City of Cannibals by Ricki Thompson  Historical Fiction/Henry VIII/Self-Discovery

Sixteenth-century Tudor England could be a confusing place for anyone. But for sheltered Dell, 16, on the run from her abusive father and their cave home outside London, it is especially daunting. Wary of the city whose inhabitants supposedly eat each other alive, Dell encounters kindly folks, develops her own puppetry skills, and learns about her mother's time in the city. Her fellow Londoners' loyalties are torn between the Pope and King Henry VIII, who, desperate for a male heir, tosses wife after wife aside, causing a rift between church and state. As novice Ronaldo awakens Dell's own sexual desire, she realizes that while the city's citizens may not literally be cannibals, many are misled by their passions and a king intent on perverting the law.

The pitch-perfect period slang and descriptions of bawdy citizens, carelessly spilled chamber pots, poverty, disease, and despair portray a city awash in vulgarity.

Barbara A. Ward
Tallahassee, LA

Cinderella Cleaners: Prep Cool by Maya Gold  Humor/Mystery

Diana and the gang at Cinderella Cleaners are back! Diana has always been curious about how the other half lives and, as a public school student, she is fascinated with the idea of attending an upscale private academy. When a private-school uniform is dropped off at Cinderella Cleaners, she has the opportunity to find out what it would be like.

Diana sneaks into Foreman Academy to find the person who stole her best friend's cell phone. The pressure is on—will Diana be able to convince everyone at Foreman Academy that she is a prep-school student? Will she be able to pass the pop quizzes? Will she be able to handle the mean girls who seem to be out to get her? Will she get her best friend's cell phone back?

This story is a lively, first-person account of Diana's adventures and is a welcome addition to the Cinderella Cleaners series.

Melanie Hundley
Nashville, TN

Compromised by Heidi Ayarbe  Realistic Fiction/Homelessness/Runaways

Maya has spent most of her life on the run. Her father is a con man, and when his schemes go wrong (and they always do), Maya uses what she knows about science to fix them. Then, her father ends up in prison, and Maya is sent into foster care. As things get steadily worse for Maya, she learns that she may have an aunt who might be willing to give her a home. She is not sure the aunt exists but feels that, given her current situation, she should try to find her.

Maya is joined by two unexpected allies on her journey from Reno to Boise. She discovers that the life of a runaway is much more dangerous than she thought. Those scientific rules that she has previously relied on to get her out of difficult situations don't really apply to her (and her friends') struggle to survive.

Melanie Hundley
Nashville, TN

Dead Fred, Flying Lunch Boxes, and the Good Luck Circle by Frank McKinney  Quest/Fantasy/Friendship/Courage

Imagine that you are walking to school with your dad, minding your own business, when you spot a dead fish. Oh, yuck! But wait, this dead fish talks! Ppeekk has just moved to Florida. Her parents are too busy for her, and her new school uniform is itchy. Her life is ordinary and lonely until she picks up a talking dead fish named Fred. Ppeekk's life changes when she is given a mission that can possibly lead to her death. With the help of her new friends, Ppeekk must find the courage to save High Voltage, Fred's kingdom in the sea. But how can such a small girl battle the great and terrible prehistoric shark, Megalodon? With the help of flying lunch boxes, manatees, and a charmed good luck circle, of course. This is a fantastical adventure beyond anything you will ever experience, and one you certainly won't forget.

Kim Coyle
Nashville, TN
Delcroix Academy: The Candidates
by Inara Scott
Mystery/Fantasy

Dancia isn’t the top student, the best athlete, or the most talented artist. She doesn’t mind that her drab clothing and unpopularity make her invisible, because the alternative could be dangerous. Dancia has powers she doesn’t know how to handle. When she sees someone in trouble—car crashes, ... happening to save them, and suddenly, they happen. Letting people into her life, she fears, will only make matters worse.

When Dancia accepts a scholarship to the prestigious Delcroix Academy, she fears she won’t be able to maintain her low profile for long. Will her new teachers find out about her gift? Can she risk making friends and keep her powers at bay? Teen readers will enjoy uncovering the mysteries behind Delcroix Academy in Inara Scott’s The Candidates. Though Delcroix is fictional, Dancia’s struggles to find truth, identity, and friendship inside its gates are engaging and real.

Caroline McCoy
Nashville, TN

Gamer Girl
by Mari Mancusi
Divorce/Games/Friendship

For Maddy Starr, life could definitely be better. After her parents separate, Maddy is forced to move in with her grandmother, miles away from her old school and friends in Boston. Her first day at a new school is filled with excitement as she discovers the school’s computer game, a character design she can learn to change. Yet, if Maddy can change the game, she learns, then she can change herself. In this blend of virtual and real life, Maddy is able to find herself, gain confidence, and finally stand up to the haters. Teens of all ages will enjoy watching Maddy’s transformation, which includes humor, real-life conflicts, and even a bit of romance.

Marlowe Brandt
Nashville, TN

Early to Death, Early to Rise
by Kim Harrison
Supernatural/Mystery/Angels
Harper Teen, 2010, 228 pp., $16.99

Madison Avery is back in the sequel to Once Dead, Twice Shy and is still struggling to figure out how her powers work, what her relationship with Josh will be, and how to keep her father from learning that she’s a Dark Time Keeper. Barnabus and Nakita have worked out a tentative truce as they try to teach Madison how to do her job as Dark Time Keeper. Madison, Barnabus, and Nakita try to prevent a deadly computer virus from being released. You would think that knowing what is going to happen and who is going to do it would help you, but changing someone’s fate is not an easy task. They are sabotaged in their efforts by another Time Keeper and his protege.

Melanie Hundley
Nashville, TN

Going Bovine
by Libba Bray
Illness/Family/Relationships
Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2009, 495 pp., $17.99

Mad Cow Disease? Who gets that? All Cameron wanted to do was get through high school with minimal effort; then he is diagnosed with Creutzfeldt-Jacob (Mad Cow Disease). This diagnosis changes Cameron’s life and his relationship with his relatively dysfunctional family.

Before his illness, Cameron had been reading the story of Don Quixote, and as his illness progresses, he finds himself battling Dark Wizards and Fire Giants. Cameron’s battles, or hallucinations, involve friendship, sacrifice, and adventure as he fights to save the future and understand the connections between his life and the literature he loves.

Melanie Hundley
Nashville, TN
**Hex Hall** by Rachel Hawkins

*Hex Hall* is a witty supernatural comedy. Sophie Mercer discovered she was a witch at age 13. Three years later, she tries to help a friend by casting a love spell that completely misfires; as punishment, she is sent to Hecate (Hex) Hall. Hex Hall is boarding school for problem Prodigums (witches, warlocks, shape shifters, vampires, etc.). By the end of Sophie’s first day at Hex Hall, she has made three powerful (and beautiful) enemies, developed a hopeless crush on a popular girl’s boyfriend, and discovered that there are such things as ghosts. To top off her first day, she discovers that her new roommate is not only the most hated person on campus, she is also the only vampire on campus.

When someone starts attacking students on campus, the only suspect is Sophie’s roommate. Sophie is determined to solve the mystery—in fact, all the mysteries—on campus.

Melanie Hundley
Nashville, TN

**How I, Nicky Flynn, Finally Get a Life and a Dog** by Art Corriveau
ISBN: 978-0-8109-8298-7

Nicky Flynn is almost 11 when his world capsizes. Mom and Dad divorce and sell his suburban home. Mom rents a one-bedroom dumpy apartment in a seedy section of Boston, and he starts sixth grade in a new school. He is sure his mom is lying about why his dad isn’t seeing or calling him.

Mom brings home Reggie, a guide dog who didn’t make the grade, and Nicky comes to rely on the German shepherd. Nicky lies, breaks into homes and cars, and commits other misdeeds in order to be with Reggie.

Nicky is in many ways typical of kids who are thrust into situations they don’t understand. He just wants to fit in at school and can’t seem to get anything right. He eventually runs away from home, and his life on the lam is a page-turner for tweens who crave action and adventure.

Judith Hayn
Little Rock, AR

**Incarceron** by Catherine Fisher
Dial, 2010, 448 pp., $17.99
ISBN: 978-0-8037-3396-1

*Incarceron* is a prison... and it is alive. It began as an experiment, a model place where prisoners could be kept away from society but still flourish. The inmates live in cells surrounded by metal forests and rundown cities. Only one person, in all the centuries this prison has existed, has ever escaped.

Finn and Claudia are desperate to escape to the Outside. Most prisoners don’t believe Outside exists, but Finn believes it does. Claudia, the Warden’s daughter, knows it does because she lives Outside. She promises to help Finn escape if he will help her avoid an arranged marriage.

The first book in an exciting new series, *Incarceron* is full of unexpected twists and turns. The escape to Outside is more dangerous than Finn and Claudia could have ever imagined.

Melanie Hundley
Nashville, TN

**Indigo Blues** by Danielle Joseph
Flux, 2010, 240 pp., $9.95

Indigo is facing ultimate humiliation. Her ex, Adam Spade, has penned and sings a #1 song, *Indigo Blues*, for his band Blank Stare. Now the lyrics are everywhere, and the band is rocketing to stardom in New York City. Indigo, however, suffers unwelcome attention back home in her small town high school as she plays out her senior year.

Indigo just wants to live her own life on her own terms: she wants her best friend Cat to offer support; her potential new boyfriend (and popular jock) Tripp to pursue her; her interfering, genius little brother Eli to come up with solutions to her problems; and nasty enemy Kristin to just go away. Indigo faces continual pressure when the whole world accuses her of cruelly breaking Adam’s heart, and she feels like everyone wants a piece of her. Told in alternating viewpoints by protagonists Indigo and Adam, the tale of romance on the rocks unfolds realistically as teenage love clashes with overnight musical celebrity.

Judith A. Hayn
Little Rock, AR

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**Clip & File**

**YA Book Reviews**
**POD**

by Stephen Wallenfels

Science Fiction/Apocalypse/Survival

Namets, 2010, 212 pp. $19.95

ISBN: 978-1-60898-011-6

The discordant sound of screeching metal awakens 15-year-old Josh from his comfortable bed in rural Prosser, Washington. The insistent voice of her mother awakens 12-year-old Meg from her duct-taped car parked in a hotel garage in bustling Los Angeles, California. From those separate wake-up calls, two seemingly disparate narrative strands are wrapped around the appearance of alien speculators in the skies. Josh and Meg are Peals of Death (PODs), alien beings who venture outside and lead humans to heretofore unimagined landscapes

The book plays with form, interspersing rap lyrics with prose. This should appeal to young rap fans, though it is sometimes difficult to really “hear” a rap on the page, and the lyrics can seem so plot-focused that they read more like journal entries than songs. In addition, the story’s central mystery—where does Sean go on those weekend trips, and the crooks can seem so plot-focused that they may read more like journal entries than songs. Despite these flaws, **Secret Saturdays** is a pleasant read with engaging characters to whom many middle schoolers will relate.

**Still Sucks to Be Me**

by Kimberly Pauley

Fantasy/Vampire/Coming of Age

Mirrorstone, 2010, 384 pp., $15.95


Being a teenager is difficult! Parents don't appreciate you. Friends flip out on you for no reason. Your boyfriend is in Brazil, and there is a cute guy in town who is more like you than anyone else. To top it all off, you are moving to LA... That’s Louisiana! Mina’s parents were killed by a rogue vampire when she was four. She was adopted by Callum, the alpha of a werewolf pack. Her life has been one of rules and strict expectations. At 15, she pauses at the boundaries that don’t go far enough. Brynn goes exploring even though she was told explicitly not to do so, and finds Chase. Brynn’s powers are huge: She is a newly turned vampire, able to turn any vampire into a pile of dust. Mina finds out that being all-powerful is not a blessing. She must use both her vampire and all-powerful powers to make things easier, but unfortunately, Mina is a teenager and is now a newly turned vampire. Being a teenager still sets the vampire thing is something worth getting used to.

Kim Coyle

Nashville, TN

Susan Weinstein

Baton Rouge, LA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stringz by Michael Wenberg</th>
<th>The Cardturner by Louis Sachar</th>
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<tr>
<td>Realistic Fiction</td>
<td>Growing Up/Family/Friendship</td>
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Fourteen-year-old Jace Adams is used to moving, but when his mom and he move to Seattle, Washington, to live with his Aunt Bernice, he is miserable. Bernice makes him sleep in the shed out back, he makes some enemies at school, and he can’t surf. His only solace is his cello, but even that enjoyment is threatened as his new orchestra teacher banishes him to last chair. If Jace wants to move back to California, he’s going to need more than the $30–$40 he makes a couple of times each week as a street musician downtown.

Help comes from his new orchestra friends, Marcy and Elvis, who convince him to enter a prestigious competition for young African American and Latino/a musicians. Can Jace win the competition and move back to California? With some likeable characters, Stringz is an enjoyable read. Mild language usage.

Jace win the competition and move back to California? With some likeable characters, Stringz is an enjoyable read. Mild language usage.

Jacqueline Bach
Baton Rouge, LA

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<tr>
<th>The Dead-Tossed Waves by Carrie Ryan</th>
<th>The Half-Life of Planets by Emily Franklin &amp; Brendan Halpin</th>
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<tr>
<td>Loss/Self-Discovery/Apocalypse</td>
<td>Friendship/ Acceptance/ Adversity/ Identity/Love</td>
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A barricade protects the citizens of Vista from the ever-shambling zombies yearning for human flesh. Mary lives in the lighthouse, watching for zombies who may wash ashore. When they do, she decapitates them. The barricade and Mary keep Vista safe from the zombies, also known as the Mudo or the Unconsecrated. When Gabrielle, Mary’s daughter, crosses the Barrier to hang out with her friends one night, her actions have consequences for the entire village.

In this companion novel to *The Forest of Hands and Teeth*, readers learn more about what happened to its heroine, Mary, once she arrived in Vista. After the truth is revealed about Gabry’s past, both women embark on separate journeys through the dangerous forest—Mary to find the truth about those she left behind, Gabry possibly to find her past and her future. The pages are filled with horror, beauty, and spiritual ruminations as the characters are tested constantly.

Liana is an aspiring planetary scientist who loves to kiss. She has even earned a not so welcome reputation. Hank is a boy with Asperger’s syndrome who loves music. The unlikely pair meet and discover that their differences just might make them perfect friends—maybe even something more. The only problem is that Liana has sworn to herself that she won’t kiss anymore boys, and Hank cannot stop talking about music long enough to try kissing a girl. Told from both Liana’s and Hank’s perspectives, the story develops through the questioning that each teenager asks about the other and themselves. With a little help from the planets, Liana and Hank realize that no matter how different they are to everyone else, they still have each other. *The Half-Life of Planets* is an uplifting teen romance story filled with laughter.

Barbara A. Ward
Tallulah, LA

Kim Coyle
Nashville, TN
YA Book Reviews

The Reckoning by Kelly Armstrong
Fantasy/Supernatural/Friendship
ISBN: 978-0-06-166283-6
des
n
In the third book of the Darkest Powers series, Chloe, Derek, Simon, and Tori are still on the run from the Edison Group. The people they’ve run to for help are afraid of the powers the four teens have. Chloe is attacking Derek and the local werewolf pack is attacking Derek. Just when the four teens think things can get any worse, they realize that at least one of the people who are supposed to be helping them has betrayed them to the Edison Group.

The Line
by Teri Hall
Science Fiction/Resistance to Government
ISBN: 978-0-8037-3466-1
The Line takes place sometime in the future where currency is a cred, pictures are called digims, computers are streamers, and the United States is a repressive regime that has closed its borders. Rachel is an adolescent who lives a quiet life on an isolated orchid farm behind the Line, a wall that separates the U.S. from the rest of the world. When Rachel makes contact with someone on the other side of the Line, everything she believed to be true about the Others—the National Border Defense System that keeps outsider away, the Others, and her own family becomes questionable.

The Red Pyramid by Rick Riordan
Mythology/Adventure/Family
Hyperion Books, 2010, 528 pp., $17.99
ISBN: 978-1-4231-1338-6
Since their mother died, Carter and Sadie have been separated. Carter travels the world with their Egyptologist father and longs for a home. Sadie lives in London with their grandparents and longs for adventure. They meet with their great-uncle Jons, who brings them to Egypt for a adventure. The Egyptian gods are waking up, and Set, one of the worst, is after their family. The two siblings begin a journey that will take them around the world as they struggle to save their father, discover family secrets, solve the riddles of the House of Life, and try to understand Set’s desire to destroy their family.

The Midnight Curse by L. M. Falcone
Mystery/Family
Kids Can Press, 2010, 208 pp., $16.95
Charli and Lacey, eleven-year-old fraternal twins experience a preposterous romp and series of supernatural adventures around Blaxton Manor in small Hampton Hollow, England. Great-uncle Jonathan Darcy has died, and they and their single mom have an all-expenses-paid trip to the reading of his will. The fun begins with myriad strange occurrences, mysterious playmates, and exciting visits from addresses. Set, an Egyptian god, and causes a huge explosion. Carter and Sadie are forced to flee. Carter and Sadie learn that the Egyptian gods are waking up, and Set, one of the worst, is after their family. The two siblings begin a journey that will take them around the world as they struggle to save their father, discover family secrets, solve the riddles of the House of Life, and try to understand Set’s desire to destroy their family.

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<tr>
<th><strong>The Sixty-Eight Rooms</strong> by Marianne Malone</th>
<th>Mystery/Fantasy/Adventure</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seventeen-year-old Lennie Walker is content to remain in the shadow of her thespian older sister Bailey. But Bailey’s unexpected death leaves Lennie lost and without purpose. Wrestling with several uncomfortable realizations concerning her assumptions about Bailey’s ambitions, Lennie mourns, leaving messages in various places for her sister. Unexpectedly, Lennie and her sister’s skater boyfriend Toby find solace in each other’s company, and the encouragement of musician Joe helps Lennie return to her love for music. As Lennie learns more about her sibling and her family, she also discovers half-forgotten truths about herself.</td>
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<td>This beautifully written novel about loss, betrayal, healing, and whatever we leave behind is filled with romance, laughter, and beautifully written passages that will resonate long after the pages have been finished. In short, this book will break your heart and then piece it back together again, a testimony to the healing power of all kinds of love.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>The Sky Is Everywhere</strong> by Jandy Nelson</th>
<th>Loss/Self-Discovery/Music/Siblings</th>
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<td>Seventeen-year-old Lennie Walker is content to remain in the shadow of her thespian older sister Bailey. But Bailey’s unexpected death leaves Lennie lost and without purpose. Wrestling with several uncomfortable realizations concerning her assumptions about Bailey’s ambitions, Lennie mourns, leaving messages in various places for her sister. Unexpectedly, Lennie and her sister’s skater boyfriend Toby find solace in each other’s company, and the encouragement of musician Joe helps Lennie return to her love for music. As Lennie learns more about her sibling and her family, she also discovers half-forgotten truths about herself.</td>
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<td>Tallulah, LA</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary</strong> by Jeff Kinney</th>
<th>Film/Comedy/Nonfiction</th>
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<tr>
<td>We fell in love with Greg Heffley in the first <em>Diary of a Wimpy Kid</em> book. Talk of the upcoming movie took the Wimpy Kid to a whole new level—Hollywood. Jeff Kinney takes us on a wild adventure through the making of the <em>Diary of a Wimpy Kid</em> movie. Kinney shows every aspect of how movies are made, from casting to the secrets of making it snow in July. He incorporates both the drawn cartoons and real photographs from the movie. The book gives background information on the actors who play our favorite characters, as well as a guided view into the process of turning the beloved book into a film. <em>The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary</em> is a wonderful companion to the books and the movie. One suggestion: make sure you read the book series before reading <em>The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary</em> because it gives some plot elements away.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Trickster: Native American Tales: A Graphic Collection</strong> edited by Matt Dembicki</th>
<th>Indians of North America/Folklore/Tricksters</th>
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<tr>
<td>A groundbreaking collection of engaging stories, <em>Trickster</em> is the first graphic anthology of Native American trickster tales. Twenty-one Native American storytellers worked closely with artists to create authentic retellings of traditional stories. Each story represents the cultural experiences of the storyteller, and the accompanying graphics are rich and colorful. Since current research shows graphic novels engage students’ critical thinking through the synthesis of graphics and text, this book is ideal for increasing achievement in reading.</td>
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<td>The book contains a list of contributors and their cultural backgrounds, so students could study different Native American cultures and use this book to enhance their understanding of those cultures. Teachers could use this book to study folklore, establishing patterns and themes students find intriguing. From an ego-driven coyote to the hijinks of wildcat and the hilarity of rabbit’s Choctaw tale, <em>Trickster</em> brings together Native American folklore and graphic novels for the first time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenan Metzger</td>
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<td>Muncie, IN</td>
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Truancy by Isamu Fukui
Speculative Fiction/Action
Tor Teen, 2010, 432 pp., $9.99
ISBN: 978-0-7653-2258-6

Tack lives in a world where school is meant to control and stifle students, and he grows increasingly wary of the oppressive educational system. He shares his annoyance with only two people—his little sister, Suzie, and a mysterious boy named Umasi who doesn't go to school. Umasi tells ... a compelling commentary on contemporary education systems, and the adventurous teen will not be able to put it down.

Marlowe Brandt
Nashville, TN

You Don't Even Know Me: Stories
Relationships/Voice/Identity
and Poems about Boys
by Sharon G. Flake
ISBN: 978-1-4231-0014-0
Disney/Jump at the Sun, 2010, 195 pp., $16.99

This highly readable collection amplifies the voices of urban teens as they maneuver through their city streets, facing the unique challenges that teen males encounter in today's world. The 14 poems and 9 short stories remind readers that their assumptions about the young African American male are inaccurate. Issues such as dying young, suicide, drug and alcohol use, family breakdown, harsh realities of a mother leaving home, and other difficult choices concern teen boys and girls. This collection of raw, honest poetry and short stories speaks to the experiences of today's urban male—his experiences in schools and the community at large. The poetry and stories are powerful and moving, and will speak to a wide audience.

Barbara A. Ward
Tallulah, LA

Voices of Dragons by Carrie Vaughn
Fantasy/Adventure
ISBN: 978-0-06-179894-8

You believe in dragons? In this alternate history novel, Kay Wyatt lives on the border of the human world and Dragon. The human world has cell phones, school, the Internet, and other typical teen worries. Dragon has, well, dragons. In Kay's world, dragons and humans have a peace treaty that keeps each on their side of the border.

Kay goes on a solo hike and is rescued from an accident by Artegal, a dragon, who wants to practice his human speech. The two become friends and, when the tentative peace is broken, must rely on each other to survive.

Melanie Hundley
Nashville, TN

Publishers who wish to submit a book for possible review should send a copy of the book to:
Melanie Hundley
1021 Delmas Ave.
Nashville, TN 37216-3630
To submit a review for possible publication or to become a reviewer, contact Melanie Hundley at melanie.hundley@Vanderbilt.edu.