

BOOKS TO GROW WITH NEWSLETTER: MAY 2005

EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello! This month we welcome many new subscribers who joined us after learning about the newsletter at the International Reading Association annual conference in San Antonio, Texas. I'd like to take a few paragraphs to tell you more.

The *Books to Grow With Newsletter* brings you a variety of resources each month, including new (and forgotten) books on topics of interest (often, I choose the topics based on the questions I receive at conferences), interviews with interesting people working in the arena of books that can be used to help kids, notice of upcoming events of interest and interaction with each other. Of course, the last only happens if you choose to interact, but please know that I would be happy to include questions, requests for assistance from the group and suggestions in the newsletters. Feel free to email me if you have something you'd like included, at cherylcoon@lutrapress.com.

You may be wondering "who" we are. *The Books to Grow With Newsletter* goes out to hundreds of subscribers, most from the United States but also including folks in Canada and the U.K. What defines us is an interest in children's books and how we can use them to help kids with ordinary developmental issues and more difficult challenges. We are teachers, librarians, school counselors, psychologists, graduate students and more.

Are you aware of the International Reading Association's Special Interest Group (SIG) in Bibliotherapy? It's a resource that includes its own highly informative newsletter as well as the opportunity to hear presentations by others at the IRA meetings. Membership costs \$15/year. If you're interested, contact the Chair and Editor of the newsletter, Dr. Dan Ouzts at danny.ouzs@citadel.edu.

ONLINE CHAT COMING UP!

Also, another way to connect! Connect For Kids, a non-profit based in Washington D.C., sponsors *Talktime Live!*, a bimonthly online discussion series for expert panelists, concerned parents, educators, advocates and policymakers. Questions can be submitted in advance or live. Please join me on June 8, from 1:00-2:00 pm (Eastern Time) when I will be talking about, what else? Using books to help kids! Simply sign on at <http://www.connectforkids.org>.

DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE

I'm delighted to tell you that, beginning this summer, I will be offering a distance learning course: **Choosing and Using Children's Books to Help Kids**. Offered through the auspices of a local university, the course can be taken either for credit or non-credit; credits earned can be used to satisfy professional requirements for continuing education and licensing. If you'd like to know more, please contact me for details at cherylcoon@lutrapress.com.

THIS MONTH'S RECOMMENDED BOOKS

In addition to the books discussed below, I've just posted new book recommendations on the Lutra Press website, at <http://www.lutrapress.com/idea/>.

TITLE: *OH, NO! Where Are My Pants? and other Disasters: Poems*, edited by Lee Bennett Hopkins, illustrated by Wolf Erlbruch. HarperCollins (2005). 32 pages. Ages 2-8.

TOPICS COVERED: first day of school, a mistake in school, when a class pet dies, stage fright, going away to camp, losing a ball game, a bad haircut, nightmares, fears, when your best friend moves, a bad day.

This charming and humorously illustrated book works well for a variety of ages because it covers so many topics at different levels of sophistication. A series of poems captures the feelings kids have when they experience: the first day of school, a mistake in school, when the class pet dies, stage fright, going away to summer camp, a losing ball game, a bad haircut, nightmares, fears, when your best friend moves and a bad day. While some of the poems are stronger than others, all of them offer an opportunity to talk about the experiences and the feelings of the characters. It's also a great entree into trying your hand at writing your own poems about life.

TITLE: *Honeysuckle House*, by Andrea Cheng. Front Street (2005). 136 pages, no illustrations. Ages 9-12.

TOPICS COVERED: best friend moving, new friends, being different, prejudice

Two very different fourth-graders narrate this story: Sarah, a Chinese-American girl who doesn't even speak Chinese and Tina, a newly arrived immigrant from China. Sarah struggles with her feelings of loss about the move of her best friend and with her frustration that teachers and other kids assume that she and Tina have something in common just because of their facial similarity. Tina struggles with adjusting to a new country and to the changes in her own mother, from whom she had been separated for more than a year while her mother made a home for them in the United States. A great opportunity to talk about assimilation and prejudice.

If you have received this newsletter in error or do not wish to continue to receive it, please let me know at cherylcoon@lutrapress.com.