Good afternoon and thanks for joining us I am Judy Simpson. If you're looking for a holiday gift of that lasts a lifetime has then consider the gift of reading and the best source for a good read is quite likely your local library. This afternoon I'm going to be joined by two Vermont librarians. They are going to review more than a dozen books and at the end of the program we are going to let you know how you can get a list of those books that they've reviewed. It's a pleasure to welcome along time contributor to across the fence Amy Howlett. Amy is with the Vermont department of libraries in bellows falls also with us is Victoria Tibbits Victoria is a librarian at the Westford public library welcome to both of you. We're going to begin with some children's books Amy I understand you're going to get us started?

Amy.: Yes I am. I brought the three bears by Paul Galdone. Maybe I should give you my theory of Christmas gift giving or whenever gift giving which is give the books that you really love where give the books it you know the person will love. This is a book that parents and grandparents really love. It is the simplest version of the story and it's one of the simple as stories and Victoria and I were talking about how when we first met children's books we were little dismissive of them but there's something about the little we bear and the middle size bear and the great big bear and making your voice change each time you say those words. It's a very familiar story Paul Galdone does pictures illustrations which speak to me of Vermont and he spent a lot of time in Vermont. The most classic of folktales the most satisfying ending and a wonderful book to have in a child's library. If you're dealing with a new baby in the house and you want to begin seeding that gift of lifelong reading go with a three bears that would be my recommendation.

Victoria.: I have press here by Herve Tullet. This is a picture book for ages birth through preschool it's a beautifully designed book and again you talk about that simple elegance it's demonstrated in this book. The offer invites the reader to interact with the book by following the directions on the pages. To give a brief example of that it says press here and turn the page. So the child presses the yellow dot. What happens great now press the yellow dot again and you automatically have engaged the child in the book. It teaches colors following directions size patterns right and left is really a wonderful book. It also engages the child was something we call prints motivation which is an early literacy concept getting a child ready to read and having them understand the books are fun and exciting.
Judy.: And interactive.

Victoria.: And interactive. It's a toy masquerading as a book and a wonderful antidote for Electronic Entertainment.

Amy.: It's so funny the idea press here. I have over and under the snow by Kate Messner. Kate lives on the other side of Lake Champlain. This is a brand new book and it's a wonderful book to enjoy it inside to make yourself think about being outside especially in winter. It's a girl and her dad I think their cross country skiing it's night. The book is done in shades of white and teal and browns and they're talking about all the things they see. There's a deer track where the deer in the winter. O bumblebees what happens to bumblebees. Bumblebees many of them don't survive the winter but the queen bee hibernates until the spring when she comes out again. From a librarian's point of view the other thing I love about this book is that in the end there are several full pages with a little square thumbnail of the animal and a description so it sums up the book. But you also have a charming narrative in the woods at night the companionship and fire in marshmallows at the end.

Judy.: And is something you can do right here in your own backyard.

Amy.: Yes yes absolutely.

Victoria.: Happy paid day by Mo Willem's. This is for early readers those children just beginning to read ages five through first grade. Elephants and piggy are already well known to many children. This is Mo Willem's latest addition. They're good friends and there's different as night and day. Piggy is exuberant and excitable. Gerald of the elephant is reticent and reluctant together they have the simple wonderful adventures of friendship in childhood. They learn how to share ice cream to get invited to parties they play ball or in this case celebrate happy pig day. Gerald's problem of course is that he's not a pig he's an elephant and he just doesn't know if he can celebrate happy pig day.

Judy.: That's a good question.

Victoria.: Is a good question the answer is inside. The problems are presented with wonderful happy surprise endings for children. I'd also point out that this supports children in their early literacy by supporting something called print awareness and bad is that print is available and shown every day in our lives in the grocery store in books all over and this support early reading. You can see the dialogue bubbles are color coded. Pigs are in pale pink gerald's in gray you can see she's talking about love there are parts the bubble is heart shaped also assist the reader. A quick story about this one; one of my story time buddies who I've known since he was born this is the first book you read it to me a couple weeks ago sat down the steps in the children's area it was such a sweet moment and he was so proud of himself. A beautiful book for early readers happy pig day by Mo Willems.

Amy.: We're moving on to a slightly older group this is the Penderwicks at point mewet I love the Jean Birdsall I guess it's a sign of how old I am getting but I miss those books of my childhood. The borrowers little women Laura Ingalls wilder. I like those good family stories there something about it this speaks to me. This is a series if you've met the Penderwicks before then you know the basis of the series. For girls and their antics outdoors often. point Mewet is in Maine. Their fathers not going with them the big sister...
isn't so the first time sky is the OAP the oldest available Penderwicks and she's so worried about her sisters because she has this responsibility. It's the usual things that happen on a two week vacation. One of the girls gets a crush on a boy on a skateboard he's really not that nice how will the family support her. Another daughter loves to write stories so she's tried to get her heroine out of trouble. Just basic friendly things. My advice would be as a parent or grandparent read it first and then when you love it you can share it with your child. The Penderwicks at Point Mouette. Grade school early grade school and that nice thing of being part of a series which many kids really enjoy.

Victoria.: Moving towards middle school then I have smile. This is a graphic novel an autobiographical book. About the author when she was in middle school. She had a terrible fall landed faced first and severely damaged for two front teeth. So this is about her dental traumas and healing but because it takes place in middle school it's also about first crashes and changing friendships and self discovery. I would point out that this is a graphic novel. A lot of adults are not comfortable with graphic novels and I want to encourage you to give them too young readers they love them. They're great for reluctant leaders because the pictures are fall full and engaging there also complex to read surprisingly complex to read for those of us who've grown up with straight to print because you have to integrate the pictures and the dialogue or the text together as opposed to having the information come through print. Don't be afraid of graphic novels this is a wonderful story. It also is a DCF book for this year so Dorothy Campbell fisher book for this year so a lot of middle schoolers will be looking for it. On a personal note having had a lot of orthodontist work as a child I winced in pain and sympathy every time she would go in and half are braces tightened. When she was struggling with the head gear to get it in I really felt it my teeth ached. A great story particularly for a middle school girl because it is a girl who's a main character. For someone with braces or someone who feels different and who doesn't and middle school so smile By Reyna tellgaller.

Amy.: 101 place is not to see. This is what I would call a kitchen table book so picture is the holidays people are coming in as always food cooking that's nice smells and are you really reading. So you have this on the kitchen table and people pick it up and say oh my gosh any hotel used to be a prison I so don't want to go there. Each place 101 places each place is a page or two long. Each place there's a photograph so you can actually see this mammoth swimming pool in Japan warm urine scented water so don't want to go there. But it also is the fun of traveling. You mentioned at DCF book this is on the green mountain book award list so those are book aimed at the high school years all in paperback another good thing if you're looking for that age group just remember it 101 places not to see Catherine price.

Victoria.: In paper too. Also in paper this is a teen adult crossover book. This is Abraham Lincoln vampire hunter by Seth Graham Smith. What a book.

Judy.: I wouldn't have put that together.

Victoria.: No you wouldn't. This is what's interesting about this book is its Lincoln’s trials and tribulations and challenges are viewed through the lens of a sinister plot by certain vampires to rule the United States. His is was used to describe the death of his first love the death of his mother the death of his children and the Civil War believe that are not.

Judy.: An interesting twist on history.
Victoria.: An interesting twist on history. Engaging for those people who don't care for history very much all confess. I was a little reticent to read this in my book group because I thought about the four factors is a going to be too gory and I thought history I'm not too sure. I really loved it which is why I'm talking about today. It's a beautiful faux history in the style of David McCullough or Doris Kearns Goodwin. It's got faux diary entries and mocked up photographs and engravings and footnotes. Lots of fun for teens and adults.

Judy.: Terrific.

Amy.: Just a couple quickly I'm going to start with junkyard dogs with Craig Johnson. I am always looking for new mysteries it's just the way I am. The main character is Walt longmare a laconic sherriff in Wyoming. Junkyard dogs starts with this old man in the junkyard he's up on the roof trying to clean the chimney with turpentine. He's hitch to a rope sewing Casey falls off you'll be all right. But they forgot anti the other end of the rope to the 68 Tornado so when his daughter lot takes off down the road and he's fine. They say this is Wyoming I'm sorry junkyard dogs cleaning your chimney with turpentine this is Vermont. This is small towns everywhere. It's a solid series I've read a bunch of them. Junkyard dogs is actually last year's book so you can probably find in paperback. The new one is out I have an ready yet but I love it. I also don't have with me the new Sarah strohmeyer kindred spirits. Sara is a Vermont author. You might know her from the bubbles series which is about a very funny hairdresser who also solves mysteries. Kindred spirits is a little quieter a little deeper. Its friends who decide to carry out their comrades last wishes. She dies of cancer she leaves a secret unfolded which may have to carry out and it's the story of how they do it. Three or four day road trip and they're fueled a little reference in kindred spirits by the recipe book for cocktails. So every night is a different cocktail and the fun of enjoying that. Kindred spirits I love the idea that the friends are emotionally attached and also that the cocktails keep them going hey we like that. It's the holidays c'mon.

Victoria.: I'm going to finish up with two nonfiction books for adults is first one is artisan bread 5 minutes a day by Jeff Bertzgerg and Zogf Francois. What I can say about this is its young and it works. When I first read about this I thought really I don't know I don't if I believe this that this is actually my personal cookbook I've had since last holiday season and I bake with all the time and have gotten some delicious bread. The recipes are for breads bagels Peter bread there are pastries you made the brioche and all the accompaniments. It's really delicious makes a wonderful gift by self for busy bakers or bread loving family's or you could package it with a baking stone and then you have the whole gift. This is artisan bread 5 minutes today. Then my final nonfiction book is by a Vermont author. This is naturally curious by Mary Holland. It's a beautiful look at the season's in Northern New England. It's got gorgeous photographs most of which she took herself and pen and ink style drawings. And makes a beautiful book for browsing with a cup of tea on a chilly day where you don't want to be outside or it's a great reference book too if you have a question you can go quickly look it up. I would also point out I really like how this book is organized it's by months so we know what to expect month by month. What's interesting about what the author has chosen to do is she starts with march and calls it awakening and isn't that true? It goes through the year and ends with February survival don't we all feel that way in February? Another quick know for her this was recently awarded the national outdoor book writers award for best guidebook 2011 so.

Judy.: Great my selection is Chris Bohjalian's new book call the night strangers. A lot going on in this book there are ghosts plane crashes people who survive plane crashes and
people who don't but are still in the book. It spooky but it's a great read and I really enjoyed it. For a complete list of all the books that we've reviewed this afternoon you can write to the Vermont department of libraries at 109 state street in Montpelier 05609. Be sure to include a return address so that in the can return the list two you. If you prefer you can call (802)-828-3261 and ask for the across the fence book list. Thanks so much for being with us. That’s our program for today I’m Judy Simpson we'll see you again next time on across the fence.

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