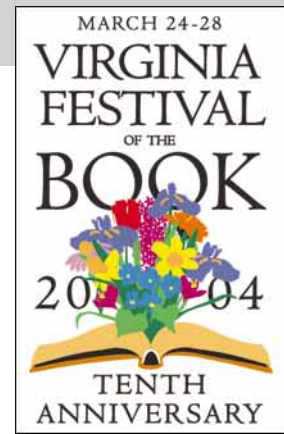


VABooks!

February 2004

***Just Us Women* by Jeannette Caines; *Castaways: Stories of Survival* by Gerald Hausman; *Surviving Jamestown: The Adventures of Young Sam Collier*, recommended by Susan Coleman**

A program of the Virginia Center for the Book at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the "VABooks!" column suggests books for Virginians to read in common. This month, Susan Coleman—director of the Center for the Book—recommends three pieces of children's literature by authors participating in the tenth annual Virginia Festival of the Book. We hope that individuals, book groups, families and neighbors will read and discuss VABooks! selections.



We often think of books and reading as journeys – journeys of discovery and revelation moving us from one vantage point to another. For children, storytime is an imaginative walk into new landscapes. Some are familiar places; others are new and exciting – even a little daunting. These three books for children and youth are a small sampling of stories about journeys that families can take together reading about others to learn about themselves.

Just Us Women, written by Jeannette Caines and illustrated by Pat Cummings, is a seemingly simple book of an aunt and niece who decide to take a trip from New York City to visit family in North Carolina. The two plan not for making scheduled stops and being on time, but rather they plan for the unexpected and the unanticipated without anyone in the car saying "Oh no! We're not stopping again!" Through their journey, we learn that those ordinary times are the ones that become the extraordinary memories we keep for the rest of our lives. *Just Us Women* is a Reading Rainbow Book and is a featured selection of Motherhead® and Fatherhead®, suitable for families with children four to eight.

Castaways: Stories of Survival by Gerald Hausman is a book of six different stories about shipwrecked people in various centuries. The stories are based on historical events and old tales and are flavored with Hausman's own experiences with the sea. As those who are ship-

wrecked face both real and imagined dangers, their journeys turn inward and reflective and they begin to understand more about themselves. Hausman draws heavily from his research and work in mythology, folklore, and nature, creating a mix of fantasy and realism that will engage any reader. Because some of the stories may be a little too scary for young readers, this Junior Library Guild selection is best for families with readers at least nine years old.

The final journey recommended for readers this month takes us back home to Virginia and its beginnings. *Surviving Jamestown: The Adventures of Young Sam Collier*, written by Gail Langer Karwoski and illustrated by Paul Casale is a fictional account of twelve year-old Sam Collier, who travels to Jamestown and the New World as a page for Captain John Smith. Karwoski's historical research shows in the details of the novel, which is enhanced by the illustrator's drawings of maps and key events. Through young Sam's eyes, the reader takes a new look at the excitement and the hardship encountered by the colonists. And more importantly, the author explores the impact of the colony upon the Native Americans and presents them as the complex and varied people they were. *Surviving Jamestown* has been selected by the Virginia Foundation Center for the Book as recommended middle school reading for the 400th anniversary of the founding of Virginia in 2007.

At the 2004 Virginia Festival of the Book, March 24-28, author Jeannette Caines will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award; additionally, authors Gerald Hausman and Gail Karwoski will make several appearances at area schools. All three will be signing books at the March 27 StoryFest. For more information, visit the youth program pages on vabook.org.

Virginia Festival of the Book

145 Ednam Drive • Charlottesville, VA • 22903-462
434.924.3296 • vabook@virginia.edu • <http://www.vabook.org>