

*Summer's Blueberries* without the pictures?

Nevertheless, storytellers of many and varied styles and tastes will find things they can use in this collection of stories for telling. With each story, the editors give telling time and age suitability suggestions. The names of authors and retellers of tales however are given only on the contents pages.

The three compilers are experienced children's librarians and obviously had a good time searching for and selecting the stories, and they have provided a bibliography of sources. They have also made indexes for authors, title and subjects.

Although the book was not designed for children it could be given to them without a qualm, as it has good-sized print well placed on the page, a colourful firm card cover, and seventeen full page illustrations by Bo Kim Louie for accent.

*S.D. Neill is a professor at the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Western Ontario where he teaches a course on storytelling.*

## The Year of the Child Remembered

*BARBARA J. GRAHAM*

*Hooray for Today*, Fran Newman and Claudette Boulanger. North Winds Press, a division of Scholastic TAB, c1979. Unpaged (c. 50 pp.) \$8.95 hardcover. ISBN 0-590-07623-X.

*Sunflakes & Snowshine*; a Canadian Child's Year, Fran Newman and Claudette Boulanger. North Winds Press, a division of Scholastic TAB, c1977, c1979. Unpaged (c. 49 pp.) \$7.95 hardcover. ISBN 0-590-07622-1.

Special Years come and go, as do the books published to represent them. A few of perennial interest remain; such is the case with *Sunflakes & Snowshine*, published in a revised and expanded version in 1979, and its companion volume, *Hooray for Today*, - both Scholastic's contributions to the International Year of the Child. Two

years later the titles remain in print, suggesting that they continue to find a niche in the libraries of Canadian children.

*Sunflakes*, when it first appeared in 1977, commanded special attention in its paperback format. Doubling as a calendar, the two page spreads of poem and picture could be hung from the wall and changed sometimes twice a month. The sprightly poetry and the vivid accompanying illustrations, although no longer available in calendar format, have continued to be great conversation points for elementary school-aged children and their parents and teachers.

*Sunflakes* has a distinctly Canadian appeal. As the author and illustrator relive the months of the year, the simple rhythmic lines and the lively visual accompaniment reflect a love and enthusiasm for Canada's seasonal changes, at the same time showing what it is like to be a child living in Canada. The introductory poem establishes and celebrates the theme:

... I'm glad that I live  
Where seasons change;  
I like  
My world  
To rearrange!

From that point on, Newman and Boulanger present poetry and illustrations closely aligned to the joy of changing seasons across Canada.

Newman, in her first January poem, begins in a passive mood as she imaginatively portrays the thoughts of a child waking to discover frost pictures on his bedroom window. Following the technique of the imagist, she conjures a distinct visual, even multi-sensory, impression, which expands from early morning darkness to include finally:

... a frozen scene  
lit  
with fiery warmth  
snow buds unfold.

The second January poem shifts to a livelier mood as a child prepares for an action-packed day of skating, skiing, and tobogganing. Boulanger's illustration shows neighbourhood children of all ages gaily sliding down and scrambling up a small snow-covered hill. The boys and girls virtually shout from the page. The sense of fun is reinforced in the short poetic lines, the regular rhythm and rhyme, which conclude with the decision to stay indoors for awhile to heal the bumps and bruises.

As the reader works through the months of February to December, he is regularly surprised and delighted with each new discovery of poem and picture, suggesting the joy of familiarity, and the fascination in differences. Boulanger's illustrations take the young reader on voyages from coast to coast, with stops at forests, lakes, mountains and oceans. He will experience life in the city and country, as well as visits to the circus, games of street hockey, and excursions to the sugar bush. The artist brings a freshness and vitality to her work, which stands well on its own, but at the same time, enhances the accompanying poetry. The bold strokes of her crayon or brush give strength to her portrayal; the vividness and warmth of her colours reflect the activities of her scenes. The Kurelek-like figures are definitely appealing.

Newman's poetry is gentle and sensitive yet full of fun, and eminently quotable. For the most part, it illustrates the simplicity and innocence of childhood; occasionally there is a subtlety which strengthens the imagination. One of the August poems reveals a child's imaginings, as Boulanger pictures a boy inside his tent listening and dreaming:

A Cricket  
is piping out  
his summer trill  
and I,  
lying sleepless in the dark,  
am wondering if  
his grassy tent  
is cool.

*Sunflakes & Snowshine* cannot fail to delight child and appreciative adult who may share the seasonal enjoyment of living in Canada through words and pictures.

*Hurray for Today* has similarities to *Sunflakes*. The books are physically of the same size and design. The double page spreads are repeated, with script on the left page and illustration on the right. The author and illustrator again follow the seasons as this time they describe and celebrate special days of Canadian festivity. Newman's charming verses are now gone, and in their place are brief factual accounts of the days themselves, and equally brief excerpts from a variety of Canadian authors.

Starting with July 1, Canada Day, Newman and Boulanger range seasonally through traditional religious, ethnic and secular celebrations. Holidays as well as special Canadian events have been

chosen. The result is mixed fare, rather idiosyncratic in choices of special occasions and the authors who represent them. Leslie McFarlane combines with John A. Macdonald and a troupe of Brownies to celebrate Canada Day, while Andy O'Brien describes the 1960 Grey Cup game at Vancouver and John Diefenbaker remembers an early Christmas with his brother. The Highland Games, Oktoberfest and Caribana receive equal treatment with Remembrance Day, the Chinese New Year and St. Jean Baptiste Day. One never knows what the next page will bring, and the previous page is always sufficiently appealing to nudge the reader on. However, the equal treatment of each day, necessitated by the format, may result in some distorted perceptions.

The total impact is positive. The young person is made aware not only of the diversity of Canadian culture but also of the oneness of our people who look with pride at the traditions which blend together to make us uniquely Canadian. The factual material could be used for beginning research; it is just tantalizing enough to inspire the curious to search for more. The illustrations again complement the script, giving visual interpretations to the more prosaic or abstract. They deserve and should receive more than a quick glance. There is again a good balance between quiet and lively scenes. The facial expressions continue to provide universal appeal. The colours chosen are for the most part vivid and attractive to children; however, a few are rather dark and lose their effectiveness.

Both *Sunflakes & Snowshine* and *Hurray for Today* are books which may be scanned fairly quickly, yet returned to with pleasure. They should provide special resource materials for teachers, as the basis for all kinds of enrichment activities. Children may be inspired to write and illustrate their own seasonal prose or verse; they may choose other holidays for celebration. However, the greatest fun will be in discovering and rediscovering the catchy phrase and the appealing illustration which somehow capture a child's perception of the life around him.

*Barbara Graham is a School Library Consultant (K-13) for the London Board of Education. She has taught courses in Children's and Young Adult Literature for the Ministry of Education and the Faculty of Education, U.W.O., and is a reviewer for several library publications.*