

a fault, and self-sufficient at least up until the point where baths become imperative. The world they live in is non-sexist to an idealistic degree; Munsch's celebrated *Paper bag princess* is by way of becoming a cult-heroine for the skipping-rope set; and his stouthearted young Jonathan, who could take on a whole subway system and WIN, is not above lending a hand with the housework. Such are the messages Munsch's work delivers, but never in a "messagey" way. Fairness and equality of opportunity are simply the atmosphere, the worldview, within which his cheerful children operate. Munsch has "a talent to amuse," and that is what he does first and best. His are stories for the telling: they come easily to the tongue, and fall pleasantly upon the ear. He understands the childish love of the repeated phrase or nonsense word ("Murmel, Murmel, Murmel"); the magic sequence of events that eager little listeners can gleefully foresee, as when all the harried adults, one by one, try to quell noisy Mortimer and are defeated; the wild exaggeration of seventeen desperate diaper salesmen in hot pursuit of the lady with the baby carriage.

The proof of one's success when telling stories to young children comes when the audience clamours to have a favourite tale told again and again. Robert Munsch's light, bright, popular stories for and about lively, self-confident Canadian kids survive the "Read it again" test as easily as his kids survive dragons, plane wrecks and apoplectic parents. Or whatever new obstacle he invents with which to challenge them next time. . .

*Angela's airplane*, Robert Munsch. Illus. by Michael Martchenko. Annick Press, 1983. Unpaginated. \$.99 paper. ISBN 0-920236-75-8. *The boy in the drawer*, Robert Munsch. Illus. by Michael Martchenko. Annick Press, 1982. Unpaginated. \$12.95 cloth, \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-34-0, 0-920236-36-7. *The fire station*, Robert Munsch. Illus. by Michael Martchenko. Annick Press, 1983. Unpaginated. \$.99 paper. ISBN 0-920236-77-4. *Mortimer*, Robert Munsch. Illus. by Michael Martchenko. Annick Press, 1983. Unpaginated. \$.99 paper. ISBN 0-920236-68-5. *Murmel murmel murmel*, Robert Munsch. Illus. by Michael Martchenko. Annick Press, 1982. Unpaginated. \$12.95 cloth, \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-29-4, 0-920236-31-6.

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## MORE SANTA OFFERINGS

*Santa's odyssey*, Gwen McNab. Illus. Paul Freitag. Initiative Publishing House, 1980. 62 pp., \$8.90 cloth. ISBN 0-88951-017-2. *Santa's own toys*, Evelyn Passegand. Illus. Marie-José Sacré. Annick Press, 1980. 24pp., cloth. ISBN 0-920236-12-X.

If the writers and illustrators of two recent picture storybooks are any indication of a trend, Santa Claus is no longer his old traditional self.

Gwen McNab has written a simple adventure story in which santa appears to be a somewhat muddled and forgetful old body who needs reminding of his purpose, until he is assisted by a complement of fairies, elves, reindeer and one red Saskatchewan rooster who looks strangely like a parrot. Santa is late "one frosty Christmas eve" (shades of Rudolph!) because he cannot find his scarlet hat with the silver bell. When a fairy discovers it, Santa cannot pull himself away from the celebrations even though the hours are passing. Rudolph must remind Santa that it will soon be dawn. Later, stalled and lost in a blinding snowstorm in Saskatchewan, Santa obtains help from a rooster who plots the course to New York. After the goods are delivered, Santa returns to wave at the rooster before going home. He regales his elves and fairies with the night's adventures before sleeping through Christmas Day.

While not providing a very exciting story line, the author creates interest through her rhymes which flow from page to page quite smoothly. Because the rhyme appears in paragraph form, the reader may not be too sure that the rhyme is deliberate until a few pages into the reading. When the rhyme does not end with the page, a problem may be created for the young reader who is still involved with the illustration on the previous page. The language is simple and non-demanding.

The large print and the ample margins are an asset for the beginning reader. The single page illustrations complement the text satisfactorily. One inaccuracy was noted. A fairy finds the hat, but it is an elf who actually gives it to Santa. The black line drawings, with the accompanying reds and pinks, are cartoon-like. Perspective is sometimes distorted for effect. The big red rooster, pink in one illustration, has character. With the exception of the reindeer, other illustrations seem static and child-like. Santa is not overly attractive as an illustration or a character.

*Santa's odyssey* will not replace *The odyssey*; it may, however, find its own niche in a large collection of children's Christmas literature. It works well when read aloud, but the star performer is one big red rooster in Saskatchewan.

Originally published as *Les jouets du père Noël*, this North American translation of an entertaining French language picture storybook is exciting and imaginative. Text and illustration ebulliently separate and combine as the story unfolds in brilliant colour. Neither text nor illustration could survive without the other.

The reader is introduced to a young, rather naive, and child-like Santa, who despite the whiteness of his beard, enjoys chewing bubble gum, swinging his legs from chairs, and eating all kinds of un nourishing sweets. He finds adults and life boring until his mother makes a suggestion: Santa should *make* toys, not just *bring* them to the children at Christmas? Taking his mother's advice and 18 pieces of bubblegum, Santa begins to make toys with which children

can pretend. The toys sing with light and float in colour. When Santa delivers his own toys, children pay little attention to all their other gifts. They are thrilled with the strange and wonderful gifts. But, alas, parents forbid Santa to visit their children again next year. Finally Santa, not giving up, decides to make presents that grown-ups can't see. The idea is a great success. However, children start to act somewhat peculiarly, talking to and playing with things that aren't really there. But no one ever tells the great secret.

The colours are brilliant and vibrant — blues, reds, mauves and purples vie with oranges, yellows and scarlets in whirling blazes of colour and imagination. The book could lead to all kinds of activities for children — at home or in the classroom. It is an exciting experience to read and view.

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#### NOTICE/AVIS

The Canadian Section of IBBY administers the following annual awards:

1. The Frances E. Russell Award which awards a \$1,000 grant annually for purpose of research for a publishable work (book or paper) on Canadian children's literature.
2. The Claude Aubry Award which awards an annual prize to an author, publisher, illustrator, editor, librarian, teacher, or other person who has made significant contributions to Canadian children's literature.

More information can be obtained from: IBBY — Canadian Section, c/o Mrs. Joan Weller, 180 Powell Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 2A3  
or from Irene Aubrey, National Children's Librarian, National Library of Canada.

La section canadienne d'IBBY administre deux prix annuels:

1. Le Prix Frances E. Russell: une bourse de 1000\$ annuellement dans le domaine de la recherche conduisant à un texte publiable sur la littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse.
2. Le Prix Claude Aubry destiné à un(e) auteur(e), éditeur, illustrateur/trice, bibliothécaire, enseignant(e) ou toute Autre personne ayant contribué d'une manière importante au domaine de la littérature canadienne.

Pour de plus amples renseignements: Section canadienne — IBBY, a/s Madame Joan Weller, 180, Avenue Powell, Ottawa (Ontario) K1S 2A3  
ou Madame Irène Aubrey, Bibliothèque Nationale du Canada.

The Canadian Section of IBBY is pleased to announce that the 1983 Claude Aubry Award has been presented to Sheila Egoff in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Canadian children's literature. The Award was presented to Prof. Egoff at "The Republic of Childhood Conference" which was held in her honour in Vancouver this past September.