mission Prizes. A Telescope (valued at \$150) and gift cards for Best Buy and Target (valued at \$50 each) were up for grabs.

- Rachel N.—Best Buy Card Winner
- Jaquece C.—Target Card Winner
- Christine H.—Telescope Winner



## Teen Book Reviews—You Read It, You Write It.

By: Madyson Anthony

The Misadventures of Maude March  
By: Audrey Coulombis

### WATCH OUT!

The notorious Maude March is on the loose. At first, 14 year old Maude is a nice lady and polite—until she is forced to marry somebody that she doesn't want to.

So she and her 11 year old sister Sallie March are running away to Independence, Missouri to find their uncle. But they face so many challenges on the way.

Will they reach Independence? And if they do reach Independence, will they find their uncle?

*The Misadventures of Maude March is a 2008 Rebecca Caudill Nominee, and is required reading for some of Lansing's Middle Schools.*



## Teen Book Reviews—You Read It, You Write It.

By: Tori Michalski

The Year of Secret Assignments  
By: Jaclyn Moriarty

The Year of Secret Assignments is about three girls from Ashbury (which is a school). Then there are three boys from Ashbury's rival school Brookfield. They first got into this pen pal assignment from English (which at that point seemed to be a huge catastrophe). Then they get blamed for all the trouble that is going on in Ashbury. This makes the pen pal project STOP, immediately.

Before I give everything away, overall this was a very, very good book! I would recommend it to anyone!



## New **T**unes New Music Releases

|          |  |                         |
|----------|--|-------------------------|
| 08/14/07 | Big Mello                                  | Wegonefunkwichamin      |
| 08/14/07 | Cruz Martinez Presenta:<br>Los Super Reyes | El Regreso De Los Reyes |
| 08/14/07 | Christy Lane                               | I Believe In Angels     |
| 08/21/07 | Talib Kweli                                | Eardrum                 |
| 08/28/07 | Akon                                       | Konvicted               |
| 08/28/07 | Caedmon's Call                             | Overdressed             |
| 08/28/07 | Plain White T's                            | Every Second Counts     |
| 09/04/07 | Manu Chao                                  | La Radiolina            |
| 09/04/07 | Eleventyseven                              | Galactic Conquest       |
| 09/11/07 | Jupiter Rising                             | Electropop              |
| 09/11/07 | Kanye West                                 | Graduation              |
| 09/18/07 | James Blunt                                | All The Lost Souls      |



### Everybody *else* is reading it...

The most well read Young Adult Books in our library are revealed.

That one book you're looking for is *never* on the shelf. It HAS to be the most popular book ever, right?

Find out if your favorite makes the list!

The 20 most popular teen fiction novels, are listed on page 5.

#### TOP YA GRAPHIC NOVELS

*The most well read Graphic Novels.*



| Title  | Total # of Checkouts |
|--|----------------------|
| Star Wars: graphic novels (various titles in the top four spots) | 285                  |
| Marvels  | 57                   |
| Strange Stories for Strange Kids                                 | 49                   |
| Miyazaki's Spirited Away (#1)                                    | 47                   |
| Fire & Flight  | 46                   |
| Ultimate Spider-Man Vol 1 (Power & Responsibility)               | 44                   |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 |   |   |   |   | 3 |
|   |   | 1 | 2 |   |   |
|   | 1 |   |   | 4 |   |
|   | 6 |   |   | 3 |   |
|   |   | 4 | 5 |   |   |
| 1 |   |   |   |   | 4 |

## Sudoku Challenge

**Bring your completed puzzle to the teen desk to get a prize!**

### Instructions:

1. Fill the grid so that the numbers 1 through 6 appear in each row, column and 2x3 box.
2. Each number will appear only once in each row, column and 2x3 box.

## TOP TWENTY YOUNG ADULT FICTION TITLES

*The most well read YA books in the Lansing Public Library*

| Title   | Author                | Total # of Checkouts |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Holes   | Louis Sachar          | 339                  |
| Eragon  | Christopher Paolini   | 125                  |
| Fever, 1793   | Laurie Halse Anderson | 125                  |
| Flipped   | Wendelin Van          | 124                  |
| The Second Summer of the Sisterhood                 | Ann Brashares         | 118                  |
| The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants               | Ann Brashares         | 114                  |
| Princess in the Spotlight                           | Meg Cabot             | 111                  |
| Princess in Love                                    | Meg Cabot             | 105                  |
| Stargirl  | Jerry Spinelli        | 100                  |
| The Giver   | Lois Lowry            | 100                  |
| Someone Like You                                    | Sarah Dessen          | 90                   |
| Speak   | Laurie Halse Anderson | 81                   |
| Princess In Waiting                                 | Meg Cabot             | 79                   |
| Stormbreaker  | Anthony Horowitz      | 78                   |
| Stuck In Neutral                                    | Terry Trueman         | 74                   |
| Girls In Pants (The Third Summer of the Sisterhood) | Ann Brashares         | 73                   |
| Cheaper by the dozen                                | Frank B. Gilbreth     | 72                   |
| Burning Up : A Novel                                | Caroline B. Cooney    | 71                   |
| The earth, my butt, and other big round things      | Carolyn Mackler       | 71                   |



# 2007 Summer Writing Group

FIC TION

What moment  
could this  
photo  
possibly be  
capturing?

See what the  
writing group  
members  
thought...



## THE FAMILY

By Shannon Pollard

One long day after a small family—a husband, wife, and son (a very weird family) — went to the store, they were on their way home when Mom realized they forgot one thing: the milk. They all wondered what to do. “The only store we get the milk from is that one because it is the cheapest and pretty good compared to all the other stores” said Mom. “It was on the 4<sup>th</sup> aisle and 5<sup>th</sup> shelf on the bottom and we almost have an empty tank of gas.” dad brought up. Together they decided to go home and unpack the groceries from the car and get some gas.

After the family did that, they all once again drove back to the store. When they got there, they were surprised that

only one car was in the parking lot, and one shopping cart that was tipped over. The family walked up to the store, but couldn't see through the window because the store wasn't very clean and the door was boarded up with pieces of wood. Dad knew that the store must have closed down. He really wanted to know how a store could just close down and how were they supposed to get the milk. He thought for a long time.

Then they all left the boarded up store and went home. They couldn't believe they forgot the milk because the family wasn't very forgetful. When they got back to their house, they did everything they would normally do, they just didn't have milk. It was very important for them to have milk, Grandma was coming for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and she  
*(Continued on page 8)*

## SHOPPING SPREE

By Crystal Jimenez

This was the day. It was time to go on my first shopping trip ALONE. As I walked through those doors with gift cards, I nearly fainted. But I was ready to do this. Let the shopping days... *begin!*

There's this weird story from an old man who lives across the street: "If you dare speed through those aisles without spare time to think, the consequences are fatal."

I should've listened, but hey, I'm not so great at that. My parents tell me I seriously talk more than I pay attention. I even got a detention once from Ms. Hobbs for not answering what seven times eight was! Anyway, back at the store, I grabbed anything that I wanted:

shoes, purses, lip gloss and more! Life was but a dream for hours until I arrived at the purchasing aisle. My cart was literally crammed with my treasures.

The old man was totally right. Waiting in line for purchasing makes you go crazy. What a terrible mistake I made. When it was my turn, the guy at the cashier announced the total price: \$693.16! "Oh no," I thought to myself "I don't have enough money! This purse needs me, I NEED IT! There's no way I'm leaving without my stuff!" Looking like an idiot, I desperately looked around the area for anything that could save me. That's when I saw a sign that read: 50% DISCOUNT OFF EVERYTHING!!! It was still a lot of money; \$344.58 was not in my budget.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## THINK TWICE

By Philip Arteaga

I knew it was wrong. I couldn't help it, I needed to be cool. I wanted to fit in. As I walked into the store, I remember I saw cigarettes and the kids. I think back and there were just 6 kids. They had said to me "We won't let you hang out with us."

This is the dumbest thing I have ever gotten myself into.

I took the price tag off then my hands started shaking like a cell phone on vibrate. Then I thought it was all over; I was at the door and a rent-a-cop said "Son, empty your pockets." I thought to myself, "Do I really want to go to jail?" All of a sudden, when the cop came over, my *friends* ran. They left me! The cop said, "Don't even think about it..."

but I dashed. I felt like a mouse being chased by a cat. I looked back and he was right on my tail. Then, not thinking, I ran into the street.

Now there is a cop on my back and a bunch of speeding cars; what a great mix. Two cars swerved to miss me and they had a head on collision. It clicked: I just killed someone. Then I heard a weird noise almost like tea steaming on a stove. I turned and looked straight and a car driving fast slammed on its brakes. He wasn't able to miss me and he sent my body flying in the air at least 10 feet. It smelled so much like blood and car exhaust fumes. Car alarms going off and people screaming for help. The weirdest thing of all is I felt like I was on fire the pain was  $\infty$  immense. The taste of dirt and gravel was in my mouth. I still remember all the

*(Continued on page 11)*

**SHOPPING SPREE**  
(Continued from page 7)

"Come on, you know you want us." My stuff was now taunting me! For the next 30 seconds, I was almost in a trance. I accidentally used my emergency credit card! All of the money was gone. There was -\$54.27 on it, which meant I was in debt. Rushing out of there with tons of bags, I ran all the way home from my scary nightmare.

"Please don't be home Dad, please don't be home" I said to myself when I entered the house. He's usually out of town at big meetings. I went to the kitchen to grab a Twinkie; I was starving! And low and behold, there was Dad, reading a newspaper with a cup of coffee. Uh-Oh. "Hey honey, you wanna tell me what those bags are

doing in the living room?"

You can guess what's next. Dad so happened to be the CEO of the store I went to! (What are the odds of that?!) When he found out how I paid for clothes such as my leather jacket, he closed down Shop-O-Rama in town, blaming the employees for my irresponsibility getting out of hand. Today if you show up, the place is deserted and boarded up. All of my friends were furious at me, which stinked, and the closes shopping mart was 10 miles away! The only remains of Shop-O-Rama are its building and a shopping cart on the ground. Across the side it reads: If you dare speed through there without spare time to think, the consequences are fatal... ✍

FICTION 2007 Summer Writing Group

**THE FAMILY**  
(Continued from page 6)

doesn't drink pop and doesn't like water. They didn't know what to do.

About an hour later Grandma came, she knew the family doesn't always have what she likes to drink and eat so she went shopping and she bought milk, and a lot of other things. Now the family had milk and Grandma was there and tomorrow would be the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Everything they could imagine was perfect except their favorite store closed. They all wondered especially dad how it got closed so fast.

Grandma knew the answer. She went to that store right before it closed. She said she just finished shopping when the fire alarm went off. There was a blazing fire just starting and everyone had to leave, she hurried up and left with her stuff and got out of the parking lot before anyone else had a chance to.

Then she ran to a few more places until she came to the family's house to tell them the terrible story. Then the family figured out that the one car was the manager's and the shopping cart was from someone who hurried out of the store and it fell over and the other carts must have been in the store. The rest of the day they were so relieved, since they finally knew what happened.

The next day (the 4<sup>th</sup> of July) together they went out to find a new store to get milk, they drank tons of milk that day and they found one and Mom knows it is exactly on the 12<sup>th</sup> aisle and 2<sup>nd</sup> shelf at the top. Mom, dad, their son, and grandma later all drank milk and ate ham (the 6<sup>th</sup> aisle, 1<sup>st</sup> shelf freezer section) while sitting on the roof watching fireworks after all it was the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. The rest of the weekend they camped out in the backyard and ate s'mores (8<sup>th</sup> aisle, 3<sup>rd</sup> shelf). ✍

# ARE YOU A WANNABE INVENTOR

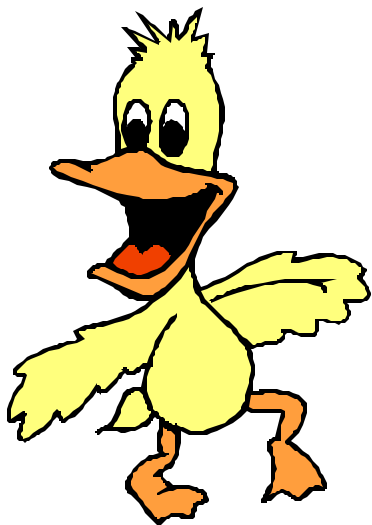


Below is a wacky scenario which calls for a wacky invention. Bring your invention to the Teen Desk on THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 20TH between 2pm and 8pm. If you can prove that your invention works, you get to pick two prizes from our Teen Treat Treasure Chest!

## Invention Challenge #1 - August & Septemeber 2007

The emperor has a pet duck, who is currently roaming the kitchens of the palace and wreaking havoc with the corn flakes. Concoct a mechanism that can capture the emperors pet duck, without hurting him, using only the following list of supplies.

Shoe Box  
Rubber Bands  
String  
Cardboard  
Masking Tape



## LUCK

By Shannon Pollard

Some people are just not as lucky as I am. I was really horrified this whole week. I...right now am in a super medical hospital. (It's scary right) I am 10 and I was in a terrible car accident, another car was speeding by and rammed us. We flew off the edge and rolled down a hill. In the car was me, my mom and my grandpa. My grandpa died in the accident. My mom is on a breathing machine.

I have a wheelchair, I broke my leg and my head has a huge bump. We have to go on walks all the time since we're in a hospital that is the only way to get exercise; we have to, even if we don't want to. We go on one walk a day and we go on all four floors.

I miss my grandpa a lot. I haven't been able to see him yet - oh how I miss him. We were on our way to visit my grandma and go to the store and a lot more; like I said some people just aren't as **lucky** as me, you wouldn't think so but it is true. There is homelessness, starving is much worse and some people wouldn't have lived from a car accident like me.

It was so sad. We were all really close to dying. I **hate** I mean **super hate** walks. Why can't they just leave us alone all I would do at home is watch T. V., be on the computer or the PlayStation. I don't *do* exercises.

Right now my mom is going on her walk she could go alone since she is older; I go with a nurse. I get to take the elevator since I'm in a wheelchair. I still have to go on walks to exercise my arms. In a half hour I will go on my walk, so I will watch T.V. until then.

I am on the basement floor and walking around a turn and I see my mom lying on the ground. I guess she never got back to her room. My nurse runs to her and right then and there I see my mom for the last time.



When I got better and was out of my wheelchair a nurse drove me and I finally got to my grandma's house. She is one of my last relatives. Once again I know people out in the world are starving, homeless and tons more...I am very **lucky**. ✍

*The above photo was the second image provided to the writing group. Anyone who finished their "cart" story, was welcome to also write for this image. This story was the only submission on this photo.*

2007 Summer Writing Group

**b**efore humanity invented writing; there was storytelling.

People created myths, morals, religions, rules, epic adventures and explanations of natural phenomena; all through the creative use of language.

Historians and anthropologists even suggest that telling stories is one of the many things that defines humanity, and unless we can finally learn what (if anything) dolphins are saying with their clicks, humans are probably the only animals to



## FIC TION

### **THINK TWICE** (Continued from page 7)

things I was feeling then like it was happening now. Looking up after I hit the ground and seeing a red cart tipped over that was the last thing before I went blind.

I woke up two days later with a handcuff on my hand and on my bed in the hospital. I couldn't move and I couldn't see. I found out later a mother and a 14 year old were in one car. In the other car was a soldier that just came back from Iraq he had fought so hard in the war and he came back to his country and end up passing away not from a bomb or gun shots but from a stupid kid.

I was sentenced to juvi for 10 years. It's so hard to talk about juvi I tried so much

to block it out. I was always getting beat up and my food stolen. The smell of the place was unbearable. One of the worst things about it all was how everyone treats everybody so badly.

Almost at the end of my sentence the mother of the soldier came to visit me. This was the worst part of juvi. It felt like a punch in the stomach. She asked me one question and that was "Why did you run into the street?" Then she said, "My son was in the war 3 years and never once got shot or injured and on his first day back he passed away." I couldn't say anything.

Think about your choices before you make them because they will always affect you. Even if it's the smallest thing.



Lansing Public Library  
Youth and Teen Department

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**AVATAR** is a bi-monthly Newsletter that focuses on the Lansing Library Teens. We are always looking for submissions on books, music, movies, sports, politics or

anything else that you think is interesting. Essays, photos and drawings are all accepted! Submission deadline is on the 20th of every other month. Not all submissions will be chosen. Type or clearly write any stories or essays, and make sure that your name is on everything you turn in. Turn in submissions at the Teen Services desk on paper, disk or via email to [teen@lansing.lib.il.us](mailto:teen@lansing.lib.il.us). (Ask at the desk for more information.) Grades 6 – 12 Only.

**T**

**A**

Drawing By Ellen Yos

