

Acton library looseleaf



An opinionated homily on how to raise readers.

As librarians we are frequently asked by anxious parents for books that will encourage their offspring to read. Sometimes we are also asked to provide remedial reading assistance. While we are quite capable of dealing with the first request we have always had to refuse the second. Remedial reading assistance is a highly specialized skill—one that we don't possess. In truth, very few children really need that highly specialized skill—most children will learn to read quite capably—just as seeds grow quite naturally—provided they have the right environment.

What is the right environment? Well in most cases it's quite simple:

1. Start by turning off the television set (if you've got the intestinal fortitude)—and this part of the treatment should start long before you are trying to induce reading.
2. Spend as much time as you can with the child looking at books and reading to him. Half an hour of "bed time" story every night is still one of the best settling down ceremonies around.
3. Have lots of books, magazines, newspapers and printed materials in your home—simple familiarity with the printed word from the crawling-around-and-eating-it stage to the make-believe-reading-it stage makes a whale of a difference.
4. Read yourself—children learn by imitation and half of what you want your child to learn about reading is the casual take-it-for-granted attitude toward the art.
5. Relax—don't push, encourage; don't nag, stimulate.
6. Enroll your child in the library story-hour (age 3 & up); give him his very own library card; bring him to the library often and let him browse.

O.K., O.K.—you've got problems, little Johnny isn't reading and he's already in grade two.

Start with step one (above) and work your way through them all. No child is ever too old to be "read-to". You just have to choose the right level. Talk with the child's teacher and try to find out if your child exhibits signs of real functional disorder such as perceptual or visual handicap. Find out what kinds of remedial help are available through the school—DON'T try to teach, drill or rehearse without thoroughly understanding the methods your child's teacher is using. Above all, be patient—children grow at different rates and non-readers suddenly turn into bookworms just when you've given up in despair.

Come to the library for help—we can steer you in the right direction to find books for non-readers, reluctant readers or avid readers. We can also supply story tapes and records for subtle encouragement. Reading clubs during the summer provide continuity and stimulation and a reward at the end.

What does the library do to help parents and junior readers?

First of all our collection is loosely graded into three basic units; so-called picture books, early readers and general juvenile fiction and non-fiction.

In general these units are intended to serve the following kinds of children:

Pre-school non-readers, the read-to and beginning readers will probably start with the picture books. These books are rarely wordless and there is a wide variation in the format but the one unifying element is that the pictures are a major part of the book, intended to tell the child a good deal about the story, even without the benefit of the words. We do have a few really wordless books, some "board" books for the very youngest children and the captivating series by Mercer Meyer about a Boy, a Dog and a Frog and their various adventures.

Beginning readers in the first two or three years of their reading careers will find the Early Reading collection more to their taste. Pictures are still a feature of this group but there is increasing emphasis on words—and especially words in sizes, combinations and quantities that will suit the abilities and attention span of this group. The Dr. Seuss books, the I Can Read series and other similar volumes are found here.

Neither of these collections should be regarded as mutually exclusive and children who are reading should not be discouraged from dipping into the picture collection. Some of our best children's literature is to be found here.

The child well along the road to independent reading will find a wide range of interest and reading levels represented in the general juvenile collection. Depending on the child's individual progress this collection will probably appeal to the grade 4 (or thereabouts) child and up. The library tries to maintain a good collection of the old faithfuls, as well as providing many of the new titles that come out. Chances are if you browse through the junior library you will find most of the favorites you enjoyed as a child.

A word about parental guidance:

A significant number of children's books today deal with subjects that would not have appeared in juvenile literature a few years ago. Even at the picture and Early Reading levels there are books on birth, death, family break-up and other such situations from real-life. Many of these books are not only useful but also often beautifully written and illustrated. Naturally, we do not select books which seem to us to offend against good taste. However, some parents may not wish their children to borrow these books. We will not, for that reason, remove them from general availability; instead we urge all parents to read and interest themselves in what their children are reading, and to provide guidance according to their own standards.

Such guidance may be particularly difficult to exercise with older children. For this age group we have created a "Red label" collection. Books dealing with realistic situations in a more

The **AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP** meets at **St. Joseph's Church Hall** 64 Church E. Mondays at 8 p.m. Information 853-3310 After Hours 853-2504



RED TAIL HAWK, common to this area, is featured in a story by bird watcher Jeff Harvey.

Plan Summerfest at Georgetown park

Summerfest will embrace "a spirit: a feeling of involvement!"

The Halton Hills Arts Council is offering a unique event to the community in the form of a Summerfest on Saturday, June 3, at the Georgetown fairgrounds.

Summerfest will embrace "a spirit: a feeling of involvement" and will help rekindle the flame of community spirit, organizers say.

Summerfest will be a collection of local groups, organizations, service clubs and individuals interested in displaying and selling to the public, while offering a day of pleasure for all the family and community to enjoy.

Organizations that have indicated their interest in participating so far include Acton Citizens' Band, Arts & Crafts of Georgetown, Credit Valley Artisans, Esqueping Historical Society, Georgetown Choral Society, Georgetown Girls Pipe Band,

adult way or those dealing with sensitive subjects will have a red seal applied to the spine. We have deliberately not tagged this collection with any of the usual "young adult" labels. If asked, we will explain the nature of the book, or if about to be borrowed by someone we think too young to assimilate it we might suggest that their parents have a look at it first.

In general terms our philosophy is that, if given enough choice and leeway, children will find their own reading level and if given the encouragement and incentive of attractive, interesting material they will progress with eagerness along the path to reading skill.

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Hawks sometimes first back in Spring

By Jeff Harvey

By the latter stages of February and early March, the first real waves of migrating birds are arriving from the United States. Among these are various types of hawks, birds of prey which vary from the large majestic soaring hawks (buteos) to the sleek streamlined falcons which include some of the fastest creatures on this planet.

The Red-Tailed and Red-Shouldered Hawks are examples of the former and occasionally they stay with us all year. More often than not, however, they move south for the winter. When many of them arrive late in the season, they can be seen circling high in the air, rarely flapping their wings, but carrying strong lofty currents that carry them along. These two hawks are both similar in size, the Red-Tailed 18 inches long on the average with a wingspan of about four feet, while the Red-Shouldered is very slightly smaller.

The Red Tailed Hawk is the most abundant and well known hawk in Eastern North America and the reddish tail feathers can be seen easily when the sun permeates it in flight. The Red Shouldered hawk is so called because of its reddish shoulder patches. Both of these birds have suffered because they are alleged to attack domestic

birds such as chickens (and other fowl) but these reputations are often gross exaggerations, as hawks do a great deal of good, keeping rodent populations at a minimum while keeping other pests in check.

Other "diurnal" (daytime) birds of prey include the falcons, such as the Peregrine Falcon and the Kestrel, both of which are typical members of the genus. The peregrine, unfortunately, has suffered due to widespread use of DDT, the now-banned pesticide which has put this species into the "endangered class". The Kestrel or Sparrow Hawk is

more common locally in Halton, and the small (9 inch) falcon can often be seen perched on hydro wires at roadside.

Other members of the hawk family include the accipiters, which like their predecessors hunt only by day and also like the others have extremely acute hearing and a sense of smell, though the latter has not been entirely confirmed. Most common of these in the Acton area is the Sharp-shinned Hawk, a beautiful bird which sometimes remains with us all year. At our bird feeder this hawk has made several "raids" on the winter occupants, rarely with

much success. Note: Hawks and other birds have their place in this world and their wild "rights" should be respected by every-

one, to ensure a healthy balanced population for future generations to enjoy. All hawks are protected by law.

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