

# LIVING

Crossword	4
Out of the attic	4
School menus	8

# E

**Get Your Best Deal at ECU**  
 NOT A MEMBER? CHANCES ARE YOU QUALIFY!  
 Call 800-999-2328  
 or visit [www.eastmancu.org](http://www.eastmancu.org)

**NCUA**  
**EASTMAN CREDIT UNION**  
*It's Your Money*

Kingsport Times-News

Sunday, February 6, 2005

# 1 school, 35 years, 300 students

## Douglass School served black children, youth of Kingsport prior to integration

By LEIGH ANN LAUBE  
lalaube@timesnews.net

**W**hen Benny Banner opens one of his yearbooks from Douglass High School, he falls silent, seemingly whisked back to his youth. He turns page after page, remembering the students and faculty of Kingsport's only high school for blacks.

Banner was one of about 300 students who graduated from Douglass in its 35-year existence.

The last all-black class of Douglass High School graduated on June 8, 1966. By September 1966, Douglass was closed, and the Kingsport school system was completely desegregated.

...

In the early 1900s, black children in Kingsport were educated at the Oklahoma Grove School, which would later be called the Robert E. Lee School. The school building was in terrible condition and, in 1919, the Kingsport Board of Education announced plans to build a new school for the blacks.

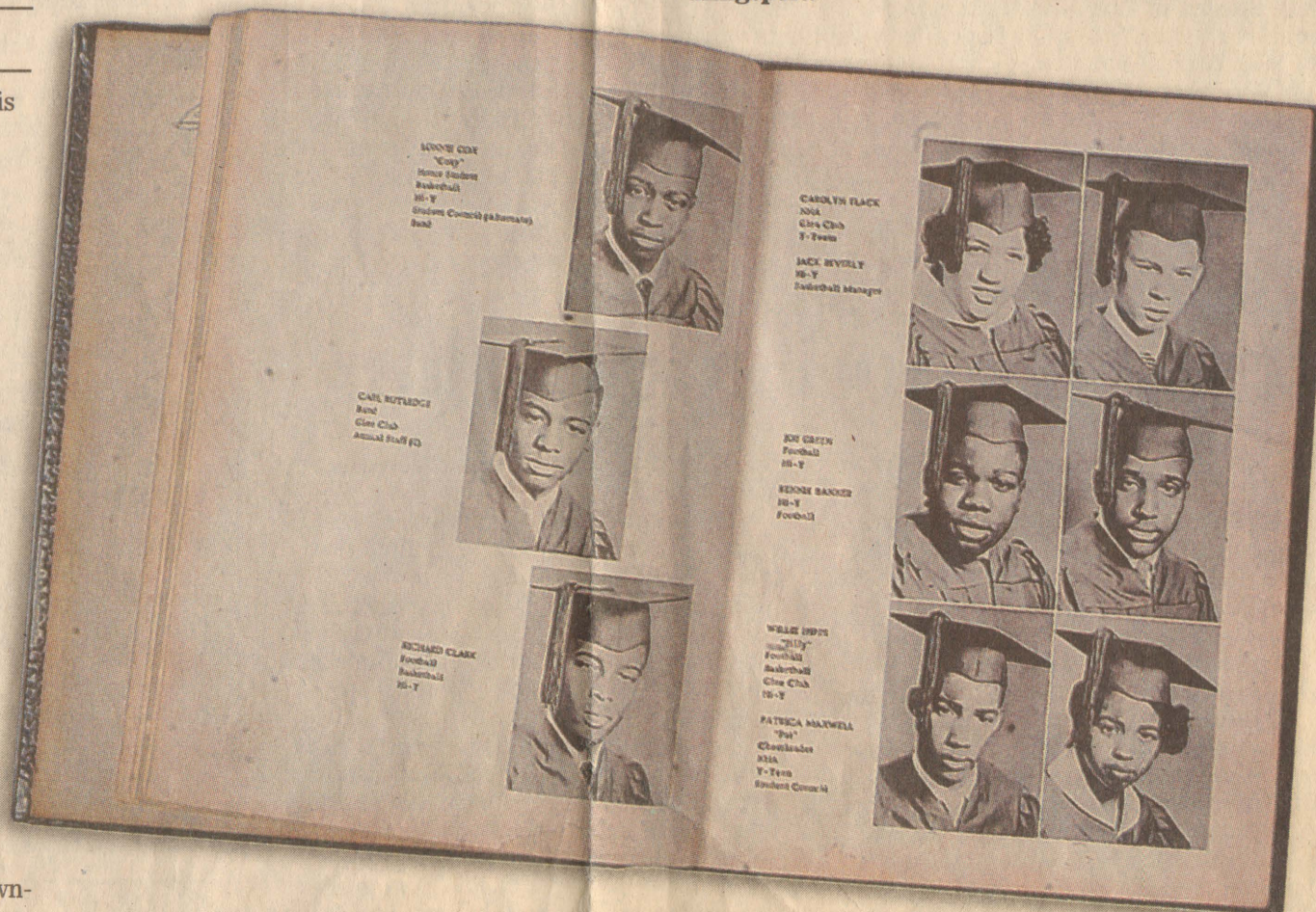
The black community waited nearly another decade before a contract was awarded to build the new school, which would house kindergarten through high school students. Named in honor of Frederick Douglass, one of the foremost leaders of the abolitionist movement, the two-story structure was built on the corner of today's Center Street and East Sevier Avenue in downtown Kingsport.

Albert H. Howell was hired as the first principal of the school. His wife was hired as a teacher, along with Bessie French and Janie Early.

Banner, one of nine children, started kindergarten



The first Douglass School was built at the corner of Center Street and Easter Sevier Avenue in downtown Kingsport.



Benny Banner (right-hand page, right column, middle photo) is one of 300 students who graduated from Douglass High School during its 35 years of existence in Kingsport. This photo is from his senior year yearbook.

## ON THE SHELF

# Kids find best kind of love

By SAMANTHA CRITCHELL  
Associated Press Writer

Forget the traditional trappings of Valentine's Day: Children don't want flowers, chocolate and diamonds. Instead, they want wholehearted adoration.



That's just what they'll get in "I Love You Through and Through" (Cartwheel/Scholastic, \$8.95, ages up to 3).

The rhyming-text book by Bernadette Rossetti-Shustak

and illustrated by Caroline Jayne Church is one of many new ones that sandwich hugs and kisses between their covers.

It's true that Ann Estelle, the aspiring artist in Mary Engelbriet's "Queen of Hearts" (HarperCollins, \$15.99, ages 4-8), does enjoy the occasional candy heart, but her true love on Feb. 14 is the box that holds her valentines. She made that box with loving hands — and a whole lot of glitter, glue and feathers — and she's very proud of it.

But Ann Estelle also learns that giving away something you love to people you love can be even more rewarding.

What would your puppy want for Valentine's Day? One little boy thinks he knows: a few extra "treaties" and a chance to lick his "feeties."

The same little boy makes lots of similar well-intentioned promises to friends, family members and pets in "If You'll Be My Valentine" (HarperCollins, \$14.99, ages 3-8) by Cynthia Ryland and illustrated by Fumi Kosaka.

By LEIGH ANN LAUBE  
lalaube@timesnews.net

**W**hen Benny Banner opens one of his yearbooks from Douglass High School, he falls silent, seemingly whisked back to his youth. He turns page after page, remembering the students and faculty of Kingsport's only high school for blacks.

Banner was one of about 300 students who graduated from Douglass in its 35-year existence.

The last all-black class of Douglass High School graduated on June 8, 1966. By September 1966, Douglass was closed, and the Kingsport school system was completely desegregated.

In the early 1900s, black children in Kingsport were educated at the Oklahoma Grove School, which would later be called the Robert E. Lee School. The school building was in terrible condition and, in 1919, the Kingsport Board of Education announced plans to build a new school for the blacks.

The black community waited nearly another decade before a contract was awarded to build the new school, which would house kindergarten through high school students. Named in honor of Frederick Douglass, one of the foremost leaders of the abolitionist movement, the two-story structure was built on the corner of today's Center Street and East Sevier Avenue in downtown Kingsport.

Albert H. Howell was hired as the first principal of the school. His wife was hired as a teacher, along with Bessie French and Janie Early.

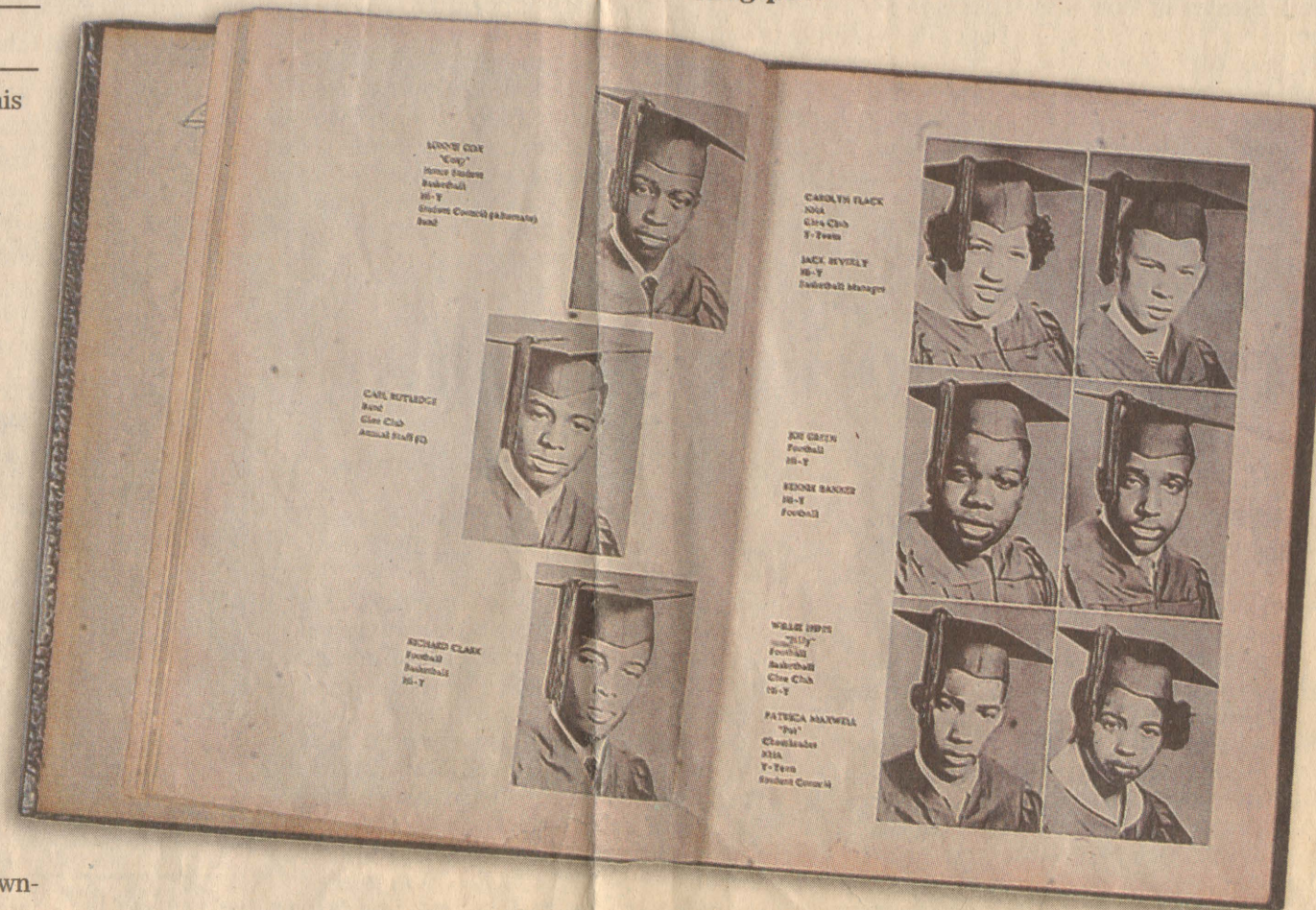
Banner, one of nine children, started kindergarten at what's now called "the old Douglass" in 1933, along with 32 other children. By the time he reached his senior year — in 1955 — that number had dwindled to 13.

By January 1951, Banner and the other students were attending "the new Douglass." Built in the Riverview community, the building today is known as the V.O. Dobbins Center, named for Douglass' second principal.

"The old school was just a cracker box," Banner said. "Our school was so small we had the gym and auditorium in the same area. At the time it was the best we could do."

Although it featured only eight classrooms, a combined gymnasium/auditorium, a library, a home economics room and a cafeteria — serving grades kindergarten through 12th — those who attended believe it was one of the best schools in Kingsport with a second-to-none faculty and administration.

"It was the newest school in Kingsport," said Virgealia "Jill" Looney Ellis. Ellis attended Douglass



**Benny Banner (right-hand page, right column, middle photo) is one of 300 students who graduated from Douglass High School during its 35 years of existence in Kingsport. This photo is from his senior year yearbook.**

through the seventh grade, when she was sent to Swift Memorial Junior College in Rogersville. After four years there, she returned to Kingsport and was hired as secretary at Douglass.

Louetta Stewart Hall was the oldest of four siblings to attend the old Douglass.

"I remember going into school and being very frightened," she said. "The building was so huge and the hallways seemed so dark."

Mrs. V.O. Dobbins taught Hall in the first grade. According to school board minutes, Dobbins earned \$185 dollars a month during the 1946-47 school year.

"I was left-handed and she tried to switch me over," Hall recalled. "I think people thought there was something wrong with me."

Cora Cox, who was recognized as Tennessee's Teacher of the Year in 1997, was the girls basketball coach as well as Hall's second grade teacher.

"I asked her if she was going to try to switch me over," Hall said.

Cox told Hall she didn't care what hand she wrote with as long as she got her work done.

Principal Dobbins, Ellis said, can be credited with starting the free lunch program at Douglass, where enrollment never exceeded 400 students.

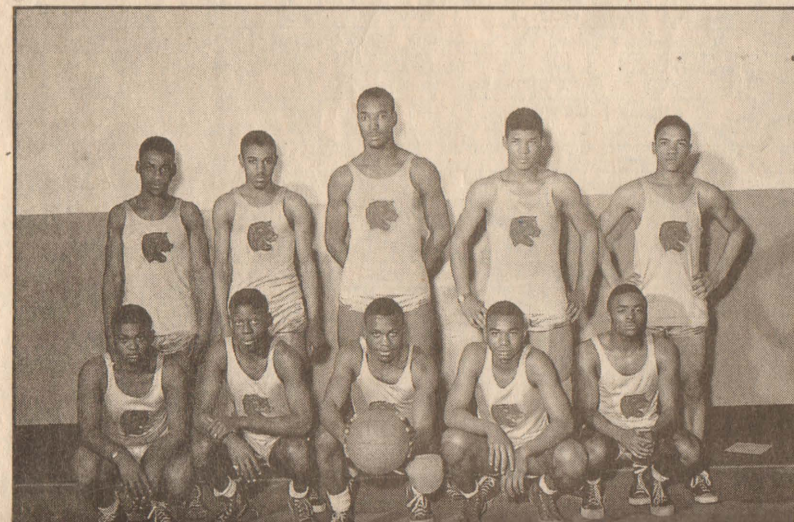
"He raised vegetables and the mothers helped him can the food to feed the kids in winter," Ellis explained.

Increasing enrollment in the old Douglass school in the late 1940s forced the school board to again consider building a new school for blacks. The new Douglass school was to be located in a new community development for blacks called Riverview.

Although some argued that the Riverview site was a dried-up riverbed — with swampy areas that absorbed odors and pollution from nearby industries — the city of Kingsport leased 10 acres from Eastman Kodak to build the school and construction began.

"When it was being built, my friends and I would go

Please see WE, page 2E



**The Archives of the City of Kingsport has only a few mementos related to Douglass School. Among those are these photos of the boys' and girls' basketball teams from the late 1940s. A photo of another girls' basketball team is featured in the 2005 Archives calendar. City archivist Brian Wilson would like to have any photos, yearbooks or papers related to Douglass High School that for-**

stead, they want wholehearted adoration.



That's just what they'll get in "I Love You Through and Through" (Cartwheel/Scholastic, \$8.95, ages up to 3).

The rhyming-text book by Bernadette Rossetti-Shustak

and illustrated by Caroline Jayne Church is one of many new ones that sandwich hugs and kisses between their covers.

It's true that Ann Estelle, the aspiring artist in Mary Engelbriet's "Queen of Hearts" (HarperCollins, \$15.99, ages 4-8), does enjoy the occasional candy heart, but her true love on Feb. 14 is the box that holds her valentines. She made that box with loving hands — and a whole lot of glitter, glue and feathers — and she's very proud of it.

But Ann Estelle also learns that giving away something you love to people you love can be even more rewarding.

What would your puppy want for Valentine's Day? One little boy thinks he knows: a few extra "treaties" and a chance to lick his "feeties."

The same little boy makes lots of similar well-intentioned promises to friends, family members and pets in "If You'll Be My Valentine" (HarperCollins, \$14.99, ages 3-8) by Cynthia Ryland and illustrated by Fumi Kosaka.

Eloise makes her own valentines, too, and while she's delivering them around the Plaza Hotel, she spreads a special kind of love as only the slightly mischievous Eloise could do. (She gets away with painting on the walls and sticking her finger in a cake.)

In "Love & Kisses, Eloise" (Little Simon, \$3.99, ages 4-8), based on Kay Thompson and Hilary Knight's famous



character, the hotel-dwelling little girl even puts a smile on grouchy Mr. Salomone's face. She also manages to put many chocolates in her mouth.

Puns are delivered inside "Be My Valentine, Amelia Bedelia" (HarperCollins, \$6.99, ages 6 and up) by Herman Parish and illustrated by Lynn Sweat.

The wind carries away the list of people Amelia is supposed to invite to a Valentine's Day party, so she trades her bonnet for a detective hat and tries to deduce the intended recipient by the words on the cards.

Surely, if the card says "You stole my heart," Amelia would be looking for a policeman, and if the card says "Are you my sweetie pie," Amelia should call on the baker. It's an interesting group that ends up at the party and, in the spirit of the holiday, become fast friends.

"A Recipe for Valentine's Day: A

at what's now called "the old Douglass" in 1953, along with 32 other children. By the time he reached his senior year — in 1955 — that number had dwindled to 13.

By January 1951, Banner and the other students were attending "the new Douglass." Built in the Riverview community, the building today is known as the V.O. Dobbins Center, named for Douglass' second principal.

"The old school was just a cracker box," Banner said. "Our school was so small we had the gym and auditorium in the same area. At the time it was the best we could do."

Although it featured only eight classrooms, a combined gymnasium/auditorium, a library, a home economics room and a cafeteria — serving grades kindergarten through 12th — those who attended believe it was one of the best schools in Kingsport with a second-to-none faculty and administration.

"It was the newest school in Kingsport," said Virgealia "Jill" Looney Ellis. Ellis attended Douglass

through the seventh grade. She was sent to Swift Memorial Junior College in Rogersville. After four years there, she returned to Kingsport and was hired as secretary at Douglass.

Louetta Stewart Hall was the oldest of four siblings to attend the old Douglass.

"I remember going into school and being very frightened," she said. "The building was so huge and the hallways seemed so dark."

Mrs. V.O. Dobbins taught Hall in the first grade. According to school board minutes, Dobbins earned \$185 dollars a month during the 1946-47 school year.

"I was left-handed and she tried to switch me over," Hall recalled. "I think people thought there was something wrong with me."

Cora Cox, who was recognized as Tennessee's Teacher of the Year in 1997, was the girls basketball coach as well as Hall's second grade teacher.

"I asked her if she was going to try to switch me over," Hall said.

Cox told Hall she didn't care what hand she wrote with as long as she got her work done.

Principal Dobbins, Ellis said, can be credited with starting the free lunch program at Douglass, where enrollment never exceeded 400 students.

"He raised vegetables and the mothers helped him can the food to feed the kids in winter," Ellis explained.

Increasing enrollment in the old Douglass school in the late 1940s forced the school board to again consider building a new school for blacks. The new Douglass school was to be located in a new community development for blacks called Riverview.

Although some argued that the Riverview site was a dried-up riverbed — with swampy areas that absorbed odors and pollution from nearby industries — the city of Kingsport leased 10 acres from Eastman Kodak to build the school and construction began.

"When it was being built, my friends and I would go

Please see **WE**, page 2E



**The Archives of the City of Kingsport has only a few mementos related to Douglass School. Among those are these photos of the boys' and girls' basketball teams from the late 1940s. A photo of another girls' basketball team is featured in the 2005 Archives calendar. City archivist Brian Wilson would like to have any photos, yearbooks or papers related to Douglass High School that former students would like to donate.**

### SAVE TIME AND MONEY

## Woman uses cell phone to reach out and touch others

**Dear Heloise:** When I was in college, I was friendly with an elderly nun who worked there. We kept in touch, and this past year she became ill and was in a NURSING HOME before she passed away. I went to visit her and asked if there was anything I could do for her, anything she needed.

She mentioned some old friends she would like to call who lived across the country. I got the phone numbers and brought my cell phone to her in the nursing home. Each Saturday she was able to call her friends, and shortly before she died, she was able to say goodbye. Some of these friends she had known for 75 years!

What I thought was a simple thing to do, and did not cost me anything, ended up meaning the world to her. I learned this at her funeral. Apparently, when someone would come to visit her, she told the person about the cell-phone calls and



Hints from Heloise

how much they meant to her. Many people at her funeral told me the same! — Becky, via e-mail

P.S. I called these ladies to let them know she had passed away, and one has since adopted me as one of her own granddaughters! It's been great!

Becky, this is a touching tale with a happy ending. For others, phone cards would make a good gift for people in a similar situation. One note: Be sure it's a reputable company in case there's a problem with the card. — Heloise

**Wide, clear tape**

**Dear Heloise:** Here are a couple of hints I think your readers will like:

- To prevent moisture from damaging instructions on insecticide or plant-food containers, place wide, clear, sticky tape around the container, and all information will be easy to read.

- Wide, sticky tape wrapped around a paint can (except the top) will help if any paint spills over the sides. It is easily wiped off immediately with a dry cloth. — Mary M. Hogan, Seaman, Ohio

### Encourage reading

**Dear Heloise:** Use comic strips for reading skills. The pictures encourage youngsters to read the story and learn "sight words." Youngsters will become more eager to tell about the story. — C.M., Meridian, Miss.

Encouraging children to read is vital,

and starting them out by looking at the comics is a marvelous way to begin. For the record, I enjoy starting my day by glancing at the funnies ... and always get a chuckle. — Heloise

### Address book

**Dear Heloise:** I use a blank-page book for an address book. These are sold in any stationery store. Every few pages, I use a marker to put the letter in the right-hand corner. At the end of the book, I have lots of room to put directions to various homes and businesses. This stays in my car and provides useful information. — Bonnie Manning, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Mail a money-saving or timesaving hint to Heloise, P.O. Box 795000, San Antonio, Texas 78279-5000, fax it to 210-HELOISE or e-mail Heloise@Heloise.com.

too, and while she's delivering them around the Plaza Hotel, she spreads a special kind of love as only the slightly mischievous Eloise could do. (She gets away with painting on the walls and sticking her finger in a cake.)

In "Love & Kisses, Eloise" (Little Simon, \$3.99, ages 4-8), based on Kay Thompson and Hilary Knight's famous



character, the hotel-dwelling little girl even puts a smile on grouchy Mr. Salomone's face. She also manages to put many chocolates in her mouth.

Puns are delivered inside "Be My

Valentine, Amelia Bedelia" (HarperCollins, \$6.99, ages 6 and up) by Herman Parish and illustrated by Lynn Sweat.

The wind carries away the list of people Amelia is supposed to invite to a Valentine's Day party, so she trades her bonnet for a detective hat and tries to deduce the intended recipient by the words on the cards.

Surely, if the card says "You stole my heart," Amelia would be looking for a policeman, and if the card says "Are you my sweetie pie," Amelia should call on the baker. It's an interesting group that ends up at the party and, in the spirit of the holiday, become fast friends.

"A Recipe for Valentine's Day: A Rebus Lift-the-Flap Story" (Little Simon, \$6.99, ages 3-7) by Marion Bauer with art by Jennifer Herbert has all the ingredients for a sweet story: There's a pair of lovebirds, cupid, ribbons and lace, and lots of boys and girls who don't mind sharing their pizza and don't get too upset when one pulls the other's hair.

"I Love You! A Bushel & A Peck" (HarperCollins, \$15.99, ages 3-6) is Rosemary Wells' cartoonish version of the Frank Loesser song from the 1950s musical "Guys and Dolls." This time the happy couple is two chicks who stick together no matter what their farm friends are up to.

"You Are Special, Little One" (Scholastic, \$7.99, ages 3-5) by Nancy Tafuri is about the Mamas and Papas in the forests and the fields who love their little ones unconditionally and who preach uniqueness as a gift.

Mommy Cat and Mommy Mouse are among nature's creatures who shower their kids with kindness in "Mama Loves You" (Scholastic, \$6.99, ages 3-5) by Caroline Stutson. The bond that's illustrated with John Segal's drawings will look familiar to moms snuggled up to their boys and girls reading this book.