

Booktalks: *Car Trouble and Flip*

Saskatchewan School Library Association

THE MEDIUM – SPRING 2010

Christine MacLellan
Teacher-Librarian
Regina Public Schools



SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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As she did for the Winter issue of *The Medium*, Chris agreed to dig into her file of booktalks and chose a couple to share. She picked two novels with appeal for both male and female readers because the stories contain strong main characters of both genders. Chris has the knack of delivering just the right amount of information to make readers curious enough to read more!

Car Trouble by Jeanne DuPrau

Duff Pringle has just graduated from high school. He has spent two weeks arguing with his parents who think he should be going to college instead of driving across the United States to take a high tech computer job with a company called Incredibility Inc. in California. His dad claimed Duff was too young to drive across the country alone, and there was probably some hitch to the job offer that sounded too good to be true. He said Duff did not know anything about the real world and would probably end up in jail, in the hospital or dead.

However, Duff knew he could do it! He would show them. He was going to California, he was going to be rich, and most of all he was going to have FREEDOM!

Duff bought a used Ford Escort for \$625 and had exactly six days to drive 6,000 miles to San Jose, California to start his new job. His car made it exactly 100 miles from home before breaking down. Phoning home for help – not an option! Therefore, using his laptop computer, he finds someone who needs a car driven west to St. Louis. Unfortunately, it is a big, gas-guzzling car, and Duff is short of money. He picks up a hitchhiker named Stu who is going surfing in California to help pay for the gas. Stu seems very nervous and keeps looking over his shoulder. They arrive in St. Louis and deliver the car to the correct address. The owner's daughter, Bonnie, answers the door. Bonnie's mom is hospitalized and Bonnie is making a plan so she does not have to live with a weird neighbor. For Duff, meeting Bonnie is love at first sight. Bonnie convinces Duff and Stu to drive her to California where her favourite aunt lives. Of course, she can't leave her dog Moony behind. Stu is much more at ease with girls than Duff and chats easily with Bonnie. Unfortunately, Duff is tongue-tied. He spends time thinking of ways to impress Bonnie make Stu look bad. Many adventures happen to this trio on the way to California. They visit a commune and a biker bar before they notice that someone is following them. Even worse, someone is out to hurt or kill them.

Read aloud from page 220, beginning with “But Bonnie...” and finishing at “We have to stop.”

Who is Stu and why does he disappear for the whole day when he spots the police? Who is chasing them? Will Duff ever tell Bonnie how he feels? Will Duff make it to California and his new job?

For the answers to these questions read *Car Trouble* by Jeanne DuPrau

Other books by this same author: *City of Ember*, *The People of Sparks*, *Prophet of Yonwood* and *The Diamond of Darkhold*.

Flip by David Lubar

On Earth they call Hollywood entertainment capital of the World. In Outer space they call Nexula the entertainment capital of the universe.

The Nexulans are always searching the universe for new material. When they discover Earth they know they have found a winner. For eighteen months, they scour Earth for its heroes and legends. They put what they have learned onto silver disks to take home. When a Nexulan uses the disk, they will experience the greatest moments in the life of a hero or legend on earth. However, on their way back to their planet, a wrench, dropped by someone working on the space station, hits their spacecraft. A hole is ripped in the main cargo compartment and all the disks fall to earth. Although most of the disks fall into the ocean, a few end up in the woods, close to the home of Ryan and Taylor Mackenzie who are twins.

Ryan and Taylor may be twins, but they are different in every way. Ryan is a boy while Taylor is a girl. Ryan is a screw-up, especially at school. Taylor does well at everything but especially at school. Add a very strict and critical dad into the novel, and you have a recipe for conflict. In fact, Taylor's main job in the family is to keep Ryan out of trouble, especially now that Mr. Mackenzie has threatened Ryan if he does not do better at school and stay out of trouble.

Ryan and Taylor find the dropped Nexulan disks in the woods. Read aloud page 19. Ryan soon discovers that if he flips the disks just right, he can become someone fantastic from history. If he flips while playing baseball during physical education class, he turns into the best baseball player of all time. Although he looks physically the same, on the inside, he is the hero from the disk.

Flipping becomes an obsession for Ryan. He becomes a Sioux warrior, an ancient Greek scientist, and, strangely, even a woman one time. He also becomes the target of the school bully, Billy Snooks.

Taylor tries to keep Ryan out of trouble. She and Ryan's friend Ellis attempt to convince him to stop flipping. When the showdown between Ryan and Billy Snooks finally happens.... I am not going to tell you to whom Ryan flips!

Can Taylor keep her brother out of trouble? What will his dad do to him if the school calls? If you want to laugh until you cry, read the part where Ryan turns into Elvis Presley.

For fast-paced action, lots of laughs, and great characters, read *Flip* by David Lubar.

Other books to enjoy by this author: *Hidden Talents*, *True Talents*, and *Punished*.

Sources

DuPrau, Jeanne. (2006). *Car trouble*. New York: Greenwillow Books.

Lubar, David. (2003). *Flip*. New York: Tor Books.