1988

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BYU's THIRD CONFERENCE ON NONFICTION BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

by: Lillian Heil

We have just completed our third conference on nonfiction books for children. For the planning committee there have been both rewards and frustrations since the first one held in 1984.

Rewards take various forms:

1. Excitement about new books as participants told us the most positive appeal of the conference was:
   - The many new book lists of the best nonfiction quantity and quality of book exposure
   - The books on display were 50% of the conference value
   - Actually seeing books for myself
   - Hundreds of nonfiction books available to peruse
   - Becoming familiar with more wonderful nonfiction books
   - Presenters who led me to investigate books I might have missed otherwise

2. Getting acquainted with authors
   - Loved authors in person
   - Writers who explain the hows and whys
   - The authors particularly Jean Fritz and Ivy Ruckman were my favorite part
   - Meeting famous authors has been so enriching to me
   - Authors are great!
   - The many authors were what drew me to the conference
   - Meeting authors in small group sessions
   - The opportunity to talk to them
   - Warmth of guest authors
3. The stimulation of making new friends
   - Visiting with guests
   - Intensity and positive exchange of ideas
   - Helpful people
   - The people and sharing of creative ideas

4. The impact of words well spoken
   - Excellent speakers
   - Great speakers!
   - Authors’ insights
   - Jean Fritz was well prepared and covered a variety of topics well
   - Rosemary Davidson and Bev Kobrin were very informative
   - Bev Kobrin and the clever way she presents in class

5. The new and creative ways to share books
   - Presentations showing ways to use books
   - Learning ways to use children’s books
   - How to use nonfiction in story reading time
   - The opportunity to hear a wide variety of new ideas and ways to share books
   - Ideas that I can use in the classroom

6. The revitalization of the excitement in teaching
   - Enthusiasm
   - Involved us in the learning process
   - Reinforcement of ideas and attitudes
   - Rekindling of enthusiasm for job

7. The shared laughter: as we watched a surprised “mummy” being wrapped with toilet tissue
   (for the book talk on Aliki’s Mummies Made in Egypt)
   - Realized that the young lady with the cage full of hamsters was seriously asking us to adopt a hamster
   - Were surprised into laughter when one participant explained how he used an orange to cool off an overheated carbator
   - None of us will forget how much John Hancock enjoyed being “huzzaed” in the mini play put on by 3 talented dramatists.
8. Frustrations were sometimes positive ones in reverse as participants said:

There weren’t enough books to purchase. (Patty Monson at the bookstore ordered plenty for the May enrollment which was only 50.)
There were participants who wanted to attend more than one small group held at the same time.
There were more people who wanted to go to the luncheons.

However there was pretty unanimous agreement that the auditorium in the Conference Center was too cold. The only one who was warm enough was James Jacobs and unfortunately I asked him if he didn’t think the room was chilly. He laughed and shrugged in disbelief. The planning committee was definitely not frustrated with the increase in attendance. Counting students, the participants numbered 140 and 150 and that’s the biggest group we’ve had.

Excellent suggestions were made for our next conference in 1990.

Exciting illustrations and authors were requested
More science experiments and ideas to use with children
More for junior and senior high school
Section on parents use of nonfiction
Use of media and more media information
Workshops on poetry
Folklore, fairy tales and storytelling
Ideas for teaching social studies and science using trade-books
Reports from University people on recent research
More foreign authors and books about other parts of the world

We don’t promise to meet all these requests (we’re still trying to adjust to the one about having a conference every year instead of every other year), but we will make use of as many ideas as we can carry out. Our weekly planning meets start in September 1988 and we hope to see even more of you in 1990 (and perhaps for a mini rejuvenator in 1989).

For those who weren’t able to come perhaps you’d like a list of books that both Ad Spofford and Bev Kobrin put on their recommended list.


Invention Book by Steven Caney's, Workman, 1985, ISBN 0894800760 $7.95

Life Through the Ages by Giovanni Caselli, Putnam, 1987, ISBN 0448189968 $14.95

The Human Body and How It Works by Giovannie Caselli, Grosset & Dunlop, 1987

The Girl From Yamhill by Beverly Cleary, Morrow, 1988, ISBN 068807801


Large As Life: Nighttime Animals by Joanna Cole, Random, 1986

Go in and Out the Window by Dan Fox (editor), Holt, 1987, ISBN 0805006281 $19.95


From Hand to Mouth by James Giblen, Crowell, 1987, ISBN 069004660X $11.70


Ward Works by Catherine Kaye, Little Brown, 1985, ISBN 0316483753 $7.70

Volcano by Patricia Lauber, Bradbury, 1986, ISBN 0027545008 $14.95

Alphabetics by Suse MacDonald, Bradbury, 1986, 56 p. ISBN 0027615200, $15.95


To Space and Back by Sally Ride and Susan Okie, Lothrop, 1986, ISBN 0688061591 $14.95


There Once Was a Time by Piero Ventura, Putnam, 1987, ISBN 0399213562 $17.95

Venice by Piero Ventura, Putnam, 1988, ISBN 039921531X $13.95