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## KARLA MASS: The week's most talked about books

June 13 - 19

**McClatchy Interactive**

June 07, 2008 - 6:28 p.m.

### A COOL BOOKLIST FOR KIDS

Celebrate summer's sizzling temperatures with some really cool books. Summer begins June 21, and what better way to jump start your carefree days than with fun, unassigned reading.

Picture books are popular with infant and pre-school kids as colorful illustrations complement crafty words. But teen series and kid sequels dominate many summer reading lists. Titles of series are easy to recognize and portray interesting characters, plots and dialogue. Book lovers of all ages anticipate good fiction they can relate to.

Hurrah! School is out, but books are still in!



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Children's librarian Terry Warner introduces young readers to books year-round at the Richard B. H. Library, a branch of Wake County Public Libraries in Raleigh, N.C. He believes there's something for everyone this summer when it comes to children's literature.

**Q:** What type of books do you recommend for children this summer?

**A:** As a librarian, when a child or teen asks me for a book to read during the summer, I first try to get a good glimpse into what he has read before and really liked. Once I can ascertain a particular interest in an author or genre, I can hit the road running in finding either like authors or genres. This part of my job is the most satisfying. It's not unlike a salesman who makes the big sale of the day!

It's also fun to give a quick shelf talk to introduce readers to something new or something that they wouldn't have thought to pick up before. Just the right "hook" in that "sales pitch" can introduce a child to a whole new, unexpected world or cast of characters that can be important in terms of identification.

Today's libraries are great merchandisers – almost like the chain bookstores, in displaying lots of new and interesting and diverse books. This summer, for certain, there's something for everyone who's browsing for that perfect book to read.

**Q** What can parents do to encourage unassigned reading?

**A:** Parents who want to encourage unassigned reading can get their children and teens involved in

discussion groups at the library. These "book clubs" have taken flight at libraries all across the county not only just at our branch, because they allow kids to make new friends, learn to "talk about" books in a relaxed setting than the classroom, relate issues occurring in their own lives to the book, and enjoy snacks and crafts that augment the book.

Parents and their children should definitely check these out!

**Q:** Kids and teen series are so popular now. Why? Is this a trend in children's literature?

**A:** We have the publishing industry to thank for this wonderful trend. Fifteen years ago, there were fewer series titles, not a great deal of diversity in characters and plot, and definitely not the interest in trying anything new that might be off the beaten path. Boy, how that has changed! Publishers recognize that today's teens are not only the most tech savvy of us all but also are more mature, open-minded and tolerant than teens from a generation ago.

What's so wonderful is that publishers are reaching out to everyone with stellar series, including *Dragon High* (of high interest to African-American girls), the *Rainbow Trilogy* (for gay teens) and many others. Teens and libraries are devouring this bountiful supply of series, and surprisingly, their appetite is still growing.

Perhaps what drives publishers most, however, is that their imprint will give birth to the next *Harry Potter* or become adapted into that next movie or TV series that is a must-see for its devoted readers. Kids are reaping the rewards of the publishers' generous offerings of series titles, too, particularly those available in graphic novel format.

We are also seeing, for the first time, a plethora of beginning chapter book series; some of the popular ones at my branch are: *Willimena Rules*, *Dragon Slayers Academy*, *Franny K. Stein* and *Geronimo S*. I think it summarizes it best to say that there's something for everybody!

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*Ducks Don't Wear Socks*

**Ages:** infants and preschool

**Author:** John Nedwidek

**Publisher:** Viking Children's Books

**Publication Date:** April 2008

**Summary:** A duck with an outlandish wardrobe teaches Emily the benefits of laughter.

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*The Pigeon Wants a Puppy!*

**Ages:** 3 to 6

**Author:** Mo Willems

**Publisher:** Hyperion Books for Children (Pigeon Series)

**Publication Date:** April 2008

**Summary:** A silly pigeon longs for the pet of his dreams - a puppy.

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*Piper Reed: Navy Brat*

**Ages:** 7 to 11

**Author:** Kimberly Willis Holt

**Publisher:** Square Fish/Henry Holt (Piper Reed Series)

**Publication Date:** July 2008

**Summary:** Fearless Piper Reed's dad is a Navy Chief. Join in her exciting childhood adventures.

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*The Road to Paris***Ages:** 8 to 12**Author:** Nikki Grimes**Publisher:** Penguin Group (USA)**Publication Date:** January 2008**Summary:** Paris is bi-racial. She struggles to trust others in a new family and a strange town where she doesn't belong.

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*The Sherlock Files: The 100-Year-Old Secret***Ages:** 9 to 12**Author:** Tracy Barrett**Publisher:** Henry Holt (Sherlock Files Series)**Publication Date:** May 2008**Summary:** Xena and Zander Holmes are excited to find out they're related to sleuth Sherlock Holmes, eager to solve the mysteries Holmes could not.**Listen to an excerpt from the *The Sherlock Files: The 100-Year-Old Secret***

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*The Battle of the Labyrinth***Ages:** 9 to 12**Author:** Rick Riordan**Publisher:** Hyperion Books for Children (Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series)**Publication Date:** May 2008**Summary:** Percy Jackson's freshman orientation at Camp Half-Blood is invaded by demon cheerleaders and other monsters.

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*Audrey, Wait!***Ages:** Young Adult**Author:** Robin Benway**Publisher:** Penguin Group (USA)**Publication Date:** April 2008**Summary:** Audrey breaks up with Evan and inspires him to write a song. Audrey's life will never be the same!

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*The Empty Kingdom***Ages:** Young Adult**Author:** Elizabeth E. Wein**Publisher:** Penguin Group (USA) (Mark of Solomon Series)**Publication Date:** April 2008**Summary:** Telemakos, grandson of King Arthur, attempts to regain his freedom in this suspenseful conclusion to the "Mark of Solomon" duology.

*After Tupac and D Foster***Ages:** Young Adult**Author:** Jacqueline Woodson**Publisher:** Penguin Young Readers Group**Publication Date:** January 2008**Summary:** Neeka and her best friends embrace D Foster and the music of Tupac Shakur.

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*New Moon***Ages:** Young Adult**Author:** Stephenie Meyer**Publisher:** Little Brown Books for Young Readers (Twilight Saga Series)**Publication Date:** May 2008**Summary:** The dangerous romance continues with Bella Swan and her vampire boyfriend Edward C

*"The Week's Most Talked About Book" is a weekly book review and literary criticism column that publishes every Friday. Selected titles are based on popularity, public opinion, research and observation. Questions, comments and suggestions should be sent to book lover and columnist Karla Mass at [kmass@mcclatchyinteractive.com](mailto:kmass@mcclatchyinteractive.com). She is a content producer for McClatchy Interactive.*

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