

The art of illustrating picture books

Have you ever had an idea for a children's picture book? Or perhaps you have already written a story but are unsure of where you go from here.

Canadian children's author Kathy Stinson, has produced in a 63-page book a valuable list of guidelines for getting your book into print. *Writing Picture Books — What Works and What Doesn't!* (Pembroke Publishers, \$8.95) takes you from the actual writing of the story — with its textual, stylistic and thematic considerations — to submitting your manuscript to a publisher.

Although the average length for a picture book is a mere 32 pages, it isn't necessarily easy to come up with a memorable story, albeit a short one. You have to rewrite and rewrite, and with Stinson's pointers, you can certainly improve the story. And don't forget to read plenty of children's books so you become familiar with the genre.

Remember too that these stories

Books for Kids with ESTHER CALDWELL

are probably going to be read aloud to children by adults, so your tale should be able to withstand repeated readings.

Keep in mind also that the text must survive on its own. Don't count on the illustrations bringing it to life. Picture books succeed when good text and good illustration complement each other. And unless you are a professional illustrator, do not include artwork with your manuscript. Roger Pare and John Bianchi are two individuals, however, who are able to combine both talents.

In fact, Pare does not totally agree with this balance between artwork and story. "When the image is explicit enough," he says, "what writ-

ing I have to add is little in terms of quantity." Pare also goes against the grain in *Winter Games* (Annick, \$4.95) with rhyming text — a style that publishers usually choose to avoid. Pare's delightful illustrations of animals at play could easily be festive greeting cards.

I always look forward to John Bianchi's latest fun-filled story. Some of the humour in *Snowed in at Pokeweed Public School* (Firefly, \$4.95), as in his other riotous books, may go over the heads of children, but that's okay, says Stinson, so long as the humour is not at the expense of the children. The writer's style, adds Stinson, must respect the children's intelligence and dignity.

The narrator of Bianchi's newest story, a black sheep, recalls that her favourite time at school is when the students and staff are snowbound all night at Pokeweed Public School. Principal Slumgum can't wait to shovel out the laneway the following morning so the bus can take the students home.

While publishers may consider old topics presented in a different light, they also like to see new subject matter. Allen Morgan may have unearthed a new one. When *Joey in The Magic Hockey Stakes* (Oxford, \$14.95, illustrated by Michael Martchenko) is disappointed that he has to trade in his outgrown skates for yet another pair of secondhand skates, the salesman whispers in his ear that they come equipped with three wishes. What happens to Joey and his special skates is magical.

Be careful, warns Stinson, of attributing human characteristics to animals, although it has worked well for Paulette Bourgeois, whose young turtle Franklin has appeared in three stories so far, with the latest being *Franklin Fibe* (Kids Can Press, \$10.95, illustrated by Brenda Clark).

If we, as aspiring writers, want to instill in children a lifelong love of reading, then it is up to us, concludes Stinson, to choose the best words that we can find.

Do stamps buy tickets?

• from POST OFFICE on page 9 regularly attending Vancouver's B.C. Place, as well as enjoying a private box at the city's annual Indy Race.

The fiasco continues with information that Canada Post has leased a private box at the Ottawa Senators' Palladium, combining that with the purchase or lease of 16 of the most expensive seats in the arena. And the Senators haven't even hit the ice yet.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) has called on Canada Post to come clean on its extracurricular spending habits. In a letter to Canada Post president Donald Lander, CFIB senior vice-president of legislative affairs Brian Gray demanded open, honest answers from the postal monopoly.

"If Canada Post feels these kinds of expenses are necessary to attract more business for the Corporation, then all Canadians have a right to be told the full extent of such a marketing plan, in terms of costs and locations of seats," Mr. Gray said.

"Canadians have a right to know the facts to decide for themselves if the money the Corporation receives via government from taxes, and from services, is being spent wisely and for the overall good of Canada Post and the country at large."

The Corporation's actions are even more offensive when you consider postal rates have been hiked once again as of January 1, 1992.


Canadians, Mr. Gray contends, have had enough wasteful spending from various governments and don't need Canada Post playing the same "game" as our political leaders.

"When firms are going out of business in dramatic numbers and when people are unemployed by the hundreds of thousands, the post office is spending money on fun and games."

□ Michael Wycks is employed by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

WELCOME!
Parents of Grade 8 Students in Milton Schools
PARENT INFORMATION EVENING
7:00 p.m. - Wednesday, January 15th
E. C. Drury High School Auditorium

Parents along with students who are planning to attend E. C. Drury High School in September 1992, are invited to hear more about the variety of courses and diploma requirements.



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EDUCATION: LET'S TALK!

Elizabeth's Fashions & Bridal Boutique
presents
"OUR ANNUAL BRIDAL FASHION SHOW"
Sunday, January 12th, 1992, 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.,
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2 Brides in attendance will win a very special Bridal Package. Also, there will be Door Prizes.
BRIDES: 2 FREE TICKETS for you and your guest when you register at any of the following locations.*

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GEORGETOWN:			
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*Cakes of Elegance	873-6569	*Montgomery's of Georgetown	873-9162
David Dew	877-2981	*Paper Factory	873-7403
*Elizabeth's Fashions	873-1470	Pinto Photography	877-0311
Epicurean Delight	877-7933	Rerun Music	877-4683
*Feminine Way	873-4907	Silver Creek Photography	877-5337
J.H. Fishback Photography	877-2322	Star Limousine Service	877-9800
*Hallmark	873-7096	*TWG Travel Inc.	877-2252
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Gymnasium

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EDUCATION: LET'S TALK!

RALPH SHERWOOD Conservation Award Nominations Wanted

Do you know a neighbour, teacher, club, newspaper or agency that has done good things for conservation in Halton during 1991? We want to hear about them! Nominations accepted up to January 31, 1992. Please complete information below and send to Halton Region Conservation Authority 2596 Britannia Road West, R. R. #2 Milton, Ontario L9T 2X6 or call (416) 336-1158 for more information.

Category: (Check One) Individual Institutional Educational

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Reason for Nomination: _____

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