

## AUDIOVISUAL REVIEW

uses a reader-response approach that involves a group of young readers from Tenafly, New Jersey who read and discuss his books, demonstrating sincere involvement with his work. One of the students, David Tobias, visits Paulsen at his ranch in New Mexico. We see them riding to the site of *Canyons* and discussing events in various Paulsen books. There are cuts to the sites of some of his stories, including a ride on a sled with a team of dogs. The author remarks that dogs take one back to a more primitive life, that "running with dogs is like dancing with winter." One of the exceptional qualities of this video is the use of scenery to match settings the author has evoked in his stories. Viewers are given a greater insight into the match of nature and person that has given us such poignant and powerful adventures.—*Jane Anne Hannigan, Columbia University, NY*

**Trumpet Video Visits: Mem Fox**, videocassette, color, 18 min. with tchr's. guide. Trumpet Club, 1992. #440-86334-1. \$14.95.

*PreS-Gr 2*—Mem Fox writes and illustrates stories for a very young audience, and in this video children listen to both a teacher and Mem Fox herself read some of her special tales. The cuts between the children in the United States and Fox in Australia are a bit forced as are the cuts to the animals in the Australian park reserve. Fox appears almost hyperactive in some portions of the film which detracts from the beauty she has created in her stories. Good closeups of the pages of her books with detailed examination of some of the stories are well done. *Koala Lou* is a perfect interaction of the story and the audience, with the kids reciting the last line with joyous abandon. Mem Fox reveals that it is not the story of her relationship with her daughter but actually about her relationship with her mother. Her emphasis on "410 measly little words and 49 rewrites over two years" in creating a book may create some awe and even trepidation in young people. Some of Fox's facial expressions are a bit overdone from the adult perspective but might be successful with young children. *Possum Magic* is used as an example to emphasize the importance of using indigenous foods in a story. Although the emphasis on food works in the book, the imitative sequence of Mem Fox seeking the same foods in a Stateside store is weak. This presentation does not do justice to the brilliant talent of the subject.—*Jane Anne Hannigan, Columbia University, NY*

## LITERATURE

**Poet: Helen Harrington**, videocassette, color, 12 min. with tchr's. guide. Prod. by Bixler Inc. Dist. by Bullfrog Films, 1991, 1992 release. #1-56029-442-6. \$150 (Rental: \$25). Preview avail.

*Gr 7 Up*—Viewers meet a contemporary poet and experience her work in this brief video. Harrington, an 84 year old Iowa farmer and poet, shares her



Paulsen talks with a young fan in *Trumpet Video Visits: Gary Paulsen (Trumpet Club)*

philosophy of life, her inspiration, and her craft. Interspersed with her comments are eight of her poems, softly and eloquently read to simple guitar music and a visual accompaniment of wintry country landscapes. This is a quality production in which a contemporary poet's works can be appreciated not only for the uplifting thoughts but for the visual beauty of nature that has inspired them. According to Harrington, she has been "captivated by so much, and reacquainted with beauty." Viewers will surely feel the same. A unique video for public and school libraries with strong poetry collections or for those wishing to build them.—*Marilyn Higgins, Metuchen High School, NJ*

**The Romance of Promise: Modern Poetry**, videocassette, color, 20 min. with booklet of poetry. Prod. by JVM Prods. Dist. by Video-11, 1992. #1-882644-03-4. \$24.95. Preview avail.

*Gr 8 Up*—While Jean and Veryl Rosenbaum read their poems, various special effects and odd camera angles are used in an attempt to enhance the listening experience. What one sees are poorly-lit head shots of the poets reading, intercut with shots of nature subjects (horses, caterpillars) over which the poets' voices are dubbed, and transparent shots of the poets' faces floating over sunsets, desert scenes and falling leaves. The poems suffer from triteness, at times wallowing in sentimentality. Some of the images are wacky as in Jean Rosenbaum's "Service for Two," where the poet touches his date's leg during dinner with a piece of "wined veal." The effect is ridiculous. Even the titles are sophomoric as in "Time," "Embrace the Challenge," and "Timeless Vacuum." Worse still, the grammar in places is just plain bad as in "Timeless Vacuum," where armies "castrate threaten incantations." No amount of jazzy video effects can save lines like, "Leave me/ Know me never" ("Tale of Two Slicks") or "machine people do not care" ("Renewed Surprise"). Those wanting to introduce students to the joy of poetry would do better to stick with e. e. cummings, Emily Dickenson, and Robert Frost.—*Francis Poole, University of Delaware, Newark*

## MASS MEDIA

**Don't Be a TV: Television Victim**, videocassette, color, 15 min. Media Watch, 1993. \$75 (+ \$5 s/h).

*Gr 5-12*—An upbeat rap song, fast moving TV clips, and a personable adolescent narrator keep this video moving at breakneck speed. The pace and use of several young children within segments will make middle school students the major audience. The presentation can be used with older viewers, but they will be turned off by the age of the onscreen participants. All viewers will gain insight into television viewing and become more media literate. The message is that television is addictive, and that viewers can do something to fight back. Segments deal with a variety of issues including TV news, advertising, gender stereotypes, and violence on television. The stereotypes section is especially well done. Several statistics are given throughout the presentation, but they are spoken quickly and without graphics so the audience does not get their full impact. This is unfortunate because they do add to the information presented, especially in the segment on violence. The producers have selected a variety of clips from shows and commercials that aptly reflect the points being made. Because viewers will be familiar with these excerpts they will be attentive to the narrative. Each segment covers one issue and graphics clearly mark the beginning. This enables teachers to stop the tape at the end of a section in order to allow for group discussion. This is a good discussion starter and a jumping off point for further investigation into the world of television viewing.—*Shelley Glantz, Arlington High School, MA*

## MATHEMATICS

**Fractions and All Their Parts, Pt. 1 (The Assistant Professor Series)**, videocassette, color, 23 min. Allied Video, 1992. #0992. \$29.95 (+ \$3 s/h).

*Gr 4 Up*—The first of a three-part series, *Fractions and All Their Parts, Pt. 1* provides three individual lessons covering the topics "What Is a Fraction," "Naming Fractions," and "Finding the Fraction of a Number." Using colorful, concise cartoon-like graphical representations, basic fraction concepts are clearly shown and well described by a friendly female narrator. Especially observant students may be frustrated by one example showing equal fractions using a rectangular piece of paper cut into four "equal parts"—vertically, horizontally and diagonally (the diagonal fourths of a rectangle are not "equal parts" unless the rectangle is a square). Similarly, some viewers may be distracted by the uncommon use of "octopi" as the plural for octopus instead of the generally accepted term "octopuses." The presentation includes some humor (e.g., an illustration for finding "the fraction of a number" declares "...Fred the fish who has given birth to nine new