



# Straight*talk*

News For And About The Libraries Of Northeast Nebraska

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Kathy Ellerton - System Administrator/Editor

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## New Youth Book Bag Sets Available



The Nebraska Regional Library Systems have received grant money from the Nebraska Library Commission to purchase book bag sets. Titles were selected based upon book reviews and input from system members. Each set contains 20 books and a CD, if available. Author information and discussion questions are included. Titles available now are:

### **Tornado** by Betsy Byars.

A tornado appears in the distance, and Pete, the farmhand, gathers everyone into the storm cellar. While they wait for the storm to pass, he tells the family about the dog dropped down by a tornado when Pete was a boy. Named Tornado, Pete's pet was no ordinary dog -- he played card tricks, saved a turtle's life, and had a rivalry with the family cat. (Gr. 3-5)

### **Riding Freedom** by Pam Munoz Ryan and Brian Selznick.

The fictionalized account of a little-known heroine, Charlotte Parkhurst, a young girl in the 1800s, who is determined to become a top-notch horse rider, but is stymied because she is a woman. She comes up with a plan so clever and so secretive that almost no one figures it out. Later she becomes a legendary stagecoach driver, and the first woman ever to vote. (Gr. 3-5)

### **Crossing the Wire** by Will Hobbs.

No longer able to grow corn profitably in his Mexican village, 15-year-old Victor, who has supported his family since his father's death, resolves to go to El Norte: "It's time for me to do what men from our village have to do." Lacking the money to secure a guide, he ventures to a border town to wait his chance in the "whirlpool" of recent deportees, newcomers, and grizzled *mojados* ("wetbacks"). (Gr5-up)

### **Sea of Monsters** by Rick Riordan.

Percy, Poseidon's 13-year-old demigod son, is desperate to rescue his friend Grover, captive of the bloodthirsty Cyclops Polyphemus, and to retrieve the healing Golden Fleece. The sheepskin is needed to restore the protection around Camp Half-Blood, the only safe haven for the children of gods and humans, heroes-in-training in our modern world. However, the camp has already been compromised and the quest for the Golden Fleece has been awarded to the bully Clarisse. Encouraged by Hermes, Percy sets off for the Bermuda Triangle anyway with his friend Annabeth and classmate Tyson. (Gr. 5-9)

Note: This is the second volume in the Percy Jackson & the Olympians Series. Both Eastern Library System and Meridian Library System have sets of volume 1, *The Lightning Thief*, available for checkout.



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## 10 "STOP" Signs on the Road to Board Recruitment

We spend so much time talking about how to recruit, that we thought it was time for the flip side - the top 10 signs that your board is NOT ready to recruit.

If your board has one of these signs, we would recommend you reconsider recruiting new board members. If your board shows more than one of these signs, stop immediately! It's time to do some major readjustment before bringing anyone new into the mix.

Here they are - the Top 10 Signs of Recruitment UNreadiness:

### Accountability:

If the board doesn't understand that it is not the director but the Board that is in the box at the top of the organizational chart, you are not ready to recruit. Being in that top box means accountability for everything that happens in the organization. If your board doesn't understand that the buck doesn't stop with the director but with the board, then recruiting should be the furthest thing from your minds.

If the board doesn't understand that it is ultimately accountable, and doesn't understand how to put that accountability into practice, you are not ready to recruit.

### Micro management:

If your board micromanages, you are not ready to recruit. Some boards see micro management as the road to accountability. Some see it as a detriment, but still can't seem to stop. Micro management is the opposite of accountability. True accountability is proactive and preventative, while micro management is reactive and fear-based. And recruitment will only perpetuate that.

### Dysfunctional Board:

If you are hoping new board members will finally fix whatever problems your board has been having, you are not ready to recruit. From poor attendance to bickering and feuds, to the countless other issues boards face, adding new board members never solves those problems. It just brings more people into the morass, to endure and potentially exacerbate those problems.

Regardless of what issues your board is dealing with, if you think recruitment will solve your board's woes - you are not ready to recruit.

### Board Giving:



If your board has no policy requiring board members to donate to the organization to the best of their means, you are not ready to recruit. This is NOT a fund raising issue. This is a living-by-example issue. If the board doesn't believe the organization is worth investing in, why should a donor? How can we ask others to give generously when we haven't done so ourselves?

With a giving policy in place, prospective board members will know what is expected of them BEFORE they join the board, and before a donor puts them on the spot by asking, "Has all your board given to the organization?"

### Board / Staff Relations:

If the board's relationship with the ED isn't great (ok, it stinks), or there are hard feelings between the board and staff overall, you are not ready to recruit. When this critical relationship is not working well, it is just plain dumb to bring on new board members until you get to the heart of what is not working in the existing relationship.

Problems between the staff and the board are almost always symptoms of something larger - usually a lack of understanding / focus on the organization's vision or its values system. Until you have at least begun to address those deeper issues, you are not ready to recruit.

### Director as Recruiter

If your Director is the one doing most (or all) of your board recruitment, you are not ready to recruit. Look at the organizational chart. Do you really want your Director hand-picking his/her boss?

If the CEO is your board's main recruiter, then your board likely has far more problems than you might suspect. You are definitely not ready to recruit.

### Organizational Planning

If the organization doesn't have a plans for how it will impact the community and plans for how it will ensure it has the capacity to create that impact, you are not ready to recruit. If you have plans, but the board has no clue about the status of those plans, you are not ready to recruit. Your organization's plans are your answer to the big questions - Why are we here? What are we trying to accomplish for the community? If the board can't answer those basic questions, then what exactly is the board doing?

If the board doesn't understand that "ensuring that the organization is making the community a better place" is one of their primary areas of accountability, the board is not ready to recruit.

### No Board Policies:

If you don't use your bylaws and board policies to guide the board's work (do you even have board policies?), you are not ready to recruit. Does the board have term limits, or can someone be on the board forever? Is it clear what types of actions could get someone thrown off the board, and what the process would be for removing them? Without policies and procedures to guide board expectations, you are not ready to recruit.

If you are thinking this couldn't happen to your board, you might be surprised at some of the bad (continued on page 10)



## Census Bureau Produces First Comprehensive Atlas in More Than 80 Years

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then the U.S. Census Bureau's new Census Atlas of the United States speaks volumes about how the nation's population and housing characteristics have changed over the years. The atlas, with more than 700 full-color maps, is the first general population and housing statistical atlas published by the Census Bureau since 1925.

Featuring more than 300 pages and weighing about 7 pounds, the atlas presents data from 1790 through 2000. It is arranged by topic and grouped into three general themes — who we are, where we come from and what we do. Most maps feature county-level detail for the United States and Puerto Rico.

"The Census Atlas of the United States is an invitation to spend several hours considering the characteristics of our country," said former Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon. "These maps do not merely offer graphic representations of the facts and data. They reveal the relationships among our nation's people and the states, cities and counties where they have chosen to live. In short, the book tells the story of our nation — its past, present and future."

Census Atlas of the United States is available on the Census Bureau Web site <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/censusatlas/>



A print copy of the Census Atlas can be purchased from the Government Printing Office online bookstore at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>

## 2007 Nebraska Children's Agriculture Books of the Year

**Where Does Food Come From?** and **Husker Numbers** are the Nebraska Farm Bureau Ag Promotion Committee's 2007 Children's Agriculture Books of the Year.

**"Where Does Food Come From?"**, by Shelley Rotner and Gary Goss, is a photo essay that teaches children in kindergarten through third grade that the source of their food is not the supermarket. The book takes a look at a variety of children's favorite foods and traces them to their source.

**Husker Numbers**, by Rajean Luebs Shepherd, uses numbers to give an entertaining and educational travelogue of Nebraska's history, geography, symbols and places to fourth and fifth graders.

Publishers across the nation submitted 37 books for review. The selection committee included elementary teachers Molly Williams (lower elementary grades and English as a second language) and Jo Conrad (third and fourth grade); Ag Promotion Committee members Mary Ann Rickertsen and Rebecca Graham; Ann Masters, a Nebraska Department of Education administrator; and Nebraska Agriculture in the Classroom Coordinator Ellen Hellerich. Each voted for the books she thought deserved the honor.

"Husker Numbers is another great book by Rajean Shepherd," Hellerich said. "This is a book that takes you on a 'numbers' adventure across the state. It ranges from the importance of honeybees to cattle grazing in the Sandhills." The Ag Promotion Committee will donate a copy of each book for County Farm Bureau Learning Barns.



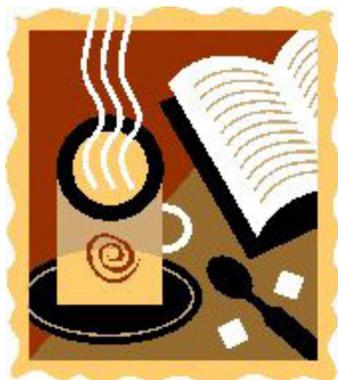
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Books, I found, had the power to make time stand still, retreat or fly into the future.  
~ Jim Bishop ~

**Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends with Sally Reed, Executive Director, Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA)**

When: March 17, 2008 3:00 p.m. CT, 2:00 p.m. MT

Where: At a computer located right in your own library

Free Distance Learning Event from FOLUSA and the Nebraska Library Commission

Invite members of your Friends Group and other library supporters to come together to learn about:

- Increasing membership in your library friends group
- Friends as advocates and financial supporters

Effective Friends groups are invaluable for raising money, promoting the library, and engaging in advocacy. In this session, Sally Reed will help library supporters and library staff work together to make sure that Nebraska library Friends groups are growing and active.

The Nebraska Library Commission recently purchased memberships in Friends of Libraries U.S.A. (FOLUSA) for all Nebraska public libraries to ensure that their library staff, Friends, Trustees, and Foundations can take advantage of FOLUSA services to enhance fund raising, advocacy, and public awareness.

Register now for this training supporting library Friends, Foundations, and Boards of Trustees at the Nebraska Library Commission Website, [www.nlc.state.ne.us](http://www.nlc.state.ne.us), click on Library Training, search on Sally Reed.

**Registration Deadline: March 13, 2008**

Please note:

- Presented online using Centra Live eMeeting software
- A live presentation accessible from your own computer via the Web
- Audio is provided via Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) using a microphone
- Access to a telephone is not required
- To hear the presentation, use a computer with a sound card and speakers
- To ask questions and participate in discussion, use a microphone

Please see the Nebraska Library Commission Website, [www.nlc.state.ne.us/training/online.html](http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/training/online.html), for detailed technical requirements and access instructions.



### CHECK YOUR CALENDAR

March 18 - **Basic Skills: Organization of Materials** at Lifelong Learning Center, NECC, Norfolk at 10 am.

March 19 - NLA Paraprofessional Spring Meeting via videoconference at

March 25 - **Basic Skills: Organization of Materials** at Lifelong Learning Center, NECC, Norfolk at 10 am.

March 25 - 29 - **PLA 12th National Conference** at Minneapolis, MN. For more information, go to: [www.placonference.org](http://www.placonference.org).

April 10 - A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Library, **Spring Colloquium 2008**, Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln. For more information, contact Brenda at 1-1-800-288-6063 or Kathy at 1-800-627-7884.

April 11 - **"Trends, Fads or Folly: Spotting the Library Trends That Really Matter"**, College of DuPage at 11am.

April 18 - Author **Ben Mikaelson** will present at St. Boniface Elementary in Elgin and Plainview Elementary Schools.

April 19 - **Midwest Technol-**

**ogy Education Expo**, Civic Auditorium, Omaha.

April 25 - **"Spelunking or Serendipity: Discovery in the Catalog"**, NLA TSRT (Technical Services Round Table) Spring Meeting, Leadership Center, Aurora.

May 9 - **Tools of Engagement: Attracting & Engaging Library Users**, Library Challenges & Opportunities 2008, College of DuPage, begins at 11am.

May 9 - **"Meeting the Library & Information Needs of Nebraska's Diverse Populations"**, NLA College & Univ. Section Spring Meeting, Bellevue University. Keynote speaker is Julie Todaro, president of ACRL.

May 21 - **Northeast Library System Board Meeting** at

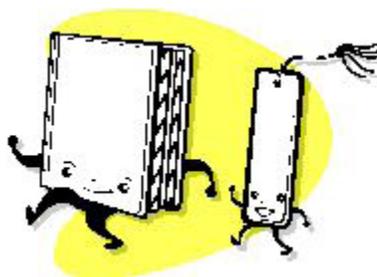
Filters may be a huge interference problem for you and your patrons, but you can make the most of what you have with work by being proactive instead of reactive. Article includes tips on how to deal with your filtering software and contains a partial listing of filtering software programs.

**Youth, Public Libraries, and the Internet: Why Youth Do Not Use the Public Library** by June Abbas, etc. Public Libraries, Jan/Feb 2008, pp. 80-85.

Researchers surveyed over four thousand teenagers to discover their reasons for not using the library. Reasons include: prefer to use the Internet, not liking to return things, don't like to read, and the public library is too far away.

**"Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers 2007"**, VOYA, February 2008, pp. 488-491.

Need something new to catch your middle school reader's attention? Check out this listing of thirty titles that include realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy and science fiction. There is something here for every type of reader including the high/low reader.



### NEW @ NLS

**"Those Interfering Filters! How to Deal With the Reality of Filters in Your School Library"** by Cindy M Schmidt, Library Media Connection, March 2008, pp. 54-55.

### Northeast News

Dollar General recently awarded a \$1,000 dollar grant to **Wayne Public Library** for improving their EZ reader collection. Congratulations!

Kathy Jacobs, **South Sioux City Public Library** Director, recently accepted the position as director of the Yankton Community Library. Congratulations Kathy and Northeast Nebraska wishes you all the best in your future endeavors.

"Let's Go to the Beach!" is the spring story hour theme at the **Hruska Memorial Public Library** in David City.

The Friends of the **Lied Randolph Public Library** will once again have their spring rummage sale on April 4th and 5th. Stop by and check out the goodies as proceeds from the sale will help fund our summer reading program.



It was a 'buggy' day at this year's Summer Reading Program Workshop.





## Online Slide Presentation Software

Can't afford Powerpoint? There is online slide presentation software available. Give it a try and you'll never go back to Powerpoint.

### Google Presentations

[docs.google.com](https://docs.google.com)

Google Presentations, the search engine giant's new Web-based presentation software, engenders the confidence that all things Google seem to inspire, along with the very nice folder and filing capabilities of Google Docs. Google continually refines its products, so one can expect the same with Presentations, which is currently quite spartan, offering only basic slide-show capabilities. While you can import existing projects, insert images, and integrate themes, it's missing a slew of features, including clip art, drawing, transition effects, audio, and exporting to PPT files.

### ThinkFree

[www.thinkfree.com](http://www.thinkfree.com)

ThinkFree has a decidedly commercial feel, although you can accumulate up to 1GB of personal storage before being charged. But their model of porting traditional office software to the Web for a fee has the advantage of coming with tech support. However, it's a bit more complex than other Web-based programs. For starters, loading ThinkFree Show is more onerous than simply opening a browser window. And to use all of ThinkFree Show's features, your computer must run certain software and at adequate speed. Once in the program, ThinkFree looks very much like the Microsoft version it is intended to replace and is the only online program I tested that offers slide transitions. Still, ThinkFree lacks the ease of use one expects of a 2.0 program.

### Zoho Show

[show.zoho.com](http://show.zoho.com)

While both Google Presentations and Zoho Show provide a chat feature while displaying a project, Zoho does it one better, allowing users to embed their project on a blog or Web site. This feature alone merits attention, but there's more. While, like the other programs mentioned, it lacks the ability to export to any format other than HTML, create page transitions, or add an audio track, Zoho Show offers great features: a robust set of shapes and symbols, included clip art, slide notes, video embedding, a slide-sorting view, and a decent font library. However, Zoho plans to charge for nonpersonal use sometime in the future. So it's difficult to wholeheartedly recommend putting your life's work there.

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### **ASPCA Announces Henry's Book Club**

ASPCA recently announced the formation of Henry's Book Club, developed by ASPCA Humane Education experts for bookworms aged 5 through young adult.

The club is named in honor of Henry Bergh, who founded the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1866. Born to a wealthy family and appointed by President Lincoln as a diplomat to Russia before starting the ASPCA, Bergh was a familiar figure on the streets of New York, donning a top hat and elegant attire while watching out for abuses against animals.

Each month two books will be featured on the ASPCA website ([www.aspc.org/henrysbookclub](http://www.aspc.org/henrysbookclub)) along with discussion questions.

### **2008 Edgar Award Nominees Announced**

The Mystery Writers of America has announced the nominees for the 2008 Edgar Awards. They are:

#### **Best Novel:**

- \* Christine Falls by Benjamin Black
- \* Priest by Ken Bruen
- \* The Yiddish Policemen's Union by Michael Chabon
- \* Soul Patch by Reed Farrel Coleman
- \* Down River by John Hart

#### **Best First Novel By An American Author:**

- \* Missing Witness by Gordon Campbell
- \* In the Woods by Tana French
- \* Snitch Jacket by Christopher Goffard
- \* Head Games by Craig McDonald
- \* Pyres by Derek Nikitas

#### **Best Paperback Original:**

- \* Queenpin by Megan Abbott
- \* Blood of Paradise by David Corbett
- \* Cruel Poetry by Vicki Hendricks
- \* Robbie's Wife by Russell Hill
- \* Who is Conrad Hirst? by Kevin Wignall

#### **Best Critical/Biographical:**

- \* The Triumph of the Thriller: How Cops, Crooks and Cannibals Captured Popular Fiction by Patrick Anderson
- \* A Counter-History of Crime Fiction: Supernatural, Gothic, Sensational by Maurizio Ascari
- \* Deviance in Contemporary Crime Fiction by Christiana Gregoriou
- \* Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters by Jon Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower and Charles Foley
- \* Chester Gould: A Daughter's Biography of the Creator of Dick Tracy by Jean Gould O'Connell





(continued from page 3....)

behavior we have witnessed from otherwise rational people - behavior that seems to only show itself when they find themselves on a board. Without consistently applied board policies and procedures, it is more likely that your own odd sets of circumstances could knock your board (and your organization) for a loop.

#### No Board Training / Orientation:

If the board has no orientation program, and new board members get little more than their board manual and perhaps a tour of the facility, you are not ready to recruit. Without training, how will that new board member know what is expected of him? And how will the organization be assured that their new board member is capable of guiding the organization?

If new board members will not be well-enough informed about the organization from the moment they are permitted to vote, you are not ready to recruit until you can teach them to do the job. And if the organization cannot ensure that every single board member understands how to read the financials (not just those on the finance committee), so that every board member can be accountable for decisions that require financial understanding (like approving the budget, approving new staff positions, etc.), then you are not ready to recruit.

#### No Recruitment Criteria or Process:

This will sound ridiculously simple, but if you don't know what you are looking for in a board member, or you don't know how to qualify prospects once you find them, you're not ready to look! If you are willing to take anyone who is willing to serve, you are not ready to recruit. And if your whole recruitment process is to ask someone "Will you serve?", and if they say "yes," they're on the board - well you are nowhere near ready to recruit.

If your board doesn't have a solid recruitment process that includes not only applications and interviews, but first and foremost knowing what you are looking for, then you are not ready to recruit.

#### So if we shouldn't recruit, what's a board to do?

The answer sounds simple, but it takes dedication and yes, it takes work. And that is to address the root cause of whichever of these 10 items describes your organization. If it is the lack of a solid board training program, develop one. If it is a lack of board policies, work to create those policies.

If the problem is that the board isn't functioning well, then perhaps they need to consider that the only training they've ever received for being a "director on a library board" has been to sit on other boards, where they also likely received no professional training. Maybe it's time to train the folks who are accountable for everything the organization does - no, not just accountable for the money, but more importantly, accountable for making sure the community is a better place because your organization exists. Does your board know how to do that? Are they willing to concede that they may need to learn?

This approach may take a lot more effort, but it works. At best, your organization's problems will simply remain. At worst, the new recruits will feed into whatever isn't working, as the organization becomes more and more dysfunctional. Our libraries exist to make the community a better place to live. Our communities are counting on us. We owe it to them to address our problems head-on, and to become the very best we can be.



## **10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism**

from The Council on Interracial Books for Children

Both in school and out children are exposed to racist and sexist attitudes. These attitudes - expressed over and over in books and other media - gradually distort their perceptions until stereotypes and myths about minorities and women are accepted as reality. The following ten guidelines are offered as a starting point in evaluating children's books.

### 1. Check the Illustrations

**Look for Stereotypes.** A stereotype is an over-simplified generalization about a particular group, race or sex, which usually carries derogatory implications. Some infamous (overt) stereotypes of blacks are the happy-go-lucky, watermelon-eating Sambo and the fat, eye-rolling "mammy"; of Chicanos, the sombrero-wearing peon or fiesta-loving, macho bandito; of Asian Americans, the inscrutable, slant-eyed "Oriental"; of Native Americans, the naked savage or "primitive brave" and his "squaw"; of Puerto Ricans, the switchblade-toting teenage gang member; etc.

**Look for Tokenism.** If there are racial minority characters in the illustrations, do they look just like whites except for being tinted or colored in? Do all minority faces look stereotypically alike, or are they depicted as genuine individuals with distinctive features?

### 2. Check the Story Line

**Standards for Success.** Does it take "white" behavior standards for a minority person to "get ahead"? Is "making it" in the dominant white society projected as the only ideal? To gain acceptance and approval, do persons of color have to exhibit extraordinary qualities - excel in sports, get As, etc.?

**Resolution of Problems.** How are problems presented, conceived and resolved in the story? Are minority people considered to be "the problem"? Are the oppressions faced by minorities and women represented as related to social injustice? Is a particular problem that is faced by a racial minority person or female resolved through the benevolent intervention of a white person or male?

**Role of Women.** Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or are they due to their good looks or to their relationship with boys? Are sex roles incidental or critical to characterization and plot? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?

### 3. Look at the Lifestyles

Are minority persons and their setting depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavorably with the unstated norm of white middle-class suburbia? If the minority group in question is depicted as "different", are negative value judgments implied? Are minorities depicted exclusively in ghettos, barrios, or migrant camps?

### 4. Weigh the Relationships Between People

Do the whites in the story possess the power, take the leadership, and make the important decisions? Do racial minorities and females of all races function in essentially supporting roles?

How are family relationships depicted? In Black families, is the mother always dominant? In Hispanic families, are there always lots of children?



## 5. Note the Heroes

For many years, books showed only "safe" minority heroes - those who avoided serious conflict with the white establishment of their time. Minority groups today are insisting on the right to define their own heroes (of both sexes) based on their own concepts and struggles for justice.

When minority heroes do appear, are they admired for the same qualities that have made white heroes famous or because what they have done has benefited white people? Ask this question: "Whose interest is a particular hero really serving?"

## 6. Consider the Effect on a Child's Self-Image

Are norms established which limit any child's aspirations and self-concept? What effect can it have on images of the color white as the ultimate in beauty, cleanliness, virtue, etc., and the color black as evil, dirty, menacing, etc.? Does the book counteract or reinforce this positive association with the color white and negative association with black?

In a particular story, is there one or more persons with whom a minority child can readily identify to a positive and constructive end?

## 7. Consider the Author's or Illustrator's Background

If a story deals with a minority theme, what qualifies the author or illustrator to deal with the subject? If the author and illustrator are not members of the minority being written about, is there anything in their background that would specifically recommend them as the creators of this book?

## 8. Check Out the Author's Perspective

No author can be wholly objective. All authors write out of a cultural, as well as a personal context. Ch With any book in question, read carefully to determine whether the direction of the author's perspective substantially weakens or strengthens the value of his/her written work.

## 9. Watch for Loaded Words

A word is loaded when it has insulting overtones. Examples of loaded adjectives (usually racist) are "savage," "primitive," "lazy," "superstitious," "treacherous," "wily," "crafty," "inscrutable," "docile," and "backward".

## 10. Look at the Copyright Date

Not until the early 1970s has the children's book world begun to even remotely reflect the realities of a multiracial society. The new direction resulted from the emergence of minority authors writing about their own experiences. Non-sexist books, with rare exceptions, were not published before 1973.

The copyright dates, therefore, can be a clue as to how likely the book is to be overtly racist or sexist. It usually takes about two years from the time a manuscript is submitted to the publisher to the time it is actually printed and put on the market. This time lag meant very little in the past, but in a time of rapid change and changing consciousness, when children's book publishing is attempting to be "relevant," it is becoming increasingly significant.



## THE REVIEWER'S CHAIR

### **The Perfect Nest**

By Catherine Friend

John Manders did the illustrations of this very funny book about a cat that builds a perfect nest to lure fowl to lay their eggs to make him a perfect omelet. Unfortunately he waits a little too long and end up a mommy to three young ones. The best part of this book is it is "trilingual"—words in Spanish, French and "Texan". All kids would love this book with is fun language, text and illustrations.

I recommend it for any library or collection and any age that likes a good, funny storybook. ~~Heather Reid, homeschool parent, Omaha, NE

### **Agnes Parker...Keeping Cool in Middle School**

By Kathleen O'Dell

Agnes is artistic and tries to not make waves in seventh grade. Her friend Prejean resents the mean eighth graders and decides to run for class president to try and change things. She wants Agnes to be her campaign manager. Agnes has fun visiting with Aram and goes to his house for lunch with him

and his mother, who doesn't speak English. She is confused when Aram becomes more friendly. Prejean's parents aren't getting along and separate. Prejean starts getting stomach-aches and doesn't eat much. It comes to a head when she can't be there for the campaign assembly and Agnes has to give Prejean's speech.

This is a nice coming of age story without too much conflict. It would be a good addition for any young adult collection in a public library or school Library Media Center.

~~Claudette Wielechowski, North Platte, NE

### **The Monster Trap**

By Dean Morrissey

An adorable book, The Monster Trap deals with the fear of monsters and things that make noise in the dark. Paddy, the main character, goes to stay with his Pop for a few days. He is sure there are monsters at Pop's place, but he and Pop can't catch them. Finally, Pop builds a smarter, faster trap and they do trap monsters. But Paddy finds out that these monsters are full of fun and not scary at all.

This is a good book for children preschool through early elementary at home or in school.

~~Samantha Bye, Leesville, LA

### **The Adventures of Old Bo Bear**

By Alice Schertle

After his toy bear comes out of the washing machine with an

ear missing and not smelling "right" – a boy takes him outside to play until he looks and smells "right". They have many adventures.

I would recommend this book for school and public libraries for ages 3-5.

~~Joan Chilvers, Pierce, NE

### **Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs!**

By Kathleen V. Kudlinski

Humans have been studying dinosaur bones for centuries. This book shows how scientist's ideas have changed through the years as new discoveries have been made.

This book is an excellent resource to illustrate how new discoveries can change common held scientific beliefs. While this book is about dinosaurs, students can see that common scientific beliefs in other areas could change based on new information.

This book contains a dinosaur discovery timeline and references for further reading. I recommend this book for both public and school libraries for kindergarten through 4th grade.

~~Latricia Olson, Randolph Public School

### **Pajama Light**

By Gale Sypher Jacob

A little girl and her daddy take walks along the seacoast before bed. The story describes their journey in the evening light. This book had great illustra-



tions. It also used words that described every step of their journey.

It is a very calming book. Kids will love the pictures and "descriptive" writing. I recommend this book for school and public libraries for kindergarten through 1st grade. ~~Lara Morrow, Emmet Public School

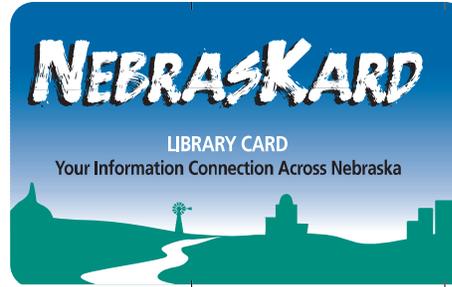
**My Father the Dog**  
By Elizabeth Bluemle

A young boy compares his father's behavior to that of a dog in a fun way.

This book is humorous and has great illustrations to go along with the story. It would be good for teaching comparison. I would recommend this book for lower to middle elementary library. ~~Sharon Kinnan, Oakdale, NE



"You'd find it easier to be bad than good if you had red hair," said Anne reproachfully. "People who haven't red hair don't know what trouble is." ~~Lucy Maud Montgomery



**Customers Benefit From Nebraskard Reciprocal Borrowing**

In July 2001, the Library Commission initiated the voluntary Nebraskard reciprocal borrowing arrangement for Nebraska libraries, through which participating public and academic libraries can permit registered borrowers in good standing to borrow materials from other participating libraries across the state. Nebraska libraries have a long history of sharing resources for mutual benefit and to meet the needs and interests of their users. The Nebraskard program is an extension of those cooperative resource-sharing efforts.

Nebraskard is designed to benefit library customers who need the convenience of borrowing materials from libraries outside their home communities. Libraries report that many of these individuals either do not have library service in their own community, or that they work, shop, or attend school outside their home community. In 2007, Nebraska libraries reported 956 cards issued—either small keychain cards or stickers for the customers' home library cards. Circulation ranged from one library reporting yearly circulation of more than 4,500 items to another reporting only six items circulated.

For more information about the Nebraskard program, including the policies and procedures, frequently asked questions, and a list of participating libraries, see the Library Commission home page, [www.nlc.state.ne.us](http://www.nlc.state.ne.us), and search on Nebraskard. Contact Maria Medrano-Nehls, 402-471-4008 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: [mnehls@nlc.state.ne.us](mailto:mnehls@nlc.state.ne.us) to order key chain tags, stickers, and bookmarks.

**Anne of Green Gables Centennial**

Check out the website for the 2008 celebration in Prince Edward Island, Canada for the 100th anniversary of Lucy Maud Montgomery's most famous novel, 'Anne of Green Gables'. The site features details about celebration events, educational activities, trivia quiz, and biographical information about Montgomery.

<http://www.anne2008.com>



### Travel Web Sites

It's that time of year when your neighborhood backpackers are planning their summer extravaganzas. Have them check out these websites for helpful information.

#### **Backpack Europe on a Budget**

[www.backpackereurope.com](http://www.backpackereurope.com)

Backpackers will find helpful information, frequently updated, on packing, hostels, transportation, and links to other sites.

#### **Beijing 2008**

[en.beijing2008.cn/spectators](http://en.beijing2008.cn/spectators)

The Beijing Olympics official web site's "spectator" section has Olympics ticket reservation details and other trip-planning information. Note: While this site links to the Beijing Tourism Administration's site, [www.bjta.gov.cn](http://www.bjta.gov.cn), for lodging and dining information, prices are not provided, and links (i.e., hotels) are not necessarily in English.

#### **BootsnAll Travel Network**

[www.bootsnall.com](http://www.bootsnall.com)

A well-organized and easy-to-navigate site for independent travelers, with information on airfares, hotels, hostels, and more. You can book some flights and hotels and search rates across numerous web sites.

#### **The Couch Surfing Project**

[www.couchsurfing.com](http://www.couchsurfing.com)

For those looking for alternative (and free) accommodations, this site, run by a nonprofit seeking to create a better world through cultural exchange, allows you to register to offer your couch to a traveler or search for a couch by destination.

#### **Eurocheapo**

[www.eurocheapo.com](http://www.eurocheapo.com)

Valuable reviews of budget European hotels with rate and contact information and maps. Some city guide information is also available.

#### **Eurotrip**

[www.eurotrip.com](http://www.eurotrip.com)

Forum for budget backpacker travel in Europe, with over 17,000 registered users, features rail and flight information as well as hostel reviews. Travelers can also book their trip on this site.

#### **Hostelling International**

[www.hihostels.com](http://www.hihostels.com)

A global booking site for HI member hostels, including family hostels. Also links to rail travel provider Rail International.

#### **Kayak**

[www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)

Started by the founders of Expedia, Orbit, and Travelocity, this excellent search engine looks for the cheapest airfares as well as the lowest hotel, car rental, and cruise rates across 140 travel sites.

#### **RealTravel: Real People,**

#### **Real Advice, Real Experiences**

[www.realtravel.com](http://www.realtravel.com)

An online community for travelers to find and share tips, with information on deals, hotels, and dining as well as forums, guides, photos, and maps.

#### **Travel Beyond Vacations**

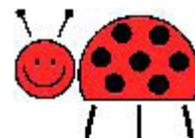
[www.reidsguides.com](http://www.reidsguides.com)

Travel author Reid Bramblett's award-winning trip-planning site, with articles and travel tips organized by destinations and activities. Entries include "12 Steps to Cheaper Airfare" and "Beyond Hotels," listing and describing a variety of nontraditional accommodations.

#### **Travelfish.org**

[www.travelfish.org](http://www.travelfish.org)

Well-organized for travel to Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and Singapore. In addition to maps, weather info, and accommodations (with reviews), there are itineraries. Pricing and value information (i.e., what will \$5-\$10 get you) is very useful.



#### **Free Bug Tracker**

Go to the Chronicle Books website and they have a cute bug tracker to print out from Bob Barner's Bugs! Bugs! Bugs!

<http://www.chronicle-books.com/excerpts.php?isbn=0811822389&store=books>

**The Northeast Library System serves the following counties: Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Butler, Cedar, Colfax, Dakota, Dixon, Holt, Knox, Madison, Merrick, Nance, Pierce, Platte, Polk, Stanton, Thurston, Wayne and Wheeler.**

"When you read a classic you do not see in the book more than you did before. You see more in you than there was before."

— Clifton Fadiman

**Check out our web site at: <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/system/northeast/nesys.html>**



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