

# Operation Clean Sweep

By Darleen Bailey Beard

Published by Farrar Straus Giroux, Inc.

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Genre: Historical Fiction

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## Darleen Bailey Beard



\*Picture from [www.darleenbaileybeard.com](http://www.darleenbaileybeard.com)

- \*Darleen Bailey Beard is the award-winning author of several books for kids, including Operation Clean Sweep, which has been nominated for four state book awards; The Flimflam Man, which was chosen as a "Best Book of the Year" by Bank Street College and turned into a play at the La Jolla Playhouse in La Jolla CA; Twister, which received starred and boxed reviews; and The Babbs Switch Story, which won the Oklahoma Book Award and the Gamma State Author Award. Her next book will be released in Fall 2009 . . . Darleen has a degree in Professional Writing from the University of Oklahoma and appears in school author visits, festivals, and conferences throughout the U.S. She enjoys reading, gardening, and traveling. She lives in Norman, OK, with her two children, a poodle, and a tankful of fish. Check out her fun web site at: [www.darleenbaileybeard.com](http://www.darleenbaileybeard.com)
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## Other books written by Darleen Bailey Beard:

- Twister
- The Babbs Switch Story
- The Flimflan Man
- The Pumpkin Man from Piney Creek

## Annotation

- It's 1916 and women haven't get been given the vote nationally, but a few states and territories have allowed them to vote...In Operation Clean Sweep, Darleen Bailey Beard writes about a young man named, Cornelius who's mother is nominated to run for Mayor of Umatilla, Oregon. Not only is it out of the ordinary for a woman to run for a public office, but to "Corn," his mother is running against his father...the incumbent.
- This book of historical fiction, is based on a true story from Umatilla, Oregon where it focuses on real historical events from the 20th century. In the story, Corn is in conflict with the realization of the 20<sup>th</sup> century political views. As the reader of the story, one can plainly see that after many conversations and insights with his mother, he slowly changes his opinion about women and their place in politics.

## Booktalk

- What would you think if your mom decided to run for a public office position that your dad already occupied? Twelve year old Cornelius Sanwick is not sure what to think. In this genre of historical fiction, Corn's mom, Flora, has decided to secretly run against his father for Mayor of Umatilla, Oregon. In 1916, only a few states would allow women to even vote let alone run for Mayor! This story is based on actual events that brought attention to Umatilla, Oregon and women's suffrage. If you like to read stories based on actual historical events, you should read this book to find out what happens in the election!

## Characters:

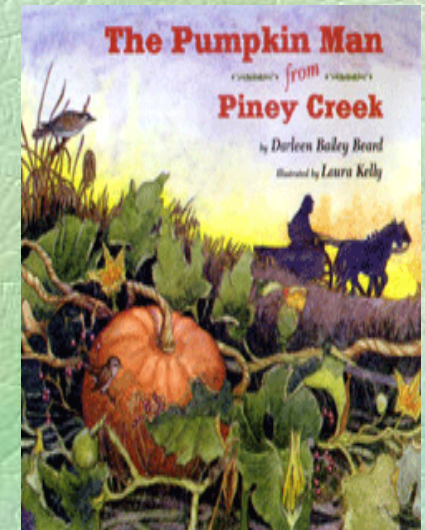
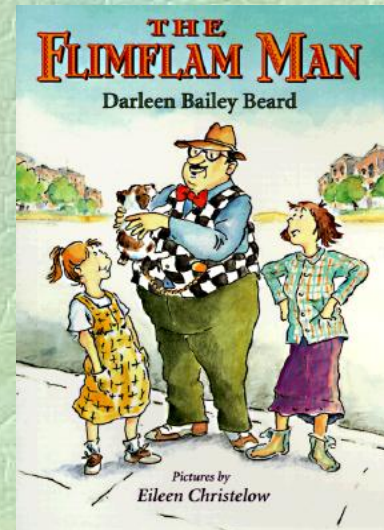
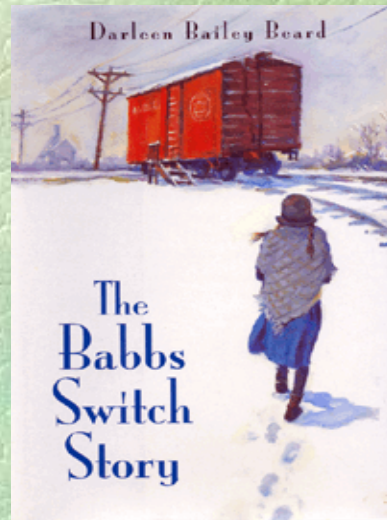
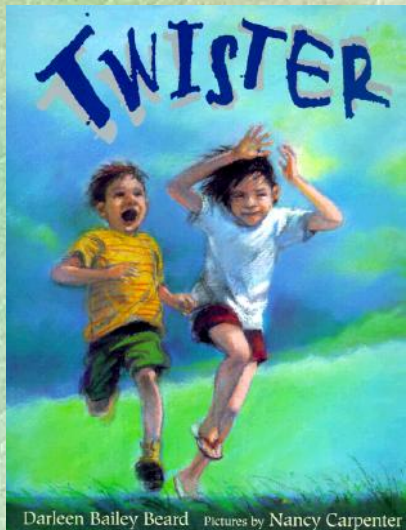
- Cornelius Sanwick "Corn" is an 11 year old boy and is the narrator throughout the story. He is a very wise child and loves History class.
- Flora is Corn's mother and is nominated to run for mayor against her husband.
- Frank is Corn's dad who is the incumbant mayor and is always complaining about his job.
- "Sticky Fingers Fred" is a pickpocket who is stealing from the citizens of Umatilla, Oregon.
- Otis "Oatmeal" is also an 11 year old boy. He is Corn's best friend and is always measuring things with his tape measure.
- Birdine is an 11 year old girl with read hair and freckles. Corn has a crush on her.
- Daisy is Corn's infant sister and loves to pull hair.
- Aunt Lola is Corn's aunt. She is a member of the "suffragists." She helps out with Corn's sister Daisy.

## Conflict and Conflict Resolution

- Internal Conflict: Corn really struggles with the secret of his mom running for mayor. He's not sure if he should tell dad, or remain loyal to mom. It is the year 1916, and in most states women don't even have the right to vote let alone run for a public office.
- Throughout the story, Corn has dialogue with his mother, after being caught eavesdropping during a secret meeting of the women. He decides not to share with his dad, Frank, that his mother is running for mayor. After several discussions, Corn realizes that his mother would really be a good mayor and that a democracy promotes equal rights...including those of women.

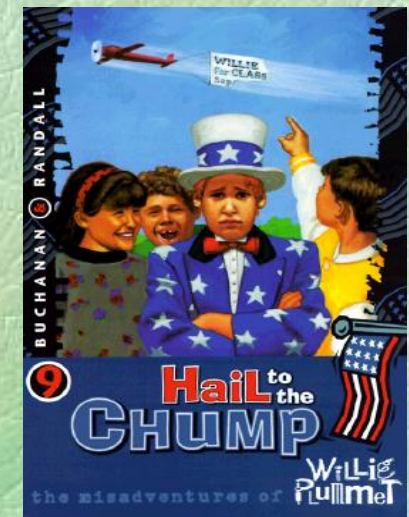
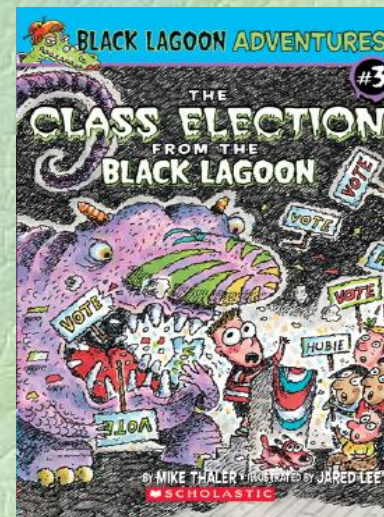
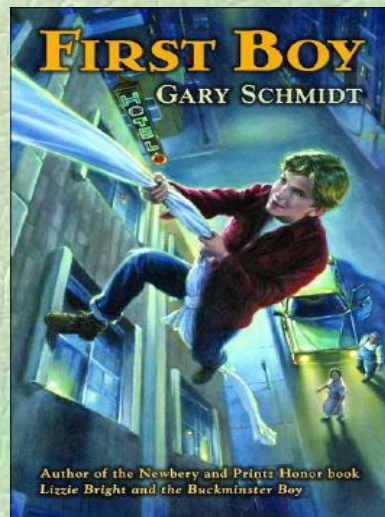
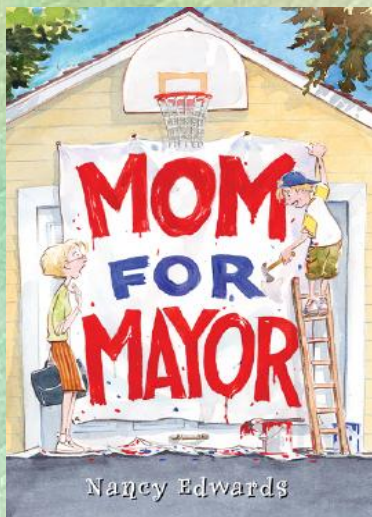
If you like Operation Clean Sweep, you'll *love* these other books by Darleen Bailey Beard:

- Twister
- The Babbs Switch Story
- The Flimflam Man
- The Pumpkin Man from Piney Creek



## If you like Operation Clean Sweep, you'll also *love*:

- Mom for Mayor by Nancy Edwards
- First Boy by Gary D. Schmidt
- The Class Election from the Black Lagoon by Mike Thaler
- Hail to the Chump by Paul Buchanan



# Interest Level and Reading Level:

- Interest Level: Intermediate grades fourth through sixth  
Ages 9-12 years
- Reading Level: third grade, eighth month

# Read Aloud Passages:

## Chapter Four, pg: 23

Corn is laying in bed, and can't stop thinking about what his mother is doing...

*How can mom run for mayor?*

*Women don't run for mayor. Especially a woman whose husband is already mayor... Women are supposed to be mothers and stay at home.*

*They're supposed to cook and clean and make sure us kids do our homework and don't go around repeating four-letter words without feeling guilty.*

*I though about Mom. There's no way she can do dad's job. She's too busy doing her own job here at the house. How does she thing she can do her job and Dad's, too?*

## Chapter Nine, pgs: 60-61

Corn and Otis are spying on a women's meeting that both of their moms are attending...

"They really *are* flying!"

"Oh, come on!"

"All right. They're marching around the room with brooms, sweeping from right to left, saying, 'Clean sweep! Clean sweep! This town needs a clean sweep! I guess they're going to march in the election day parade with their brooms...Oh no!"

"What?"

"Birdine just walked by, and she looked up at the window."

"Birdine? What's she doing in there?"

"Don't know, but she has paint on her hands and face. Must be painting a sign or something. Now she's looking again."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure I'm sure." He ducked down.

Then he peeked back in. "Oh no!"

"Oh no what?"

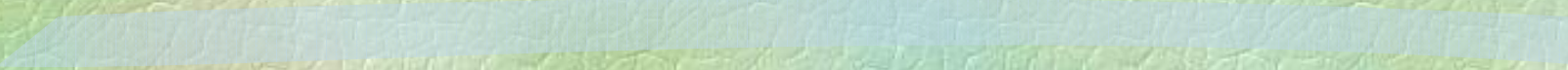
## Setting and Point of View:

- The story takes place in Umatilla, Oregon in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century during the winter months of November and December.
- The story is told in First Person Omniscient. Cornelius is the narrator, and seems to know everything about all the other characters in the story.

## Theme:

- The overall theme of Operation Clean Sweep is the women's right to vote and equal rights for men and women in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Being that this story is based on real historical fiction and takes place in Umatilla, Oregon, Darleen Bailey Beard does a wonderful job portraying the feelings of suffrage from a male perspective. The title itself comes from the sweep of an election where the women are hoping to take over *all* the office positions. At one point in the story, Corn sees many women sweeping with brooms at a secret meeting. This signifies the cleaning up of Umatilla by the use of women in politics.

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