

## Book Talk

### Quick Picks and Recommendations

Lavonne Foster, owner of Hooked on Books, 2756 S. Campbell, picks:

**A Woman of Substance**, by Barbara Taylor Bradford. Used paperback. \$3. Emma Harte begins life in an impoverished family with an invalid mother. She learns to survive grief, heartache, and poverty. Eventually, she is able to build an international business empire from one small shop. Being a woman of substance creates big problems, which she deals with in her own special way. **Crystal Shard**, by R.A. Salvatore. Used paperback.

\$3.50. Isolated in the barrens of the Icewind Dale, the villages come under attack by Wulfgar, a young barbarian who ends up young his life to a grizzled dwarf. With the help of Dizet, the dwarf strives to mold the barbarian into a warrior.

**Cris Park, manager of Borders Books and More, 3300 S. Glenstone, selects these books; both works are children's fantasy:**

**The Amulet of Samarkand**, by Jonathan Stroud. Paperback. \$7.99. 462 pages. Nathaniel is a magician's apprentice who decides to speed up his magical education in order to seek revenge on an older, more experienced magician. He masters the spell to summon Bartimaeus — a sly, smart-mouthed, shape-shifting djinni — and soon learns that summoning and controlling a djinni are two different things. When Nathaniel sends Bartimaeus to steal his enemy's greatest treasure, they find themselves involved in magical intrigue, murder, and rebellion.

**The Conch Bearer**, by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Paperback. \$5.99. 265 pgs. Anand is entrusted with a conch shell with mystical powers. His task is to return it to its rightful home. Accompanying him are a scrappy street girl and a mysterious man with surprising powers. Anand's quest takes them through many dangers and he ends up making a decision that will change his life forever.

**Elaine Hines, owner of Renaissance Books and Gifts, 1337 E. Montclair, picks:**

**Dragonology: the Complete Book of Dragons**, by Dr. Ernest Drake. \$19.99. Hardcover. Great illustrations of the scaly beasts abound, along with a guide to location and identification of various species.

To complete your fantasy feast, leaf through **The Art of Amy Brown**. \$30 hardcover or \$20 paperback. Amy Brown is a phenomenon in the world of fantasy illustrators. Give it as a gift and keep one for yourself as a treasured possession.

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# Author's Note

A special section in A&E focusing on local authors

## WRITING FOR CHILDREN

Springfield's Jackson showcases her love for young readers

by James Hanson

Louise Jackson has shown an interest in and a love for writing since she was young. It's an art she developed thanks in large part to her mother.

"My mother was an English teacher," Jackson said. "She valued writing very much and even aspired to be a published author herself, and she did fairly well with her writings late in her life.

"She bought me a baby brownie Kodak camera and said she would buy me a roll of film every week as long as I wrote one story about one of the photos I took. I was so excited because I loved photography, and I did just that, I wrote a story every week."

This might explain how the Springfield resident grew to love writing young children's books.

She grew up in Leander, Texas, 20 miles north of Austin. She continued her love for pictures and writing throughout her schooling and became a teacher. She was a reading and language arts professor at the University of Wyoming from 1974-1995.

Jackson had her first book, a picture book titled *Grandpa Had a Windmill*, *Grandma Had a Churn*, published in 1977. Her next picture book, *Over on the River*, was printed in 1980. These books are out of print now but can be found at [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or at [www.BN.com/usedbooks](http://www.BN.com/usedbooks).

"I had so many things to write for academics that I wasn't able to put out as many works as I would've liked," Jackson said. "I did love teaching and thought it was best to focus my energy on that job at the time."

She moved to the Ozarks in 1995 after retiring from the university, and began to write for children again.

"I remembered what it was like growing up where I did," Jackson said. "The Ozarks reminded me of home and I love the nature and lifestyle and use it for my writing."

In 2003, almost 25 years after her last book was published,

Eakin Press released Jackson's *Gone to Texas from Virginia*.

Her books of historical fiction can be read and understood by children, but some adults might enjoy them as well, Jackson said.

"Yeah, I think that adults would even enjoy my newest book especially," Jackson said. "As long as they don't mind the hero being 14-year-old boy."

*Gone to Texas from Virginia* is the adventure of a young boy traveling to Texas in 1850 with next to nothing.

Jackson is currently shopping her latest book, *Sent Away*, a story about a young woman in 1857 who journeys from Hawkins County, Tennessee and ends up residing in Greene County.

Jackson also has a book about a young girl detective she is working on that she sees as being a series, and another book is in the works.

When Jackson isn't busy writing, which she tries to do in the mornings to have free time for the afternoons, she loves to be outdoors, walk, hike, garden, visit historical sites, and play with her cat Patches.

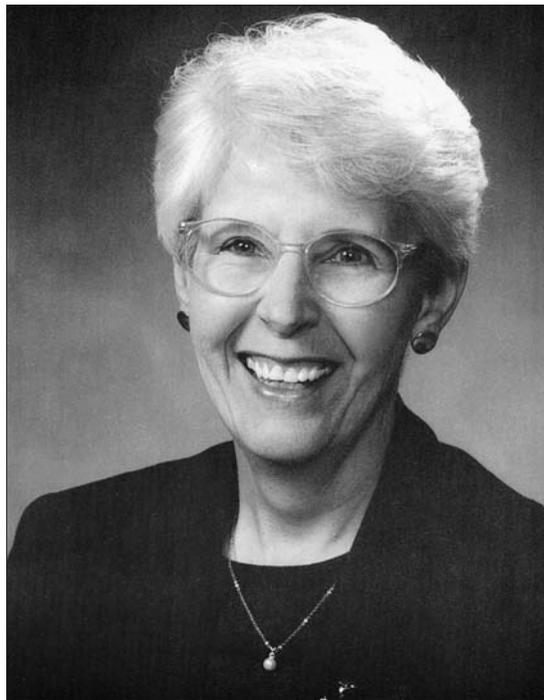
Jackson often visits schools, libraries, and literary meetings to speak to aspiring writers and

*"I keep thinking I should have done something more than I did. I don't know what, with the water coming up so fast. But it seems like a boy that's already fourteen - going on fifteen and pretty near a man - could have helped some way. That's what worries me the most.*

*Pa could swim. Plenty good enough to take care of himself. I don't know what happened to pull him down. Can't understand it at all.*

*Ma couldn't swim. If I had grabbed her, even latched on to the tail of her dress, maybe ... I don't know. I just don't know.*

(excerpt from "Gone to Texas from Virginia")



Louise A. Jackson, Springfield resident and author, is following up her book *Gone to Texas from Virginia* with a new historical novel, *Sent Away*.

others about her love of writing and to offer advice on what she has learned in the profession.

One such meeting will be on September 12 at the Brentwood Branch Library, where she will give her workshop "The Craft of Writing." On September 16, she will be the featured speaker at the Reading Rainbow Award Banquet to be shown on Ozarks Public Television.

Jackson said she loves to speak at events because she can share her stories and show people how she became a writer, and encourage parents to help children become more interested in reading and writing.

Jackson said that writing is not easy.

"No matter what, you have to keep on going and keep believing in yourself," she said, "even if you get rejected. That is what makes writing so hard. It's no easy task, but it sure is a lot of fun."

She added that anyone who wants to write should do three things: read, read, and read. Read the genres or types of books they are interested in writing. Write even when they don't feel like it. Writers don't have to be inspired. A good idea could develop from just sitting down and beginning to write. Read how-to books for writing.

"Those have been very helpful to me," Jackson said, "and I think it will benefit many writers."

### Fair at Library Center to Help Would-be Writers

Many people try to write or have dreams of being a writer.

But they don't have enough information, don't know how to handle things like writer's block and where and how to be published, and lack knowledge of different types of styles.

Aspiring writers can find help at the free Authors Fair, which will be held from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

September 24 at the Library Center, 4653 S. Campbell.

The event will host 42 authors from Missouri. Charles Hedrick and Riki Lipe are among the authors scheduled to appear at the fair, which also is open to fans of reading.

The fair should be fun and exciting for everyone, said Sarah Jane Rosendahl of the Springfield-Greene County Library's community relations department.

"This will provide a chance for people to talk about the craft of writing," Rosendahl said. "Or they can discuss the various books by the authors."

Thirteen of the authors will give talks. They will discuss their books and writing. A drawing for a book by a local author will be held before and after each speaker.

Many of the authors will be bringing copies of their books to sell and also will be autographing their works.

"Everyone should try to attend," Rosendahl said. "It should be a lot of fun."