



# LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## **Interracial books for children bulletin: special double issue, Handicapism in children's books. Volume 13, Nos. 4-5 1982**

New York, NY: The Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc.,  
1982

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/MXXKMT2BKLFTB84>

This material may be protected by copyright law (e.g., Title 17, US Code). For information on re-use see: <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/Copyright>

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.

INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

# BULLETIN

VOLUME 13, NUMBERS 4 & 5, 1982

ISSN 0146-5562



## Handicapism in Children's Books: A Five-Year Update

The CCBC  
4290 Helen C. White Hall  
600 N. Park Street  
Madison, WI 53706



# BULLETIN

VOLUME 13, NUMBERS 4 & 5

1982

**SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE: HANDICAPISM IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS**  
**GUEST EDITOR: EMILY STRAUSS WATSON**

## ARTICLES

Handicapism in Children's Books: A Five-Year Update 3  
*Has the growing awareness of disability rights influenced children's literature?*  
*A survey of more than 70 books provides some answers.*

The Disability Rights Movement Five Years Later 18  
*A disability rights activist finds that both progress and setbacks have marked the last few years of the struggle for disability rights.*

Films about People with Disabilities 22  
*Some current films provide non-stereotypic portrayals of people with disabilities.*

Resources on Disability Rights 23  
*Activist groups, information and publications on disability rights are listed.*

## DEPARTMENTS

Bookshelf 25  
 Hits & Misses 29

## COVER

Illustration by Tomie Arai.

Indexed in  
*Alternative Press Index*  
*Education Index*  
 ERIC IRCD

**READER ALERT:** On October 25 Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) will conduct a national "day of dialog" on the threat of nuclear war. We hope to have a special issue of the *Bulletin* that will be relevant to this teach-in effort ready in early October. Meanwhile, readers can obtain further information from ESR, 639 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139; telephone (617) 492-1764.

INTER RACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN BULLETIN is published eight times a year by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023. © 1982 by the Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc. Institutional and contributing subscriptions are \$15 a year; individual subscriptions are \$10 a year; single copies are \$2.25 each for regular issues, \$3 each for special double issues plus 50¢ handling; bulk rates available upon request. A subscription form appears on the back cover.

## COUNCIL ON INTER RACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND BULLETIN STAFFS

**Bradford Chambers**  
 Editor

**Ruth Charnes**  
 Managing Editor

**Sonia Chin**  
 Proofreader

**Leonidas Guzman**  
 Secretary

**Lyla Hoffman**  
 Bookshelf

**Robert B. Moore**  
 Director, CIBC Racism and Sexism  
 Resource Center for Educators

**Elsa Velazquez Sein**  
 Subscriptions

## EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

**Rodolfo Acuña**  
 Chicano Studies Department  
 California State University, Northridge

**Beryle Banfield**  
 Curriculum Specialist

**James Banks**  
 College of Education  
 University of Washington, Seattle

**Sanford Berman**  
 Hennepin County Library  
 Edina, Minn.

**Mary Lou Byler**  
 Association on American Indian Affairs

**Luis Nieves Falcón**  
 Sociology Department  
 University of Puerto Rico

**June Jordan**  
 Poet-Author  
 Department of English  
 S.U.N.Y. at Stony Brook

**Donnarae MacCann**  
 Columnist, *Wilson Library Bulletin*

**Ruth S. Meyers**  
 Educational Psychologist

**Franklin Odo**  
 Ethnic Studies Program  
 University of Hawaii at Manoa

**Alvin Poussaint**  
 Harvard Medical School

**Porfirio Sanchez**  
 Department of Mexican American Studies  
 California State College, Dominguez Hills

**Barbara A. Schram**  
 School of Education  
 Northeastern University

**Albert V. Schwartz**  
 Division of Educational Studies  
 College of Staten Island, C.U.N.Y.

**Geraldine L. Wilson**  
 Early Childhood Specialist and Consultant



*Has the growing awareness of disability rights influenced children's literature? A survey of more than 70 books provides some answers*

## Handicapism in Children's Books: A Five-Year Update

By Emily Strauss Watson

Five years ago, a special issue of the *Bulletin* (Vol. 8, Nos. 6 & 7, 1977) was devoted to handicapism — the attitudes and practices that lead to unequal and unjust treatment of people with disabilities. Since that time, people with disabilities have become increasingly visible and vocal, and their activities have led to legislation mandating various civil rights for disabled people (see p. 18). Reflecting this increased activism, this past year was proclaimed the "International Year of Disabled Persons" by the United Nations.

What effect have the events and changes of the past five years had on children's literature? Has the portrayal of children and adults with disabilities changed since the *Bulletin's* 1977 analysis? To find out, a survey of the new materials was initiated.

The project began by researching *Children's Books in Print* to identify books with disability themes published since 1977 but not yet reviewed in the *Bulletin*. Titles were listed under such categories as "Physically Handicapped," "Crippled," "Blind," "Deaf," "Mute" and "Retarded." The more acceptable terms of "Disabled," "Mobility Impaired," "Hearing Impaired," "Visually Impaired" or "Developmentally Disabled" did not appear, thus implying a degree of handicapism before the project was even fully launched. We also referred to *Notes from a Different Drummer* by Barbara H. Baskin and Karen H. Harris (Bowker). After identifying the books to be reviewed, letters requesting review copies were sent to the appropriate publishers. Cooperation from the publishers was uniformly good. A total of 54 books were reviewed for this issue; an additional 20 books, already reviewed in the *Bulletin*, were considered in preparing this overview. (An

additional four books arrived too late to be included in this issue and will be reviewed in upcoming *Bulletins*.)

The largest number of books dealt with mobility impairments; these were followed by those dealing with hearing impairments, visual impairments and developmental disabilities. Learning disabilities, perhaps the most frequently noted disability in an educational setting, was dealt with in only three books (one fiction, two non-fiction). Of the 54 books reviewed, only 7 were non-fiction. Most books were for grades four through eight with fewer titles for either younger or older readers. The number of books dealing with people with disabilities — though still small — is increasing as people with disabilities become more visible in society.

Books were distributed for review to disabled people active in the disability rights movement and non-disabled people active in or familiar with disability

concerns. A list of reviewers appears in the box on page 5.

The evaluations (which begin on p. 6) showed that while handicapist children's literature is still being published, positive portrayals of people with disabilities are increasing. The *Bulletin's* 1977 survey found a limited number of books worth recommending. A subsequent analysis of books on hearing impairments (Vol. 11, Nos. 1 & 2, 1980) also found only a few good books. The survey undertaken for this issue revealed more than 20 books that could be recommended (see box on p. 17).

There are now books that show disabled children, teenagers and adults as active, participating members of society. People with disabilities are shown interacting with their non-disabled peers in mainstreamed schools and other settings. There are even two teenagers who successfully combat handicapism.

Although the number of books on disability for the younger child (pre-school-grade two) group is small, a high percentage is excellent. *The Balancing Girl*, *Grandma's Wheelchair*, *Through Grandpa's Eyes* and *My Sister Is Different* present independent, likeable people who happen to be disabled.

Other books for young readers which deserve special commendation have already been reviewed in the *Bulletin*; they include *Darlene* (Vol. 12, No. 2), *My Friend Jacob* (Vol. 12, No. 2) and *Nick Joins In* (Vol. 12, No. 6). All of these books contain positive images of disabled people and/or minority representation. Other previously reviewed books for young readers which present positive role models of and for children with disabilities but which lack multiracial characters include *Janet at School* (Vol. 10, No. 3), *Don't Forget Tom* (Vol. 10, No.

This issue is an up-date of the *Bulletin's* first issue on handicapism (Vol. 8, Nos. 6 & 7), which appeared in 1977. In addition to a discussion of handicapism in the media (including children's books), that issue contains facts and figures on disability in the U.S. and a lesson plan on teaching about handicapism and disability. Copies of that issue are available for \$3. plus 50¢ postage and handling.

A subsequent *Bulletin* (Vol. 11, Nos. 1 & 2) on the depiction of deaf and hearing impaired people in children's books and on American Sign Language appeared in 1980. Copies are available for \$3. plus 50¢ handling.



3) and *Giant Steps for Steven* (Vol. 11, No. 8).

For the slightly older reader, the choice is somewhat greater. *Apple Is My Sign*, *Silent Dancer*, *A Little Time*, *Just Like Always*, *The Seeing Summer* and *God, Why Is She the Way She Is?* (despite its mawkish title) are extremely well done. *The Swing* (Vol. 11, Nos. 1 & 2) is also recommended for middle-schoolers.

Non-fiction books which present accurate, sensitive and informative material for this age group include *What If You Couldn't . . . ?*, *Alesia* and *Like It Is: Facts and Feelings about Handicaps from Kids Who Know* (Vol. 11, No. 6).

Recommended for high school readers are *Run, Don't Walk*; *Passing Through*; *Signs Unseen*, *Sounds Unheard* and *Little Little*. Other previously reviewed

books for older readers which combat handicapist stereotypes include *Belonging* (Vol. 9, Nos. 4 & 5) and *Head over Wheels* (Vol. 12, No. 8). A non-fiction work, *See Me More Clearly: Career and Life Planning for Teens with Disabilities* (Vol. 12, No. 1) is also recommended for this age group.

The *Bulletin's* 1977 survey found that books ignored both adults with disabilities and minority people of all ages with disabilities. Happily, things are improving in this regard. Books such as *Grandma's Wheelchair*, *Through Grandpa's Eyes*, *Alesia*, *My Sister Is Different* and the previously reviewed *Darlene* and *My Friend Jacob* deserve especial commendation for their excellent treatment of people with disabilities who are older or from minority backgrounds. *I Can't Always Hear You* included minority people but failed to present realistic, helpful information about hearing impairment. *The Bookseller's Advice* included older characters but reinforced ageist stereotypes, as well as sexism and handicapism.)

While the number of good books may appear relatively small considering the number of years being covered, it is more than double the number of books which could be recommended in the first survey.

Unfortunately, for every positive book, there seemed to be at least two books that could not be recommended or recommended only with reservation. Many of the stereotypes identified in the first *Bulletin* survey still appear. While the disabled person is no longer depicted as atmosphere or evil/sinister, people with disabilities are still portrayed as (1) pitiable or pathetic, (2) an object of violence, (3) a "super cripp," (4) laughable, (5) his/her own worst enemy, (6) a burden, (7) non-sexual, and (8) incapable of full participation and/or isolated from society as well as other disabled people. Not surprisingly, many of these stereotypes often appeared in the same book! In addition, many books are factually inaccurate.

Probably the most frequently noted stereotype (and one of the most offensive) is the portrayal of people with disabilities as pathetic or pitiable. *Sam and His Cart*, *Max's Dream*, *Lester's Turn* and *Cry of the Wolf* contain prime examples of this stereotype. Statements such as "You're only a cripple if you think you're one" (*Cry of the Wolf*) should not appear. Neither should a boy with cerebral palsy be described as someone who "shakes" (*Sam and His Cart*).

## Guidelines on Disability

The guidelines below are based on those that appeared in the first *Bulletin* study on handicapism (Vol. 8, Nos. 6 & 7); they were prepared by the Center on Human Policy, the Center for Independent Living in Berkeley, Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York and the CIBC. Several additional points have been added by *Alternatives*, which is published by the Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York City.

These guidelines are offered to assist authors, editors, reviewers, librarians, teachers and readers in identifying and counteracting common stereotypes about people with disabilities.

- Shun one-dimensional characterizations of disabled persons. Portray people with disabilities as having individual and complex personalities and capable of a full range of emotions.

- Avoid depicting disabled persons only as recipients; show disabled people interacting as equals and giving as well as receiving. Too often the person with a disability is presented solely as the recipient of pity or assistance.

- Avoid presenting physical characteristics of any kind as determining factors of personality. Be especially cautious about implying a correlation between disability and evil.

- Refrain from depicting persons with disabilities as objects of curiosity. It is entirely appropriate to show disabled people as members of an average population or cast of characters. Most disabled people are able to participate in all facets of life and should be depicted in a wide variety of situations.

- A person's disability should not be ridiculed or made the butt of a joke. (Blind people do not mistake fire hydrants for people or bump into every object in their path.)

- Avoid the sensational in depicting disabled people. Be wary of the stereotype of disabled persons as either the victims or perpetrators of violence.

- Refrain from endowing disabled characters with superhuman attributes. To do so is to imply that a disabled person must overcompensate and become superhuman to win acceptance.

- Avoid a Pollyanna-ish plot that implies a disabled person need only have "the will" and the "right attitude" to succeed. Readers need insights into the societal barriers that keep disabled people from living full lives—systematic discrimination in employment, education and housing; inaccessible transportation and buildings; and exorbitant expense for necessities.

- Avoid showing disabled people as non-sexual. Show disabled people in loving relationships and expressing the same sexual needs and desires as non-disabled people.

- Avoid all terms that dehumanize or objectify persons with disabilities (such as "the deaf" or "the blind"), all terms that characterize disabled persons as dependent or pitiable, all terms that perpetuate the myth that people with disabilities are incapable of participating in the life of a community. Use terminology that conveys dignity, independence, merit and ability.

- Books about disability should deal with issues of concern to people with disabilities such as civil rights, housing, transportation, employment, independent living, sexuality and other aspects of living. *Understand these issues from the viewpoint of the consumer.* (Remember, too, that telethons generally stereotype disabled people and that they give the message, "we are begging money for these poor, crippled children—or people—who need your handouts.")

- Stories about disability and disabled people should be written in consultation with people with disabilities or by them, not just for and about them.



The disabled person as victim also continues to be a popular theme. In two books, *Let the River Be* and *Lester's Turn*, the disabled characters die — a convenient literary ploy perhaps but one not conducive to the health and well-being of people with disabilities. *The Acorn People* also reinforces this stereotype. The disabled protagonist of *Sam and His Cart* is threatened. In *The People Therein* (Vol. 12, No. 6) the disabled protagonist falls on an upturned rake and injures herself.

Many books also still depict disabled characters in isolation from both disabled and non-disabled people. Many times this takes the form of isolation caused by teasing peers. Books that reinforce this negative stereotype include *Please don't tease me*, *I Can't Always Hear You* and *Growl When You Say R*. Very few books show disabled children interacting with others in a way that is not related to their disability.

It unfortunately continues to be true that a large number of books on disability contain misinformation and/or glaring errors about disability. It is often apparent that authors have had little or no contact with disabled people, particularly disabled activists. For example, *Button Eye's Orange*, *The Seeing Stick*, *Max's Dream*, *Cry of the Wolf* and *The Lake Is On Fire* all leave the reader with the mistaken impression that disabilities can be miraculously cured or "overcome." Even non-fiction works contain inaccuracies. *Being Blind*, *Deafness*, *Physical Disabilities* and *Teaching Exceptional Children* are examples. In *Mr. Wheatfield's Loft* and *Run from a Scarecrow*, two non-verbal boys suddenly find their voices in times of crises, hardly typical or helpful to children who have genuine communication difficulties.

If one typical stereotypic depiction is the presentation of a disabled person as dependent, the flip side of the coin is to describe people with disabilities as "super crips." The worst offenders are usually about disabled people who have "made it" and "overcome their disability" — in short, the over-achievers. True to form, *The Finger Game Miracle* (yet another rendition of the Helen Keller story) and *The Fastest Woman on Earth* (about Kitty O'Neill, a deaf stunt woman/race car driver) are prime candidates for Super Crip of the Year awards. In the running for the Super Crip Award are two fictional characters — the protagonists of *The Big Dipper Marathon* (Vol. 11, No. 7) and *Only Love* (Vol. 12, No. 2), although the latter could only be

Our thanks to the reviewers who evaluated the books for the overview that begins on page 3. Reviewers included Janet W. Acevedo, Glenn Anderson, Carolynne Bethka, James Byrne, Kenneth Diesenhoff, Caryl-Robin Dresher, Robert Feinstein, Betsy Gimbel, Sara L. Heskins, Rosemary Kasper, Mary Ellen Tosi, Judith J. Trotta, Emily Strauss Watson, Kipp Watson, Nancy Wernikoff, Lois Wolff and Paula Wolff.

considered for a posthumous award because she dies. The blind protagonist of *Go Tell It to Mrs. Golightly* is also a super crip. Even *My Brother Is Special*, a basically acceptable book, implies that a developmentally delayed youngster is worthwhile only after he trains for and participates in the Special Olympics.

Fortunately, one stereotype — that of people with disabilities as laughable — seems to be disappearing. Only *The Bookseller's Advice* used this device as the basis of its plot. *Growl When You Say R* and *Please don't tease me* deal with an aspect of the "laughable" concept — peer pressure and teasing — but neither suggests effective ways in which to counter such occurrences.

One of the most common stereotypes in children's literature has been the portrayal of the disabled person as his/her own worst enemy, and unfortunately, this stereotype refuses to die gracefully. Only a handful of authors appear sensitive to the fact that it is society — with its handicapist attitudes — that is the "worst enemy" of people with disabilities. Architectural and communicational barriers handicap people with disabilities far more than the disability itself. It is apparently easier to "blame the victim" than the society that callously creates such barriers. *Cry of the Wolf*, *The Lake Is On Fire* and *Lester's Turn* reinforce these themes. Similar previously reviewed books include *Accident* (Vol. 12, No. 8), *To Walk on Two Feet* (Vol. 9, No. 6) and *The Big Dipper Marathon* (Vol. 11, No. 7).

Although all stereotypes oppress and limit, one of the most damaging has been the concept of the disabled person as a burden. Books with a religious emphasis often reinforce this stereotype, emphasizing disability as a test-of faith. *Of Braces and Blessings* is a prime example of this genre, as are *A Step Further* and the previously reviewed *Johanna's Miracle* (Vol.

9, No. 1). A non-religious book that also reinforces this stereotype is *The Girl Who Wanted Out*, reviewed in the *Bulletin's* special report on teenage romance series (Vol. 12, Nos. 4 & 5). Two other non-religious works—*Lester's Turn* and *Max's Dream*—use negative terms ("misfortune," "poor" and "crippled") that reinforce this concept.

Expressions of affection or caring remain practically non-existent in the books under review. Only in *Passing Through*, *Grandma's Wheelchair*, *Through Grandpa's Eyes* and *Run, Don't Walk* does one see a person with a disability as capable of giving and receiving affection. Unfortunately, sexuality is completely ignored, even in books for teenagers; if teenage characters show a hint of sexual interest, they are soon killed off. See, for example, *Only Love* (Vol. 12, No. 2) and *Waiting for Johnny Miracle* (Vol. 12, Nos. 4 & 5). There are no disabled adults shown in loving, caring — and by implication, sexual — relationships.

The stereotype of the disabled person as incapable of full participation in society also continues to appear, particularly in books depicting people with mobility impairments and developmental disabilities. *Lester's Turn*, *Paulus and the Dragon*, *Max's Dream*, "Seeing" in *the Dark*, *Sam and His Cart*, *The Acorn People* and *Cry of the Wolf* all reinforce the myth that people with disabilities can not enter into the mainstream of society. Such books are particularly counter-productive to the efforts that disabled people are making to insure their full participation in our society.

As noted above and as will be seen from the reviews that follow, there are some bright spots, but overall, the picture is basically disheartening. Positive portrayals of people with disabilities are still too far and few between to generate a real change or impact. Disabled people are now fighting for rights often taken for granted by their non-disabled peers. They are effecting societal change through increased social activism. Children's books can reinforce and accelerate this much-needed change.

#### About the Author

EMILY STRAUSS WATSON, active in the disability rights movement, is currently National Coordinator of Disabled in Action National. A speech-language pathologist in the Ramsey (NJ) Public Schools, she is also serving on the New York State Department of Education Advisory Panel on Education of Children with Handicapping Conditions.



The book reviews below appear in three somewhat arbitrary groupings based on grade level. The groupings—For Young Readers, For Middle Grades and For Older Readers—are merely a guide; children's reading level and sophistication should be considered when recommending or choosing books.

## FOR YOUNG READERS

### The Balancing Girl

by Berniece Rabe,  
illustrated by Lillian Hoban.  
Dutton, 1981,  
\$10.25, 29 pages, grades p.s.-2

Margaret is a little girl who likes to balance things, and she's quite good at it. She can build towers, castles and even balance books on her head while pushing her wheelchair. Margaret attends school with friends who accept her for her strengths and her weaknesses. How Margaret and her classmates work together to make a successful school carnival makes a delightful tale.

This book presents a disabled child in a positive light. It does not deny or diminish her disability and shows her relating easily with her non-disabled peers. The book's depiction of professional and older women is another plus. [Emily Strauss Watson]

### The Bookseller's Advice

by Sue Bretnier,  
illustrated by Jane Chambless-Rigie.  
Viking, 1981,  
\$8.95, 28 pages, grades 1-3

Simon the bookseller is "old" and "wise" and the villagers come to him for advice. He also has a hearing loss of which "no one is aware—not even he." (Actually his granddaughter is aware of it, but every time she tries to explain what he has misunderstood, she is brushed aside.) The villagers follow Simon's advice no matter how ridiculous it is. For example, George the baker, soon to be married, wants advice on how to be a groom—Simon "hears" broom and gives him a book on housekeeping. Sarah wants to know how to stop her daughters from fighting like cats and dogs; Simon "hears" that the cat and dog are fighting and tells her to get rid of one of them. Sarah leaves to get rid of one of her daughters! Another woman—horrors—is a lousy cook.

Finally, Rachel tells her grandfather what happened. When Simon runs off to correct his mistakes, he finds all has turned out well. The groom is happy because he now knows how to keep house, he and the bride will "share the work and then we'll be content." Sarah got rid of one of her daughters but "they missed each other so much all they did was cry. So I brought them back together and now they are the best of friends." (Children will get no comfort when they see how easily a parent gets rid of a child in order to stop the arguing in the house.)

Once again, hearing loss is portrayed as a simple and humorous misunderstanding of words, and hearing impaired people are portrayed as mindlessly accepting what they "hear." This book's jacket talks about the "playful humor" of the story. What is humorous about teaching a new generation the handicapist, ageist and sexist stereotypes found in this book? [Janet W. Acevedo]

### The Finger Game Miracle

by Nancy Kelton,  
illustrated by Ron Recchio.  
Raintree (205 Highland Ave.,  
Milwaukee, WI 53203), 1977,  
\$8.95, 31 pages, grades k-3

Here is yet another biography about the superest "crip" of all—Helen Keller. This one is poorly written, simplistic and handicapist.

For starters Helen is described as deaf, blind and "dumb." The author also uses "blind" as a noun rather than an adjective, thereby dehumanizing blind people. Anne Sullivan is said to have been trained to work with *handicapped* children, as if working with all "handicaps" is the same. In fact, Anne was specifically trained to work with blind or deaf/blind children. Braille is described as the language of "the blind." It is not a language, but rather the written form of a language.

Helen's learning to fingerspell is presented in a confusing way. While we can understand how Helen learns that W-A-T-E-R means the liquid running through her fingers from the pump, we are not told how she integrates the next words she is taught. What, for example, is Helen's referent for TEACHER? Is T-E-A-C-H-E-R a name, a woman, a person who fingerspells into one's palm? The omission of this information reinforces something that is unfortunately believed by many teachers of deaf children: If you sign something to a deaf person, she/he will understand even if the person doesn't have a referent for the sign. Should the deaf person not understand the sign, he/she must be stupid, slow, narrowminded, etc. (Helen was also taught signs, yet this is never mentioned.)

After bringing us once more through the food-throwing dinner scene, the author has two paragraphs on what happened when Helen got older. The author accurately states that, "She learned how to use her voice and began speaking all the words she had learned with her fingers." However, the reader gets no sense of the long, laborious, time-consuming, continuous, tedious process learning to speak actually is for a deaf person. As for Helen's social and political activism—and Anne's—we learn nothing. [Janet W. Acevedo]

### Grandma's Wheelchair

by Lorraine Henriad,  
illustrated by Christa Chevalier.  
Whitman, 1982,  
\$7.50, 29 pages, grades p.s.-2

When Thomas' older brother goes to kindergarten, Thomas has his own special place to

go—Grandma's. Thomas and his Grandma spend a very busy day together; they make applesauce, fold and put away the warm laundry, dust and vacuum. Best of all, Thomas gets to sit on Grandma's lap anytime he wants. (Thomas' mother is expecting a new baby and doesn't have much lap just now.) When Grandma's wheelchair gets a flat tire, they team up to get an old wheelchair out from the garage, and soon their active day continues.

*Grandma's Wheelchair*, despite its title, is a positive non-stereotypic tale. Grandma is an active person and her wheelchair is simply an aid. Problems related to disability such as broken wheelchairs and transferring from one wheelchair to another are presented in a simple and forthright manner. A delightful, demystifying book, *Grandma's Wheelchair* deserves top honors. [Emily Strauss Watson]

### Growl When You Say R

by Muriel Stanek,  
illustrated by Phil Smith.  
Whitman, 1979,  
\$6.95, 32 pages, grades k-3

Robbie can not pronounce the "r" sound correctly. When he moves to another town, the children at the new school make fun of his mispronunciations. Robbie's new teacher sends him to a speech class to get help. At book's end, Robbie and two classmates get lost on a class trip to the zoo, and he is able to announce on the loud speaker, "Roberts School, Bus Number Nine. Wait for us."

The idea behind this story is commendable; children need to understand individual differences and the value of special instruction. The book has several positive aspects. Robbie's activities, his learning process and the excitement of success are well done, and Robbie's anger at being teased, his frustration and discouragement are also realistic.

Unfortunately, there are some disturbing aspects to the story. Robbie seems to be in second or third grade, but apparently no one has ever noticed or mentioned his speech difficulties before. One wonders if his parents—not to mention his previous teachers—have been totally oblivious. When his new teacher tells his mother that Robbie is to start speech class the next day, there is no discussion between parent and teacher or between Robbie and his mother, although this abrupt announcement obviously does little to alleviate Robbie's already anxious state. In addition, this book shows children's special needs being met with unrealistic ease. Time, due process and availability of services do not always allow for such immediate and intensive intervention as this book depicts. [Nancy Wernikoff]

### My Mother Is Blind

by Margeret Reuter,  
photos by Philip Lanier.  
Childrens Press, 1979,  
\$2.95 (paper), 31 pages, grades p.s.-3

A young boy describes the rehabilitation process his mother goes through when she loses



her vision. This book deals with the family's reactions to the onset of the mother's disability and tells how they function now. How the mother learns to read and write braille, to discriminate between coins and bills, to cook, to clean, and to travel using a cane are discussed.

*My Mother Is Blind* is simply written, and the clear photographs add continuity and clarify the text. It is a good introductory book for young students and could be used to stimulate valuable classroom discussion and/or simulation activities. It is important for the adult to make clear, however, that this story deals with the experiences of one family, and that other people may react differently to the same situation. It would also be helpful to discuss how the family's experiences might have differed if the mother had been born without vision instead of losing it as an adult. [Paula Wolff]

## Roly Goes Exploring

by Philip Newth.

Philomel Books (200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016), 1981,  
\$12.95, 24 pages, grades pre k-2

This is an ingenious book especially designed for blind children but it can also be used by their sighted peers. The text is both in braille and large print, and the characters are geometric shapes in raised printing.

The book presents numerous opportunities for instructional exercises. For instance, when Roly says goodbye to his "12 friends" who are "as small and round as he is," a blind or sighted child can count the 12 little circles and check to see that there are 12 friends.

On another page, Roly counts 15 rectangles. "Is that right?" asks the text. "No. Roly doesn't count very well. How many can you count?" Readers will find that there are only 13 rectangles.

This book is excellent for developing an understanding of shapes with very young children whether visually impaired or sighted. In addition, the book is fun to read. An earlier work with a similar format—*What's That?* by Virginia Allen Jensen and Dorcas Woodbury Haller—is also recommended (see Vol. 11, No. 8). [Robert Feinstein]

## FOR MIDDLE GRADES

### The Acorn People

by Ron Jones.

Abingdon, 1978,  
\$4.95, 75 pages, grades 5-8

*The Acorn People*, based on the author's "true" experience at a camp for disabled children, reinforces many biases. The author paints a picture of pathetic disabled children who are an "eerie sight" with their "swollen heads," "mongoloid faces," "nervous twitches." (The book also includes an Italian co-counselor

with Mafia connections and a Black staff member who is "mean looking" but actually gentle and always singing.)

Particularly abhorrent is the camp nurse's explanation that "Most will not live past their teen years. It is nature's way." What a terrible disservice to the adult disabled population! What about those disabled individuals who grow up? This book seems to say there are no disabled adults with whom non-disabled society need concern itself. The myth is reinforced by the brief epilogue in which the reader is informed about the deaths of five of the campers soon after camp. (The fact that two died in car accidents might also appear to be "nature's way.")

We are filled with pity for these "unfortunate" children and may easily lose sight of the dignity and need for self-achievement that is expressed in the main body of the story. The fact that each camper is an individual, likeable or not, is lost in the tears shed for these dependent creatures who have been made happier for a short while by the fine physical specimens who have cared for them during their camp sojourn. The author, in any case, apparently leaves camp ennobled by his experiences, as does the rest of the staff; the reader is left with stereotypic material that negates the book's strong points. [Sara L. Heskins]

### Alesia

by Eloise Greenfield and Alesia Revis,  
illustrated by George Ford with  
photos by Sandra Turner Bond.  
Philomel Books (Putnam), 1981,  
\$8.95, 60 pages, grades 5-up

It is rare to find truly positive literature about an individual who is disabled—and even rarer to find such works about a person of color who is disabled. *Alesia* is such a rare find.

Alesia tells of her childhood, the accident that caused her disability, her recovery period and her experiences at a school where "all the children . . . are disabled." All this is told in a straightforward, matter-of-fact way; Alesia is not consumed with self-pity. Another plus: Alesia's family includes her in all aspects of family life—sometimes that is not easily achieved.

Alesia is also a typical teenager; she loves Fridays because she gets to sleep late the next day and "talking to her girlfriends in the recreation room." She goes to many parties and loves to dance ("I can do it pretty well if I lean against something for support"). Her insights are real without being overly dramatic or simplistic. With honesty, she confides that "Sometimes I get lonely when everybody else is busy and I'm the only one sitting around." Alesia is very real and any teenager could identify with her.

The illustrations and photographs realistically depict different facets of Alesia's life. *Alesia* teaches us about growing up and gives us a view of a girl who just happens to be disabled. The book is highly recommended. [Caryl-Robin Dresher]



Good books about people with disabilities are now being written; above, three works that present non-stereotypic depictions. Positive portrayals of minority people with disabilities are also beginning to appear; Alesia (below) is outstanding.





## Apple Is My Sign

by Mary Riskind.  
Houghton Mifflin, 1981,  
\$7.95, 146 pages, grades 5-8

Harry Berger, a ten-year-old deaf boy, leaves his family's apple farm to attend a school for the deaf in Philadelphia at the turn of the century. Harry is apprehensive about leaving the secure world of his family, all of whom are deaf and use sign language, and their small town. Suddenly Harry, whose nickname in sign language is "Apple," must meet new people and adjust to many new things, including a new school, new friends and life in a big city. Although Harry is aware of the gulf between deaf and hearing people, he learns about a more personal level when he befriends a boy who is the only deaf person in his family. When Harry returns home for Christmas, he must adjust to the changes that have taken place during his absence. Harry befriends a local hearing boy and teaches him finger spelling, only to be hurt when his new friend uses finger spelling to cheat in a spelling bee. The story ends positively with all differences resolved and Harry looking forward to returning to school and his friends there.

The author of this well-written book is not hearing impaired but her parents were deaf and she learned to communicate with her hands before she learned to speak. Her experiences are reflected in the text, which gives a sense of the syntax and flavor of sign language, and in the non-stereotypic portrayal of people who are deaf. A readable and informative introduction does an excellent job of introducing sign language and finger spelling. This book will go a long way in helping to break down handicapist stereotypes. [Emily Strauss Watson]

## Battle at the Blue Line

by P.C. Fredricks,  
illustrated by Ken Shields.  
Victor Books (S.P. Publications,  
Wheaton, IL), 1978,  
\$2.25 (paper), 132 pages, grades 4-10

Brad Phillips, a thirteen-year-old hockey player, wants very much to win a hockey championship and fulfill "a growing commitment to Christ." He also wants to understand and help his older brother, Gary, whose legs are paralyzed as a result of an accident.

Brad is a sympathetic, credible young teenager, and his reactions to his brother's disability and to his brother are realistic. Gary's bitterness and resentment of Brad's athletic ability are also well handled, and both boys show believable growth in understanding themselves and each other through the course of the story.

Brad's Bible-reading and prayers pervade the book without intruding on the story. However, the citations for the biblical references are rather intrusive and make the reader feel "preached at." Another drawback is the fact that common hockey terms are defined in intrusive footnotes, although it would seem that

any child who would choose a hockey story of this sort would already know those terms.

There is plenty of hockey action and a bit of a mystery that young readers will appreciate. [Lois Wolff]

## Being Blind

by Rebecca Marcus.  
Hastings House, 1981,  
\$6.95, 119 pages, grades 5-up

*Being Blind* is a positive, interesting and very informative book. The development of blind infants and young children, schooling, learning to travel, learning daily living skills, earning a living, and ways sighted people can be helpful are all discussed. Blind and visually impaired people are portrayed as capable, independent and able to fill a wide variety of occupations as adults.

The author is particularly good at presenting the attitudinal problems which people who cannot see often encounter. Referring to employment, she notes:

You're always getting the door shut in your face. If you're blind, they think you'll be more trouble than you're worth. What we really need is education for the sighted.

The author brings up another important issue when she says that "Most blind people say that one of their biggest problems is the way sighted people act when they are with them," and she gives examples which explain the statement.

There are, however, some untrue or at least misleading statements. For example, when discussing how rubella during pregnancy causes blindness in babies, the author fails to mention that it frequently causes hearing loss, brain damage, mental retardation and heart defects as well. The section about children's reactions to having a blind sibling does not present enough diversity. In addition, statements such as "Blindness does not prevent most homemakers from becoming good cooks" is a distortion. Blind people vary greatly in their cooking and homemaking skills—as do people with average vision.

The flaws are, on the whole, minor. *Being Blind* does an unusually good job. [Paula Wolff]

## Cry of the Wolf

by Zane Spencer and Jay Leech.  
Westminster Press, 1977,  
\$7.95, 144 pages, grades 5-8

*Cry of the Wolf* tells of a teenage boy who has incurred a spinal cord injury and his miraculous—and implausible—recovery. The stock plot follows an overused formula: accident/bitterness/revelation/miracle.

Jim, disabled in a car crash that kills his father, is dismissed from the hospital by his doctor, who patronizingly informs him that "Your legs have healed." The implication is clear: "I—the doctor—put the pieces together, now go practice." This is cruel and simplistic, especially for someone who has sustained

major physical and psychological traumas and who must now make major changes in his lifestyle.

Jim's family is also patronizing. Such statements as "You can't quit now," "You're worth fighting for, boy" and "You're only a cripple if you think you're one" perpetuate the stereotype of the bitter, unmotivated disabled person.

Jim's revelation occurs through a clichéd sub-plot. When Jim's favorite horse (pregnant at that) escapes one winter night, he follows. In the midst of saving the mare—and its newborn foal—from wolves, Jim finds that he can walk. Such "hope-for-a-miracle" myths do not need promoting. [Caryl-Robin Dresher]

## Deafness

by Jane Hyman.  
Franklin Watts, 1980,  
\$6.90, 64 pages, grades 4-6

*Deafness* discusses the various types of hearing loss and their causes, the effects of hearing loss and the ways hearing impaired people communicate, including speechreading, speaking, sign language, reading and writing.

The author writes about deafness from a hearing person's viewpoint (none of the experts quoted are hearing impaired) and some of the resources are outdated. Hearing people tell us how deaf people should feel and how hearing people should react and relate to them. The perspectives of deaf people—and of disability activists in particular—are missing. Also, because the emphasis is on the clinical aspects of deafness, the book does not convey enough information about societal barriers.

The section on manual communication is especially misleading. The author erroneously uses American Sign Language as a generic term for all forms of sign language used by deaf people. American Sign Language is actually a language created and used by deaf people; it has its own syntax and lexicon and is totally unrelated to English or any form of manual English. The author tells us American Sign Language includes Signed English, Senglish (I've never heard of this one!) and Native Sign Language (presumably her term for American Sign Language). The reader is also told that Native Sign language is less formal than Signed English. This is not true; ASL can be as formal or as informal as English or any form of manual English. It is particularly distressing to find that an issue of prime importance to deaf people—their language—has been treated so poorly. [Janet W. Acevedo]

## Do Bananas Chew Gum?

by Jamie Gilson.  
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1980,  
\$6.95, 158 pages, grades 5-up

Twelve-year-old Sam Mott is dyslexic but so far no one has fully understood or known about his disability—not his parents, teachers or classmates. This is unfortunately typical:



there is a general tendency to try to hide less visible disabilities. Sam has always resorted to excuses or jokes when problems arise. When he is asked what he does best, he answers: "I don't know. Make people laugh at me, I guess. I'm good at that."

The author shows how a lack of understanding can lead to a negative self-image and feelings of shame. Sam refers to himself as "dumb" or "dumbhead." His classmates call him "Tinselteeth" (because he wears braces on his teeth) or "Cutie" (because he cannot spell c-u-t-e).

It is extremely unlikely that a child's dyslexia would be undiagnosed for so long, so it is therefore more disturbing that Sam's parents fail to understand his problem and to agree on how to best help him. Sam can "hear Mom and Dad in the kitchen arguing about me. It had to be about me. They wouldn't have anything else to argue about." While Sam's father appears to have some understanding of his son's problems and tries to help him, he is unable to stand up to his wife and what she feels is best for Sam. His parents' denial, especially that of his mother, only prolongs Sam's inability to learn and cope with his disability in a positive, productive manner.

The author realistically describes the feelings of the parties involved but does not deal with possible solutions. There is instead a sudden, premature happy ending. No time is spent on how Sam learns or the feelings and struggles involved in this process. Learning disabilities can be dealt with; young readers need to know how. [Carolynne Bethka]

### The Fastest Woman on Earth

by Alida Thacher,  
illustrated by Ken Bachaus.  
Raintree (205 Highland Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53203), 1980,  
\$11.45, 45 pages, grades 4-8

Kitty O'Neil is a stuntwoman and holder of the woman's land speed record. (She was prevented from even attempting to break the man's land speed record!) This book focuses on Kitty's achievements in sports (swimming and diving), in racing (everything from water skis to "rocket" cars) and her work as a stuntwoman.

Kitty has also been deaf since she was four months old. While her deafness is not the major focus of this biography, a good portion of the story does relate to Kitty's "overcoming her handicap." She lectures at schools for deaf children and tells them: "Think positive. Never look back and never give up." Some deaf children might be inspired by this advice, but many more will see her facility in speech-reading and speaking (as well as her other achievements) as unreachable. Kitty, like Helen Keller, had someone drilling her in speech training 24 hours a day from early infancy. Unfortunately, many people expect all deaf children to acquire the same expertise. The bottom line is work hard to be accepted by the hearing world. Become the best at something and you will be accepted. Think posi-

tively and you will be thought of as a hearing person—presumably the ultimate goal for a deaf child. If you can't hear, at least you can act hearing.

The book suggests that if deaf people can fit into the hearing world, they won't be dependent on anyone. This implies that signing deaf people are always dependent on others. This is far from true. Many signing deaf people function just as easily as Kitty seems to do with hearing people. These deaf people, however, can do something Kitty can't—relate with other deaf people. Kitty never learned sign language and her only associations with deaf people are with the deaf children to whom she lectures. Kitty "has no trouble talking with most people who can hear . . . but she needs help when talking with deaf people who use sign language."

The author does state that few people—deaf or hearing—can do what Kitty does, but this is near the end of the book, after the overcoming-your-handicap and winning-is-everything lessons have been well established. [Janet W. Acevedo]

### Go Tell It to Mrs. Golightly

by Catherine Cookson.  
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1977,  
\$7.95, 192 pages, grades 5-up

Six-year-old Bella, who is blind, goes to stay

with her grandfather in the English countryside and becomes involved in a mystery there. The book, which is well written and suspenseful, does capture some aspects of being blind. For instance, the author does a good job describing the way Bella finds her way around: "Now standing with her back to the hedge, she knew that the house lay to her left. . . . Taking the grass verge as a guide, she went slowly ahead." And here is an excellent description from the perspective of a person without vision: "She knew that Mrs. Campbell must be sitting on her haunches because of the way her breath was fanning her face. When people bent over you, their breath rushed down over your nose, but when they were on a level with you it spread smoothly over your face."

Unfortunately, these strong points do not make up for the stereotypes. One of the most glaring of these is the portrayal of Bella as saintly ("She's joy unconfined"). Bella is a "super crip." She moves "with a swiftness that would have outdone any sighted person." "That child, she's remarkably intelligent," says one of the characters. "She saw more through her blindness than you all did with your eyes," says another. The idea that a person with a disability must perform at an extraordinary level is damaging since it implies that superior accomplishments are necessary to be accepted by others and viewed as a worthwhile person. [Paula Wolff]

## Parents and Teachers Receive Hidden Messages in Books about Disabilities

Project R.E.E.D. (Resources on Educational Equity for Disabled) of the Non-Sexist Child Development Project of the Women's Action Alliance, Inc., reviewed 47 recommended books about disability written primarily for parents and teachers. The Project found biases in the treatment of people with disabilities in addition to serious omissions in regard to sex and race. For example:

- Eighty-four per cent of the books with pictures showed boys with disabilities more frequently than girls with disabilities.
- Only 12 percent of the pictures examined were of minority people even though disability disproportionately affects minorities because of poverty, poor working conditions, etc.
- Only three of the 850 pictures showed adults with disabilities.
- Seventy-two per cent of the so-called generic references were to males. In addition, use of the generic "he" outnumbered the generic "she" in every disability category mentioned except autism and passivity, which one author discussed as a behavior problem. (Only three authors made a deliberate effort to use the generic "she" as frequently as the generic "he.")

Reading this body of literature, one might conclude that most people with disabilities are white boys, that girls cannot aspire to certain roles in our society, and that children with disabilities cannot aspire to adult roles at all.

Even though these messages are not explicit, they can still limit the reader's conception of options open to disabled children, particularly those who are Black, Hispanic, Asian or Native American. Since these books will be of particular interest to those teaching or rearing disabled children, these limits are likely to be conveyed to the children themselves.—Nancy Gropper, Evaluator, Project R.E.E.D.

For additional information about Project R.E.E.D., contact the Non-Sexist Child Development Project, Women's Action Alliance, Inc., 370 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017; telephone (212) 532-8330.



## "God, Why Is She the Way She Is?"

by Linda Jacobs Ware.

Concordia, 1979.

\$2.50 (paper), 80 pages, grades 3-up

Thirteen-year-old Kelly Marshall's young sister Becky is mentally retarded. While working at a school/camp for mentally retarded children, Kelly meets Joel, another young aide, whose sister Marcy is also mentally retarded. The two families accurately symbolize "two sides" of the "retardation story"—Becky is a lovable child in an accepting family, Marcy is an angry, wild child in a guilt-ridden, denying family. Both families—and both siblings—have been affected by the retarded children, but in very different ways.

When Joel asks Kelly why Marcy is the way she is, Kelly says: "It's not easy. It's hard. It's working step by step and not knowing when or if you're going to get through. But it's believing you will . . . somehow. And all of it counts . . . the patience and the work . . . it counts because people count. You're always asking God, why is she the way she is. Why don't you forget that and ask God for strength to do what you can to help?"

As the story ends, Joel still didn't know the answers, but his question has changed. Instead of God, why, he asks God, how. This book speaks many truths of the realities of living with a mentally retarded sibling. And in spite of its title, it does not dwell on simplistic "religious" explanations or suggest that faith solves all problems [Mary Ellen Tosi]

## I Can't Always Hear You

by Joy Zelonky,

illustrated by Barbara Bejna and Shirlee Jensen.

Raintree (205 W. Highland Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53203), 1980,

\$10.65, 31 pages, grades 3-5

It is the first day at a "regular" school for Kim, who has a hearing impairment. She is shouted at (presumably to help her hear better), laughed at for pronouncing a word wrong and for lining up with the boys to go to the bathroom, and called a robot because of her hearing aid. By the third day of school she is accepted as one of several children with an individual difference. Life is just not that easy.

Kim's hearing loss is likened to what hearing people would hear if they covered their ears with their hands. In fact, this only muffles sounds slightly. It is not clear if this is how Kim hears with or without her hearing aid, but in either case Kim apparently has a lot of residual hearing. It seems from the text, however, that Kim's impairment is more severe. Why, for instance, does she pronounce "take away" as "tickery"? "Takery" would make more sense, and in any case she pronounces the word correctly immediately after being corrected. Secondly, why doesn't she understand with her eyes, if not with her ears, that only the boys are lining up to go to the bathroom?

The school principal is also hearing im-

paired (again, her loss seems very mild) and wears a hearing aid (there are no other disabled children). While this could be a very positive element (many hearing impaired children never see a hearing impaired adult), it isn't. The principal tells Kim that she will be accepted by the other children if she is "patient and friendly" and expects a lot of herself.

Readers learn nothing about hearing impaired or deaf people or the severe communication and socialization problems that a hearing impaired child encounters in a mainstreamed school setting. To compare a hearing loss to needing dental braces (which eventually come off) or to getting a rash after eating chocolate (which goes away in a few days) misrepresents hearing loss, even a mild hearing loss. It's not that simple. Once again, children are told that to be accepted they must perform well ("I'm the best in arithmetic," says Kim), or be patient and friendly and wait. Like many other works, this book implies that either of these alternatives will guarantee acceptance. The book's most positive element is its interracial cast. Kim is Asian American and there are Black children (males only) as well. Kim's teacher—a man—is also Black. In addition, the theme of "everyone is different" is a refreshing change from "we're all the same." It's a pity the information about hearing impairment isn't more accurate! [Janet W. Acevedo]

## Just Like Always

by Elizabeth-Ann Sachs.

Atheneum, 1981,

\$9.95, 160 pages, grades 5-up

Jamie and Courtney have similar disabilities (scoliosis) and must cope with a prolonged hospital stay. The two girls are very different. Jamie is outspoken, mischievous, always



*Apple Is My Sign is a fine novel that presents deaf people in a non-stereotypic way.*

questioning the arbitrary hospital rules and exploring limits. Courtney, a shy quiet girl, "has always been a model patient" and lives in a fantasy world. It is through the very different personalities of the two girls that the reader subtly realizes that individuals with the same disability are just that—individuals.

Although the hospital staff is depicted in a somewhat clichéd fashion, the hospital setting is described realistically and well. The author also captures the clinical atmosphere that often violates patient rights. This is evident when a doctor callously invites his colleagues in to observe his examination of the girls and in the insensitive lack of communication that occurs when no one tells Courtney that her hair must be cut off.

*Just Like Always* portrays the growth of two individuals and their friendship; it touches the reader with the tenderness of friendship and the reality of living with a disability. [Caryl-Robin Dresher]

## The Lake Is On Fire

by Maureen Crane Wartski.

Westminster Press, 1981,

\$9.95, 130 pages, grades 6-up

Rick has recently been blinded and lost his best friend in an accident. He is a negative and angry teenager who is unwilling to accept the help of his anxious, worried parents. While this might have been an accurate introduction to a book about the process of learning to accept an acquired disability, the tale quickly becomes an unrealistic—and handicapped—soap opera that includes Rick's suicide attempt.

A forest fire provides the traditional "do or die" situation in which Rick is suddenly changed from a helpless, dependent disabled person to a "super cripp," one who suddenly develops the miraculous skills needed to save himself and an untrained dog in the midst of a forest fire. One wonders if the author (who also wrote *My Brother Is Special*; see below) has ever even had any contact with blind people. [Caryl-Robin Dresher]

## Lester's Turn

by Jan Slepian.

Macmillan, 1981,

\$8.95, 139 pages, grades 6-up

Lester, an independent teenager with cerebral palsy, is determined to "free" his disabled friend Alfie from a wasteful life in an institution, but his wish to free Alfie often seems to approach obsessional proportions. When kidnapping fails, Lester convinces an overzealous volunteer to take Alfie in—if Lester can obtain the money necessary to support Alfie. This financial need leads to a Busby Berkeley production-number fund raiser. The book ends with Alfie's death (yet another disabled person who dies at a book's conclusion) and Lester's realization that his need to save his friend was at least partially due to his own fear of growing up.



There is a teenage volunteer with a patronizing "Oh, please let me be of service" tone; a hospital administrator, stern and in control, and most of all, Alfie, the orphaned and directionless institutional resident. All of the characters are less than positive role models and the language is also handicapist. Words such as "slow in the head," "inmates," "suffer" and "feeble-minded" are used freely—even by disabled characters. [Caryl-Robin Dresher]

### A Little Time

by Anne Norris Baldwin.  
Viking, 1978,  
\$6.95, 119 pages, grades 3-5

This warm and sensitive story explores a family's interaction with Matt, a Down's Syndrome child, and with each other. Mom does too much for Matt; Dad travels too much to notice his family's problems; ten-year-old Sarah is too resentful; her older sisters have their own lives; two-year-old Peter depends too much on Matt.

Matt causes special problems for Sarah when a girl whom she wants desperately as a friend rejects her because of Matt. Sarah's pain is real: society does not accept those who are different. When Matt gets lost during Sarah's birthday party, her classmates help find him. Through this incident they learn more about him and become more comfortable. (Matt is so loveable that anybody would want to hug him, give him anything he wants and protect him.) After Sarah's overworked Mom gets sick, the family reluctantly decides to place Matt in a group home. Though life without Matt is more relaxed, and while Matt develops new skills at the group home, the family decides that they want Matt home with them. Dad sums it up, "All his life he's been trying to teach us how to play." Learning how to live with Matt or any disabled child takes honesty, acceptance and courage. [Judith J. Trotta]

### Max's Dream

by William Mayne,  
illustrated by Laszlo Acs.  
Greenwillow Books, 1977,  
\$6.95, 88 pages, grades 5-8

This handicapist tale centers on an annual mid-summer dance. The children, for some unexplained reason, chose Max to be their King of the Dance. (Since Max is an "invalid" who never leaves his bed, this appears to be a gesture made out of pity.) It becomes Max's responsibility to choose a Queen. He dreams about a girl, "someone far away in a big room across the sea." The children search for Max's mystery girl and finally find her in a far-away town. She is a girl Max saw long ago in the place where they make "iron bones" (braces). Max is told he "must come here so that we can help him" and of course, the "iron bones" work wonders. Max and his queen lead the mid-summer dance and he "becomes better and better after that." He and the mystery girl grow up and marry and Max becomes a

member of parliament. (Don't you just love happy endings?)

This poorly written book is filled with handicapist language and attitudes. Max, dependent and isolated, is described as "lying there crippled in his bed day and night." An orphan, Max is a "burden" on the owner of the boarding house in which he resides. The book is also sexist, showing women only in submissive roles. [Caryl-Robin Dresher]

### Mr. Wheatfield's Loft

by Isabel Langis Cusack,  
illustrated by Richard Egielski.  
Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981,  
\$9.95, 143 pages, grades 4-8

Eleven-year-old Ellis Hampton, who has not spoken since he witnessed his father's death when he was three, carries a notepad with him everywhere. He feels that everyone including his mother and stepfather label him "dumb" because he can't talk. He feels accepted by Mr. Wheatfield, who teaches him about racing pigeons, and by Jaime, a young migrant worker who is staying on at Mr. Wheatfield's. Ellis also finds Partleigh, a not-very-racing pigeon, that he cares for. In a not-very-realistic but convenient hurricane finale, everything ends happily: Ellis even finds himself miraculously cured when he calls out to his pigeon.

Traumatic muteness does happen (though not very often), but such miraculous cures are rare indeed in spite of their frequent occurrence in children's books. In addition to perpetuating the instant-cure myth, the book is filled with a pervasive racism and sexism made all the more regrettable because the book is rather well written. [Judith J. Trotta]

### My Brother Is Special

by Maureen Crane Wartski.  
Westminster Press, 1979,  
\$7.95, 152 pages, grades 5-8

Being a new kid in town is never easy, but when your younger brother is developmentally delayed, it sure makes things harder. Moving has not been easy for any of the Harlows—Dad isn't happy with his transfer, Mom feels pressured to put Kip in an institution, Kip is upset because his pet canary has died and Noni feels trapped in her family's difficulties, not to mention her own problems of being accepted and making new friends at school. Noni's only escape and joy is in running. When Noni hears about the Special Olympics, she sees a chance for her brother to become a winner, not just one of those "unfortunate children who are handicapped, retarded." In the process of training Kip for the Special Olympics, Noni helps herself and her family deal with some of the real problems associated with having a disabled child in the family.

*My Brother Is Special* is not great, but it is quite good. The author has managed to touch on many of the well-meaning but patronizing attitudes often encountered by parents and

siblings of children with disabilities. The problems associated with finding an appropriate educational setting for children with disabilities are presented, though other options aside from a segregated school for "retarded kids" are neglected. Family and peer dynamics associated with a disabled child are accurately conveyed, and the author succeeds in making Kip a real kid. Although Noni is occasionally too good to be true, she is not unaware of her situation and its realities. Her frustrations at her brother's limitations are real and legitimate. Only a resort to overly dramatic moments (e.g., use of medication to sedate Kip) keep this book from being truly top-notch. Still and all, *My Brother Is Special* deserves an "honorable mention." [Emily Strauss Watson]

### My Sister Is Different

by Betty Ren Wright,  
illustrated by Helen Cogancherry.  
Raintree (205 Highland Ave.,  
Milwaukee, WI 53203), 1981,  
\$11.55, 32 pages, grades k-5

*My Sister Is Different* explores what having an older sister who is developmentally disabled means to Carlo. Even though Terry is older and bigger, Carlo takes care of Terry and resents the responsibility. His Grandma asks, "Is your heart so dried up and scrawny that it can't love?" When Terry gets lost, Carlo realizes with a rush of brotherly memories that he does love her. He continues to get angry with Terry and sometimes resents her, but he remembers his experience. When Carlo gives Terry a wonderful birthday card, Grandma says approvingly, "Your heart is in better shape than I thought."

The illustrations are as good as the text and show a multi-racial cast of neighborhood children and other characters. (Carlo seems to be Italian, but nothing is specifically mentioned about his background.)

This appealing book can be read to younger children, and even adults will warm to its gentle understanding and respect for those who are labeled mentally retarded. [Judith J. Trotta]

### The New Boy Is Blind

by William E. Thomas.  
Messner, 1980,  
\$7.79, 64 pages, grades 3-6

Ricky's first experiences in a classroom with sighted peers is told from the perspective of one of his classmates. There is good information about how Ricky writes with a braille, learns to walk around the classroom and school building using trailing (walking with one hand outstretched and touching the wall) and uses tactual maps; how sighted students are taught to guide Ricky by having him hold their elbows is also presented well. This information is presented simply and clearly enough to be useful to very young children. There are some other good points; for instance,



a child notes: "Mr. Allen said that we helped Ricky too much. He said that Ricky was only blind, not helpless."

In spite of the book's good points, *The New Boy Is Blind* contains many damaging and stereotypic images. Ricky is portrayed as socially incompetent, lacking social experiences to an almost unbelievable degree. "Ricky had never been to a boys room before, so I had to explain the place to him," says the narrator. And later: "He had never played much with kids before. He couldn't understand when kids were mean" and "Ricky would sometimes start to sing right in the middle of Mr. Allen's reading lesson." Although Ricky does achieve greater social skills, this portrayal reinforces a very common negative image. A scene in which children cluster around Ricky and stare at him while he "would sing for them or tell jokes to make them laugh" is offensive. The book also implies that there is something wrong with appearing to be blind, and that success means covering it up:

Soon Ricky and his sighted guides were walking around the halls without problems. If you didn't know Ricky was blind, it would've been hard to tell from just looking at him. . . . Mr. Norman taught Ricky to always look in the direction of a person who is talking. This made it harder still for someone to tell that Ricky was blind.

In addition, Ricky's mother is so overprotective that she is afraid to let her son go on class trips, play in the playground or visit other students' homes; she even buttons his coat for him. Although she "comes around" later in the story, her overprotectiveness is so pervasive and overdone that it cannot be counteracted.

In spite of some good information about the ways in which young blind students function and a few scattered positive comments, *The*

*New Boy Is Blind* cannot be recommended. [Paula Wolff]

## Paulus and the Dragon

written and illustrated by Jean Dulieu.  
Crossing Press (Trumansburg, NY), 1978,  
\$3.95 (paper), 78 pages, grades 2-5

In this fantasy Paulus, a forest-dwelling dwarf, stumbles through life largely dependent upon luck and the beneficence of others. Paulus has been given a fire-spouting dragon in return for a favor. His attempts to survive with the dragon (a significant feat in view of the fact that it enjoys eating dwarfs) and finally to relieve himself of this burden comprise the plot.

Unfortunately, Paulus seems to be rather stupid. When he finds letters with no writing at all, he says, "Just what I thought. . . . There's nothing on the envelope. So it must be for me again. . . . It seems to be important, but I do wish this letter writer could be a little bit clearer."

Even when Paulus succeeds in his efforts, it seems largely due to chance. (On the other hand, it is evident that the dragon by might alone is a superior creature.) Although Paulus is likeable, he reinforces the stereotype that being small means being inferior and incapable. [Rosemary Kasper]

## Please don't tease me . . .

by Jane M. Madsen with Diane Bockoras,  
illustrated by Kathleen T. Brinko.  
Judson Press, 1980,  
\$2.95, unpagged, grades 2-7

Diane Bockoras has an arthritic condition and, not surprisingly, was teased a lot by her schoolmates. "Please don't tease me . . ." attempts the worthy goal of reducing teasing behavior. Sensitive, straightforward and positive interaction between children and teachers (or other adults) can do much to eliminate teasing and reduce the harm that teasing does to budding self-esteems. Unfortunately, this book's attempt to deal with an often avoided subject will do little to change anyone's attitude.

The story itself encourages passivity by both children and adults. Diane, whose only dimension is her disability, never fights back; her only response is to smile at those who torment her. Diane's mother "didn't try to answer her questions but simply said, 'Diane, one day they will understand.'" Diane's teacher answers Diane's pleas for help by saying that "it won't help" to tell the children not to tease. While the book may reflect the author's childhood experiences some 20 years ago, these are hardly the messages we want to give children today.

Some suggestions for classroom discussions of teasing are offered in a concluding "note to adults." Unfortunately, these are patronizing and focus on ways to encourage children to consider their behavior towards "those less fortunate than they." Effective teaching em-

phasizes learning about children's differences and about their different needs, not about charitable tolerance or passive "acceptance." A final point: the library card catalog listing on the copyright page is the only place in the book that states why Diane is different, and there the unfortunate term "deforming" arthritis is used. [Kipp Watson and Jack Reed]

## Run from a Scarecrow

by Irene Bennett Brown.  
Concordia, 1978,  
\$5.95, 128 pages, grades 5-9

The book jacket states that *Run from a Scarecrow* is "based on the 23rd Psalm." It might be better described as a modern metaphor of the 23rd psalm. It is a story about fear, danger and finding the strength to face both. It is also a story about loneliness. There is no preaching and God is not even mentioned. This is an adventure story, and a good one.

Hank, growing up in Missouri in the 1880s, longs for adventure. While attempting to "go West" and become a cowboy, he meets Bigger Stokes, a mysterious and mute boy. Hank's loneliness and his sympathy for Bigger eventually lead him to take Bigger back home with him.

The boys become close friends, and Hank's reaction to Bigger's inability to talk is what would be expected of a simple but sensitive boy who needs a friend. The two manage to communicate extremely well, and Hank misses only the sound of another voice in response to his own.

All of the characters are well defined, and the Judeo-Christian values underlined by the story are developed through the characters' treatment of each other. The author is an excellent storyteller. There is a build-up of suspense that is not resolved until the last chapter. One can even forgive the cliché of Bigger's finding his voice in time to try to save his friend from the villain. (In fairness to the author, Bigger's inability to talk is a plausible reaction to the witnessing of his parents' murder.)

The ending ties up all loose ends a bit too quickly and neatly, but the book is a "good read" with valid messages about friendship. [Lois Wolff]

## Sam and His Cart

by Arthur Honeyman,  
illustrated by Michael de Waide.  
EMC Publishing (St. Paul, MN), 1980,  
\$6.95, 56 pages, grades 3-5

*Sam and His Cart* is about a boy who was "born crippled" and uses a wheelchair (not a "cart"). At the age of twelve Sam starts to work by selling lightbulbs from door to door. He scares children and their parents because he "shakes" and "doesn't talk like the other children." Sometimes Sam stays at home because he doesn't like to scare people. In addition to depicting the protagonist as a "freak"

*The illustrations for Sam and His Cart are as handicapist as the text. Sam, who has cerebral palsy, is described as "shakey" and the illustrations show him with three heads.*





who "shakes," the book suggests that disabled children have nothing to gain by staying in school. (The fact that this is illegal appears to be irrelevant.)

The author extends his bigotry to non-disabled people. In his travels, Sam meets a "big, fat foreign lady," who asks, "Watta you wanta?" (Could she be British?) Sam also encounters a "beautiful lady" who warns the children to stay away from Sam because they "might hurt him"; she throws Sam some money in an effort to get Sam to "go away from here." A woman who is "old and ugly" and carries a "crooked cane" befriends Sam after the children taunt him and helps convince the neighborhood to buy Sam's lightbulbs so that Sam can continue to work.

The quality of the artwork reflects the text. Sam's shaking is conveyed by making him look as if he has three heads. Sam is sometimes shown to be much smaller than the other characters; while this was probably done to convey Sam's feelings, it only reinforces the "poor little crippled boy" aspects of the story. Most of the other characters are also depicted stereotypically.

This book is, unfortunately, geared towards very young readers. Would you want this to be a child's first exposure to another child with a disability? [Caryl-Robin Dresher]

### "Seeing" in the Dark

by Elizabeth Rider Montgomery,  
illustrated by Troy Howell.  
Garrard, 1979,  
\$5.58, unpaginated, grades 1-5

Kate, who is blind, is going to a new school. Her adventures there are the substance of this very stereotypic book.

Kate's new school is very conveniently located on the same block as her house. The author writes: "There were no streets to cross so Kate did not hold Miss Stone's arm. Instead her hands touched the walls of the office buildings they passed." This is not realistic. No blind child would walk in the street simply by following buildings; if bus service weren't necessary, a cane would be used.

The children give Kate all sorts of tests to see if she is really blind. When she is able to identify objects by touching them, they are further convinced that she is not really blind. Finally, they spin her around until she becomes disoriented. Only then do they believe she is blind. Young children could easily detect that a classmate is blind. Also, kids generally are not cruel. When one child says: "It must be awful to be blind. I feel sorry for you." Kate answers, "Don't feel sorry for me. It's no fun being blind, but I'm used to it."

Although the children do come to accept Kate, it is only at the end of the story—when she leads her teacher and classmates out of a smoke-filled room—that she truly "makes it." Kate plays the violin, is able to read braille, and seems to have some sort of personality. She should not have to perform heroic deeds in order to be accepted.

In addition to being poorly written, the book

has no useful information about blindness. It only serves as a reminder that many people are unable to see beyond a physical handicap. [Robert Feinstein]

### The Seeing Stick

by Jane Yolen,  
illustrated by Remy Charlip and  
Demetra Maraslis.  
T.Y. Crowell, 1977,  
\$8.95, unpaginated, grades K-UP

Written in the style of an ancient fairytale, this new tale tells of an emperor, his blind daughter Hwei Ming, and the old man who comes to help her.

In stereotypic fashion, the emperor undertakes a search to find someone to "cure" Hwei Ming; the fact that the person who does help is both old and blind draws on another stock literary device. The book can also be misleading; it states, "As the princess listened, she grew eyes on the tips of her fingers." Obviously meant to be poetic, the image will confuse children and does not adequately convey the unique perceptual experiences of people who gain information about the world through senses other than vision. When the princess teaches blind children "to see as she saw," it reinforces the all too common idea that blind people can help others who cannot see, but are unable to fulfill varied roles in the outside world.

The pictures in wax crayon and pencil are unusual. However, they are very unclear and are unsuitable for use with visually impaired students. [Paula Wolff]

### The Seeing Summer

by Jeannette Eyerly.  
Lippincott, 1981,  
\$9.50, 153 pages, grades 4-6

This is the story of a friendship that develops between Jenny Lee, a blind girl, and Carey Cramer, who is sighted. Jenny is an active, independent child; there is some awkwardness between the two girls at first, until Carey comes to understand how capable Jenny is.

Although the book is in general both positive and accurate, it does contain some inaccurate information. For instance, at one point Jenny tells Carey, "You don't have to stare." When Carey protests that she wasn't staring Jenny says, "Yes, you were. I can feel you." Stares can not be felt! Furthermore, the book says that Jenny began learning to use a cane at age five, which is a very early age to learn this skill.

Another problem is that Carey is sometimes a "super blink." For example, when Carey and Jenny are walking together, "Sometimes the tip of her white cane, sweeping from side to side, found an obstacle before Carey found it with her eyes." A cane can not pick up what the eye can. Jenny's independence is a plus but at times she seems downright nasty. This, unfortunately, is a common belief about blind people.

Despite the inaccuracies cited, the book has a great deal of worthwhile information about blindness. It is well written, has a good adventure story and portrays Carey and Jenny interacting as friends, trying to help each other, with blindness being deemphasized. [Robert Feinstein]

### Seven Feet Four and Growing

by H. Alton Lee.  
Westminster Press, 1978,  
\$7.50, 93 pages, grades 4-6

Being tall brings a whole set of special problems, and fifteen-year-old Bill Saunders is acutely aware of all of them. He is self-conscious about his height, and because he is fearful of his power, he is afraid to be assertive. He has special clothing requirements, which are costly for his parents. Most important, he looks like a basketball superstar—and does not like the sport.

Bill must decide whether to attend basketball camp during summer vacation, a choice which his father, coach and buddies strongly advocate. In reaching his decision, Bill receives support and guidance from some strong allies including an empathic young—and female—veterinarian. Dr. Morgan comments: "You have to get over this bad opinion you have of yourself, just because you're especially large. If you like yourself and accept yourself for what you are—and can be—other people will, too." With this advice and the confidence inspired by a female friend, Bill is able to accept himself and begin planning for the future.

The author accurately presents the difficulties encountered by persons of large stature. The feelings of Bill and his family are portrayed realistically if somewhat idealistically, although the resolution of Bill's conflicts is rather simplistic. [Rosemary Kasper]

### Silent Dancer

by Bruce Hlibok,  
photos by Lis Glasgow.  
Messner, 1981,  
\$8.29, 64 pages, grades 3-6

Nancy is studying ballet; she is also deaf. *Silent Dancer* tells this fourth grader's story with grace and dignity, not to mention a high level of interest.

Nancy is shown interacting with her parents and older brothers (who are also deaf) as well as with her friends and teachers. While *Silent Dancer* deals primarily with Nancy's love of ballet and her desire to dance at Lincoln Center, the book also provides useful information about deafness including a matter-of-fact treatment of sign language. It also shows deaf adults (professionals at that) and gives myth-dispelling information on how Nancy hears. *Silent Dancer* clearly and sensitively tells the story of a girl who loves to dance and who just happens to be deaf. The book, written by Nancy's brother (who is also deaf), shows how first-hand knowledge contributes to a bias-free book. [Emily Strauss Watson]



## Through Grandpa's Eyes

by Patricia MacLachlan,  
illustrated by Deborah Ray.  
Harper & Row, 1979,  
\$8.95, unpagged, grades 2-4

This is a warm story about the relationship between a young boy, John, and his grandfather, who cannot see. The grandfather encourages John to close his eyes and use his ears and senses of touch and smell to become more aware of the environment, and to understand how he perceives and appreciates his surroundings without vision. John does understand, but he goes beyond this and shows real empathy. The warm, caring, and very special relationship that the two share makes *Through Grandpa's Eyes* special. [Paula Wolff]

## What Difference Does It Make, Danny?

by Helen Young,  
illustrated by Quentin Blake.  
Andre Deutsch, 1980,  
\$7.95, 93 pages, grades 4-7

Danny is a nine-year-old boy with epilepsy whose disability becomes a problem when he is handicapped by the school's sports teacher, Mr. Masterson. It is Mr. Masterson's own ignorance and prejudices that handicap Danny, not Danny's limitations or inabilities. Danny is a bright, mischievous, active child. When he dislikes the way he is treated, Danny rebels. It is Danny's active involvement in overturning Mr. Masterson's decision to limit his activities that makes this book interesting.

The story dispels myths and misconceptions about epilepsy and does so in a humorous, straightforward manner. When Mr. Masterson says "He doesn't look like an epileptic, does he?" another teacher answers, "What do you expect? Horns? He doesn't look like a little devil either, but he can be." The author rejects labeling, a favorite societal pastime. The school's headmistress states that Danny is "... not an epileptic. His fits are epileptic. He isn't."

In a simple informative manner, the book describes what epilepsy is, the medical tests used to diagnose it and, in a moving but realistic scene, what a seizure involves. There is one false note when the headmistress says: "Anyone can have a fit. Just think how often we say, 'I nearly had a fit!'" This can be confusing to children, since it does not distinguish between a fit of temper and an epileptic seizure.

The book has two more serious flaws. Attempting to make Danny's hospitalization less frightening, the author downplays the trauma involved. Hospitalization is a frightening experience, and it is far better to recognize feelings of fear than to negate or ignore them. The second, far more serious, drawback is the resolution of the conflict between Mr. Masterson and Danny. It is only after Danny turns into a "super cripp" (through his rescue of a drowning boy) that Mr. Masterson "mends his ways." In addition, Mr. Masterson almost immediately appears on crutches himself, but no explana-

tion for this is provided. It is unclear to the readers what to make of this. [Carolynne Bethka]

## What If You Couldn't . . . ? A Book About Special Needs

by Janet Kamien,  
illustrated by Signe Hanson.  
Scribner's, 1979,  
\$9.95, 83 pages, grades 4-up

*What If You Couldn't . . . ?* can answer many questions about disabilities and people with disabilities. Its viewpoint is sound and anti-handicapist; disabled people are shown as active, independent, contributing members of society.

The book explores visual impairment, mental retardation, mobility impairment, hearing impairment, emotional disturbances and learning disabilities—and is equally successful in discussing each area. The author shows rare insight and sensitivity and the non-patronizing text is clear. Whenever technical terms are introduced (and they are certainly not avoided), they are easy to understand and accept. The artwork carefully reflects the text's ideas and concepts. Multi-racial children and adults with disabilities are shown as doers—as learners, teachers, helpers or friends. Learning theory is presented in a way that could clear the cobwebs from much highly acclaimed but muddled professional literature. (The description of mental retardation is particularly good.)

The author's own conclusion is worth noting:

If the special class in my school had not been hidden, and if we could have played with the kids and done things together and had been able to ask questions when we were curious, I think everybody would have been much better off. We might all have learned a lot about how people really are different from each other and how they are mostly very much the same. We might have learned that there is more than one way to do almost anything.

It is this theme that characterizes *What If You Couldn't . . . ?* and makes it a one-of-a-kind, must-have book for anyone interested in breaking down barriers. [Emily Strauss Watson]

## Winners: Eight Special Young People

by Dorothy Shainman Siegel.  
Messner, 1978,  
\$7.79, 192 pages, grades 5-8

*Winners* is a loser. It features eight young adults with disabilities, each chosen simply because they have "overcome" their disability. No effort seems to have been made to reflect the current concerns of the disabled community—an increasingly sensitive and vocal minority that cares deeply how they are portrayed by their non-disabled peers. No mention is made of architectural, communicational and attitudinal barriers. In fact, the employment difficulties encountered by a person with hemophilia are mentioned without indi-

cating that it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of disability. Instead, *Winners* abounds with cloying patronizing super-crip images, complete with doses of such handicapist terms as "crippled," "affliction," and "misfortune." One person is described as "a friendly, self-reliant young man, with none of the hang-ups so many of us expect in the handicapped."

The author also offers simplistic solutions to complicated problems, implying that a disability can be neatly negated if the disabled person can "face his handicap . . . (if he/she is) stubbornly determined to overcome it." It is far too simplistic for the mother of a deaf person to state that "The only thing that's wrong with them is that they can't hear!"

A pecking order of disabilities is reinforced when Julio, a blind person, comments: "I can imagine worse handicaps, y'know. Deafness, for example. If I was not able to talk or hear, I think I would flip out. . . . Everytime I read about somebody who makes it with that kind of handicap, I think, wow. They're really great."

All of these young people appear to come from middle- and upper middle-class families, including an ex-drug addict who states: "I wasn't like the junkies in the ghetto. . . . Not low class." Their parents can afford architects for their homes and motorcycles or horses for their children. Nice as this is, it does a disservice to children with disabilities from less affluent backgrounds—and presents an unrealistic picture of our society. [Emily Strauss Watson]

## FOR OLDER READERS

### Alice with Golden Hair

by Eleanor Hull.  
Atheneum, 1981,  
\$9.95, 186 pages, grades 7-up

*Alice with Golden Hair* tells of a mildly retarded young woman who has been hired as an aide in a nursing home for elderly people. Many hints but little solid information is offered about Alice's family life, her disability and the reasons she has spent a number of years in residential settings for the developmentally delayed. Clearly Alice has led a sheltered life, one that has not given her basic living skills such as traveling independently or handling money. On the other hand, Alice's good sense and caring attitude allow her to operate competently in her new environment.

The book is written from Alice's point of view and readers see how she matures and gains insight. For example, Alice first sees Jim, the deaf physical therapist, as "just another handicapped person," but she comes to realize that he is actually a competent adult, fluent in sign language and sensitive to the needs of others. Similarly, Alice first sees the Black members of the staff in stereotypic terms, but she eventually becomes close friends with a Black woman who seeks to break racist stereotypes. The portrayals of the



elderly residents of the nursing home are also sometimes stereotypic, but unfortunately they reflect to a degree certain realities for older people abandoned by society. Sensitive readers will understand that the book does not endorse biased thinking. As with *Little Little* (see below), a certain amount of sophistication on the part of the reader is needed. [Emily Strauss Watson]

## Breakaway

by Ruth Hallman.  
Westminster, 1981,  
\$8.95, 92 pages, grades 7-up

When Rob becomes deaf after a swimming accident, his mother tries to "protect" him by cutting him off from his former friends. She also discourages him from wearing a hearing aid and learning new communication skills. Rob's girl friend Kate is determined that he overcome his self-pity and go about his life. They run away together and Kate convinces Rob to accept his deafness; he learns sign language and finds that he can still be a contributing member of society.

This book is positive because it shows a deaf person as capable and able to live a full and fulfilling life. It also shows the overprotectiveness that a deaf person might encounter from a parent, guardian or other adult. Although the story is exciting, it is somewhat unbelievable; everything happens so fast and so easily for Rob (he seems to learn sign language overnight) that it does not give readers a realistic picture. (The information about Rob's sudden deafness is also questionable.) A "super-crip" incident is also thrown in for good measure: Rob's ability to lip read helps to foil a robbery. [Glenn Anderson]

## Let a River Be

by Betty Sue Cummings.  
Atheneum, 1979,  
\$8.95, 195 pages, grades 8-up

Ella, who is fighting to save her beloved Indian River from pollution, has become known as the town eccentric. A young man who appears on her pier one day knows no other name than "Reetard." At first grudgingly, Ella shares her meager food and home with Reetard. She also shares her knowledge and love of the river. Reetard gains both a social conscience and a sense of self-worth; Ella gains a friend and a renewed awareness of needing other people. Together this odd couple successfully fight the person primarily responsible for the pollution.

The book does have its drawbacks. For instance, why couldn't Ella give Reetard another name? More important did Reetard have to die at the end of the book, making this one more disabled person killed off in the course of a novel? Despite these shortcomings and an unnecessarily technical vocabulary, readers will be thoroughly caught up in this work by a skilled storyteller. [Judith J. Trotta]

## Little Little

by M. E. Kerr.  
Harper & Row, 1981,  
\$8.95, 183 pages, grades 7-up

A humorous look at society and its mores through the eyes of some memorable "little people" is provided in this whimsical tale. The major protagonists—Little Little La Belle and Sydney Cinnamon—are both dwarfs with one major difference: Little Little is "p.f." (perfectly formed), Sydney is not. Sydney's appearance and his lack of a high school education are considered significant disadvantages by Little Little's parents.

Many of society's beliefs, traditions, and practices are taken to task. Little Little and Sydney are well aware of the injustices which prevail and try their best to pursue their own destinies. Although not always successful, they make a valiant effort and never lose their sense of humor.

Although satirical, the book is also informative. Little Little's Grandfather claims that Tom Thumb could have been famous without being a dwarf if he had used his intelligence "instead of letting someone exploit him!" When Little Little asks what "exploit" means, he replies: "It means to utilize for profit. This Barnum fellow made a lot of money satisfying the public's curiosity about what someone different looks like. He turned Tom Thumb into a sideshow!"

The leading characters are well-rounded and clearly defined. Readers learn that all people have the same needs, problems and abilities—small persons simply have some special needs which must be met. The dialogue is fast-paced and witty. Although sensationalism is depicted, this is clearly done to educate. Stereotypes are skillfully shown to be just that—stereotypes. This book is recommended for young adults who can understand the satire. [Rosemary Kasper]

## Of Braces and Blessings

by Bonnie Wheeler.  
Christian Herald Books, 1980,  
\$4.95, 159 pages, grades 10-up

Bonnie and Dennis Wheeler have six children (three "natural" and three adopted), all of whom have physical, mental or emotional disabilities. The warm and loving parents are courageous people with a faith that has helped them deal with all of the problems that the Wheeler children have had. Bonnie Wheeler says that she sees her children as whole, individual people—but the emphasis in this book is on the children's disabilities and how God has helped them "overcome" those disabilities. The book is a classic example of the "Christian testimony" genre.

The author accepts her children's disabilities as "blessings in disguise," as opportunities to prove her faith. While this seems to have helped her cope with braces, operations and illnesses, one feels that the solution of faith is a simplistic one. The author says many times that she "almost" gave up or "almost"

lost faith, but then she "remembered" that Jesus was present. Her story might be more widely meaningful if she had not glossed over those moments.

The book offers very little for anyone who does not have the Wheelers' brand of faith. [Lois Wolff]

## Passing Through

by Corinne Gerson.  
Dial, 1978,  
\$7.95, 193 pages, grades 8-up

*Passing Through* describes the friendship that develops between two teenagers, each in need of a special friend. After Liz Jordan's brother commits suicide, she finds herself alone and confused, tormented by thoughts of her own vulnerability and bereft of the one person with whom she could share her innermost doubts and fears. Then Liz becomes a tutor to Sam Benedict, a classmate with cerebral palsy. Sam is bright, sensitive and quite popular but he lacks that one special friend who accepts him as comfortably as he has learned to accept his disability. A friendship between the two develops but it upsets Liz' parents, who refer to Sam as "spastic" and a "dirty Polack." Things are eventually resolved in a realistic if a bit too-fast-paced ending; Sam and Liz find they have each gained insight and perspective on their own problems as well as those they can expect to face as adults.

Sam is realistically presented as a person who has learned to accept himself and his disability. The depiction of Liz respects the difficulties of dealing with teenage suicide, an increasing phenomenon. No simple answers are provided for there are none to give. Some of the adults are presented in a stereotypic manner, but all in all, *Passing Through* is an excellent book. [Emily Strauss Watson]

## Physical Disabilities

by Gilda Berger.  
Franklin Watts, 1979,  
\$7.45, 119 pages, grades 9-up

This book fails to distinguish between "physical disability" and "handicap." Physical disabilities limit a person's mobility, senses or mental faculties. Handicaps are the burdens foisted upon disabled people by a society that is insensitive, uncaring and, at times, cruel.

Concern for an enlightened attitude is expressed; the book notes, "It is becoming very clear that the most important problems of the disabled are not the disabilities themselves, but the attitudes of people toward them." Nonetheless, the book reinforces stereotypic attitudes. For instance, famous disabled people who have "made it" (and are thus acceptable) are identified by the dozen. One such person, Charles Steinmetz, is described thus: "one of the most brilliant inventors in the field of electricity in the early years of this century, he was only four feet tall and had a deformed, misshapen body." What does having a "deformed, misshapen" body (the adjectives



themselves reveal much about the author's attitude) have to do with being brilliant? In any case, identifying famous disabled people does not promote acceptance of the typical person who has a disability; if anything, it encourages the "super cripp" syndrome.

One illustration shows disabled teenagers playing Monopoly in an institutional setting complete with an attendant nurse. The caption says, "This barrier-free hall allows the disabled to live more normal social lives." This perpetuates the medical model stereotype: disabled people are treated as if they had contagious diseases. Sick people are quarantined until they recover; if disabled people are quarantined, they throw away the thermometer.

Even the book jacket reinforces negative attitudes. It shows a puzzle with the outline of a person, but some of the pieces are missing. This implies that disabled people would be just like non-disabled people if it weren't for some missing anatomical parts. The quality of being human is not based on a quantity of anatomical parts. [Kipp Watson]

## The Quiet Revolution: The Struggle for the Rights of Disabled Americans

by James Haskins with J.M. Stifle.  
T.Y. Crowell, 1979,  
\$7.95, 147 pages, grades 7-up

*The Quiet Revolution* gives lip service to the struggle for civil and human rights that is being waged by disabled people but fails to present issues from the perspectives of disabled activists. It is indicative of the author's perspective that a bill of rights for the "handicapped" composed by the United Cerebral Palsy Associations (UCPA) provides the structure for the book. Thus issues are defined by a provider agency rather than by any disabled activists. To give just one example of the distortions that result, the first enumerated right in UCPA's bill of rights is the right to the prevention of disability, whereas the right to travel free of handicapping barriers—an issue of greater importance to activists—is buried

within an overall right to barrier-free public facilities.

In yet another example of the author's handicapist perspective, he claims that telethons "destigmatize" disabilities and provide a major impetus for the advancement of disability rights. He fails to mention that disabled activists believe that telethons do precisely the opposite. Adding insult to injury, this book refers to children as "crippled" and to people who use wheelchairs as "confined."

The author's failure to consult or even recognize the leadership of the disability rights movement—let alone mention any disability rights organizations—reflects a perspective that renders his book useless—if not damaging. [Kipp Watson]

## Run, Don't Walk

by Harriet May Savitz.  
Franklin Watts, 1979,  
\$6.90, 122 pages, grades 8-up

*Run, Don't Walk* tells how the paths of two wheelchair-bound teenagers cross as they struggle to overcome personal, social and political barriers. When faced with inaccessible school bathrooms, Samantha Lee Anderson tries to run away from the problem by going home to use the bathroom or just "holding it" all day. Johnny Jay spends months picketing the school and eventually stages a sit-in that results in his expulsion. Meanwhile, Samantha has decided to enter the town marathon race, and she trains day after day. When the marathon committee rejects her application on the basis of her disability, she is finally forced to fight back. At this point she realizes that Johnny's fight to get accessible bathrooms is also her fight, and she leads a three-day walk-out at her school that ends in victory as well as Johnny's reinstatement. A little romance also develops between the two youths as the story unfolds.

Samantha and Johnny are a far cry from the passive, dependent disabled youngsters usually depicted in children's fiction. The author is also to be commended for showing disabled teenagers fighting back and working together to overcome societal barriers.

A teenager's life is one-third laughs and two-thirds tears, and this is captured in most engaging fashion in this well-written book. The author manages to be sensitive to the crises so common to teenagers as well as to the many crises in the life of a disabled person, young or old. The story, though fiction, is as true as life itself, and the reader will be both laughing and crying with each turn of the page. This book is a must. [Betsy Gimbel]

## Signs Unseen, Sounds Unheard

by Carolyn Brimley Norris,  
sketches by deaf children.  
Alinda Press (P.O. Box 553,  
Eureka, CA 95501), 1981,  
\$3.50 (paper), 172 pages, grades 7-up

This wonderful, suspenseful story will give hearing readers considerable insight into the

world of deaf people struggling to survive in a world in which hearing people constantly tell them they *can't* do what they want to do (and what feels natural to them) and *must* do what they don't want to do (no matter how unnatural it feels).

Nine-year-old Nicky has been deaf since birth. His divorced mother and his siblings learned signed English when Nicky was young and his mother is actively involved in the school for deaf children that he attends. Problems arise when Nicky goes to stay with his father while Mother honeymooned with her second husband.

Nicky's father has been told by the "experts" (physicians and speech and hearing specialists) that Nicky won't become successful in a hearing world if he uses signs. The father is determined that Nicky learn to speak; he allows Nicky neither pen and paper, nor even the smallest gesture to communicate. He also hires a tutor, a deaf man whose mother forced him to learn how to speak after he lost his hearing as a child. The tutor ties Nicky's hands to his chair to prevent him from using them in any way.

Nicky runs away rather than submit to further distress. When he needs assistance, he fails to find a "smart hearie" (one who signs and can interpret) but he does meet Marti, who eventually gets him back to his father. Marti becomes curious about deafness and Nicky when she sees how frightened he is about being reunited with his father. In her attempts to learn more, she meets several deaf people and learns a great deal about the different ways in which they successfully deal with societal barriers.

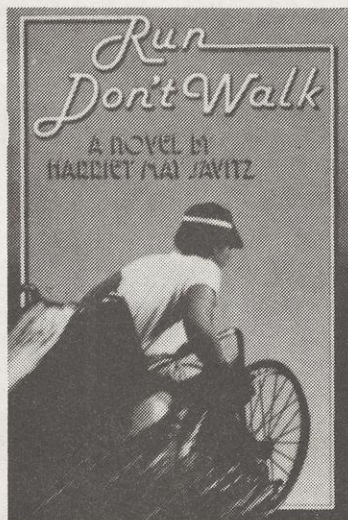
This is an anti-handicapist, non-sexist novel that avoids simple solutions to difficult problems. ASL, its strength and depth as a language and its importance to the deaf community, is described eloquently. [Janet W. Acevedo]

## A Step Further

by Joni Eareckson and Steve Estes.  
Zondervan, 1978,  
\$4.95, 192 pages, grades 10-up

The author's first book, *Joni*, told of the diving accident that left her a quadriplegic teenager. In this book, Joni describes (and documents with quotes from the Bible) her belief that God had reasons for her suffering. Suffering, she says, is God's choicest tool to mold our character. After being thrown from her wheelchair onto an icy pavement, she thinks: "Did I really have the right to complain about my injured face? No. My body was not my own; it was God's to do with as he pleased . . . there are no accidents in a Christian's life. If God has sent something, it must be for our ultimate good." Lying there, she continues in silent prayer: "Dear God, thanks for what's going on right now. . . . Don't let me get angry. . . ."

The God she describes chastens us, using various methods to keep us in spiritual shape ("Often his tool will be a guilty conscience, one of the more effective weapons in God's arsenal of suffering."). When Joni questions why





she isn't healed through prayers, she reasons that "God must want disease to exist in the sense that he wills or chooses for it to exist, for if he didn't he would wipe it out immediately. . . . So God chooses to allow sickness—for many reasons. One of them is in order to mold Christian character. In this way God chooses one form of evil (sickness) to help remove another form of evil (personal sin)." Regrettably, Joni implies that there is a correlation between disability and evil.

Joni's acceptance of her disability seems to consist of thanking God for her disability. The frustrations and anger that come with any disability are minimized or not acknowledged, except as part of the "chastening process" of God's will. Depressing and distressing "explanations" in the form of biblical platitudes are given. Some will see this story as a beautiful testament to Joni's faith. Unfortunately, it presents stereotypes about disability, an all-accepting faith, and the image of a punishing God. Such messages are apt to be disturbing as well as confusing to young people who are already questioning their religion, values and identity. [Mary Ellen Tosi]

### Teaching Exceptional Children: A Special Career

by Carol Teig Anker,  
illustrated with photos.  
Messner, 1978,  
\$8.29, 224 pages, grades 7-up

This book is intended to introduce young readers to the field of instructing exceptional children. Unfortunately, it perpetuates several handicapistic notions.

The author states that she uses the terms "handicapped," "deviant," "exceptional" and "disabled" interchangeably since these words are, she writes, "widely used." Young readers need to learn why disability rights activists would strongly disagree with that decision; only through accurate information will everyone come to realize that a disability only becomes a handicap when societal barriers and attitudes cause it to be. When writing about retarded people, the author uses "Mongoloid" and "Mongolism" rather than Down's Syndrome. And why does the word "crippled" appear? Those who work with disabled children need information that does not depict disability in stereotyped, negative terms.

There are also statements about curriculum that are misleading or not necessarily true. The book does not make it clear, for instance, that many educational institutions are having some success in teaching reading and math to trainable mentally retarded students. There is also a great deal of interest in teaching sign language to hearing impaired children; the author leads one to believe that this is an alternative only for the deaf. The categories of "perceptually impaired" and "neurologically impaired" are not clearly defined here; since these impairments are still not always considered learning disabilities, clear information is particularly important.

Although the author does have much to say

that is valid and important, it is marred by a handicapist perspective. [Sara L. Heskins]

### Yes We Can!

by Wally Frost.  
Regal Books (Ventura, CA 93006), 1981,  
\$8.95, 156 pages, grades 10-up

Wally Frost writes of his determination to live a full life though "confined" to a wheelchair since he had polio over 35 years ago. He honestly tells of the agonies and anger he experienced during his years in a veterans hospital and the shattering of his dreams for success as a college football player. He married despite objections by his wife's family and the fact that his own father also had difficulty in see-

ing how he could lead a normal life. Wally fought their handicapist image of him and fathered and provided for five children. He now lives a "fully human" life and manages to keep a sense of humor.

Wally is also a lay minister involved in many areas of service. Wally's "faith story" sometimes seems a little heavy (there are quotes from the Bible), but some sound faith spurs on his determination. A more serious problem is that Wally seems to be a disabled person who has overcompensated and become almost superhuman to win acceptance. His wife and children are also depicted as almost too perfect. There are no hints of resentments or altered life styles; they are so loving and "all accepting" that they seem too good to be true. [Mary Ellen Tosi]

## Recommended Books

The list below includes books reviewed in previous *Bulletins* (issue dates appear in parentheses) as well as those reviewed in this issue.

### FOR YOUNG READERS

#### Fiction

- The Balancing Girl* by Berniece Rabe, Dutton, 1981.
- Darlene* by Eloise Greenfield, Methuen, 1980 (Vol. 12, No. 2).
- Giant Steps for Steven* by Carol J. Bennett, After School Exchange, 1980 (Vol. 11, No. 8).
- Grandma's Wheelchair* by Lorraine Henriod, Whitman, 1982.
- My Friend Jacob* by Lucille Clifton, Harper & Row, 1980 (Vol. 12, No. 2).
- My Sister Is Different* by Betty Ren Wright, Raintree, 1981.
- Roly Goes Exploring* by Philip Newth, Philomel, 1981.
- Through Grandpa's Eyes* by Patricia MacLachlan, Harper & Row, 1979.
- What's That?* by Virginia Allen Jensen and Dorcas Woodbury Haller, William Collins & World, 1980 (Vol. 11, No. 8).

### FOR MIDDLE GRADES

#### Fiction

- Alesia* by Eloise Greenfield and Alesia Revis, Philomel, 1981.
- Apple Is My Sign* by Mary Riskind, Houghton Mifflin, 1981.
- Belonging* by Deborah Kent, Dial, 1978 (Vol. 9, Nos. 4 & 5).
- God, Why Is She the Way She Is?* by Linda Jacobs Ware, Concordia, 1979.
- Just Like Always* by Elizabeth-Ann Sachs, Atheneum, 1981.
- A Little Time* by Anne Norris Baldwin, Viking, 1978.
- Silent Dancer* by Bruce Hlibok, Messner, 1981.

#### Non-Fiction

- Like It Is: Facts & Feelings about Handicaps from Kids Who Know* by Barbara Adams, Walker, 1979 (Vol. 11, No. 6).
- What If You Couldn't . . . ?* by Janet Kamien, Scribner's, 1979.
- Wheelchair Champions* by Harriet May Savitz, T.Y. Crowell, 1978 (Vol. 9, No. 7).

### FOR OLDER READERS

#### Fiction

- Little Little* by M. E. Kerr, Harper & Row, 1981.
- Passing Through* by Corinne Gerson, Dial, 1978.
- Run, Don't Walk* by Harriet May Savitz, Watts, 1979.
- Signs Unseen, Sounds Unheard* by Carolyn Brimley Norris, Alinda Press, 1981.
- The Swing* by Emily Hanlon, Bradbury, 1979 (Vol. 11, Nos. 1 & 2).

#### Non-Fiction

- See Me More Clearly: Career & Life Planning* by Joyce Slayton Mitchell, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980 (Vol. 12, No. 1).



*A disability rights activist finds that both progress and setbacks have marked the last few years of the struggle for disability rights*

# The Disability Rights Movement Five Years Later

By Frieda Zames

In 1977, I wrote an article about the disability civil rights movement for the special *Bulletin* on handicapism. At that time, disabled activists had high expectations. It seemed that some long-fought-for changes were about to take place.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 contained a civil rights section—Section 504—which provided that “no otherwise qualified handicapped individual . . . shall, solely by reason of his [sic] handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” In 1977, this section was given teeth when specific regulations on education, employment and health care were signed. To us, these regulations signified that society would take steps to eliminate the stereotypes and prejudices, the historic patterns of segregation and discrimination against people with disabilities, and extend to them the privileges of full and equal citizenship.

Several other positive federal laws were also on the books. The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 required that any building constructed or leased with federal funds must be made accessible to physically disabled persons. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 established the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board to disseminate information concerning barriers, provide technical assistance on removing barriers and enforce the Architectural Barriers Act. The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142) of 1975 required that every disabled child receive “a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.” (While the emphasis in PL94-142 is to provide disabled children with special education classes and services when needed, the emphasis in 504 is to mainstream children with disabilities into regular classrooms.)

At the same time, the independent living movement had been growing. The movement began with the founding of the Center for Independent Living, an organization offering numerous services to people with disabilities living in the Berkeley, California area. This center was significant because it was (and still is) primarily administered by disabled people and more than half its employees were disabled. Funds had been provided for the establishment of independent living programs throughout California, and several years later CIL's were set up throughout the country. In 1975, the first national conference on independent living was held in Berkeley, and that same year, Ed Roberts, who is severely disabled, was appointed director of the California State Department of Rehabilitation.

Other organizations of disability ac-

tivists had also formed. Disabled in Action (DIA) was organized in 1970 by Judy Heumann, who had sued the New York City Board of Education when her application for a teaching license was rejected because of her disability. Although her lawsuit was successfully settled out of court, the publicity it received spurred her to found DIA to fight other such battles. (DIA is now a national civil rights organization with city, county and state chapters around the country.)

In 1974, the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, the first coalition of its kind, was organized by 150 disabled people who had gathered in Washington, D.C., for the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. The coalition has grown enormously, and it now represents several million people with a wide variety of disabilities.

Disabled people have always fought injustice and demanded equality. However, at least three characteristics learned from other recent civil rights struggles distinguish the disability rights movement. First, we realized that if we wanted to develop a truly effective movement, we had to gain control of it and fight our own battles. (In the past, professional providers—usually non-disabled—supposedly defended our rights. What they really defended were their jobs and their power over us.) As we took control, our identity, our prestige and our power grew. Second, we no longer accept the view that we should adjust our lives to fit a society that ignores or insults our existence. We now demand a restructuring of society to accommodate our needs and to affirm our equality. For example, we now demand that public buildings and public transit be accessible, that sign language interpreters be provided at public hearings and that braille and large print be available at public libraries. Third, we recognize that in order to be effective we

## A Question of Numbers

Up-to-date and accurate statistics about the number of disabled people in the U.S. are hard to come by, in part because efforts to gather this information have not been extensive or thorough. (The census, for example, asks only about employment-related disabilities.)

The American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities estimates that at least 36 million people in the U.S.—one in six—have physical and/or developmental disabilities. The proportion of disabled people in the population is increasing, in part because of improved medical technology.

For further statistical information, see Vol. 8, Nos. 6 & 7 of the *Bulletin* and the *Digest of Data on Persons with Disabilities* (Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979).



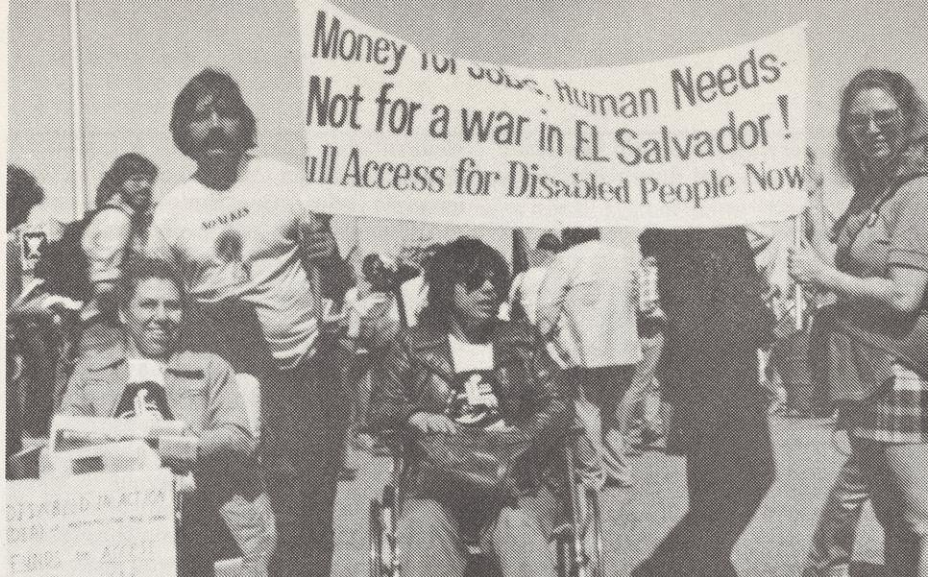
must form coalitions. Not too long ago, people would struggle to obtain benefits for their own specific disability, fighting those with other disabilities for a tiny piece of the political and economic pie. We learned that this divisiveness hurt us all, and that it was important to battle together for our fair share of that pie.

When the 1977 *Bulletin* article was written, the modern disability civil rights movement had achieved significant results — at least on paper. What has happened since then?

In 1977, it seemed that access to public transportation was just around the corner. Such access is of extreme importance to the disabled community (see p. 20) and legislation had already confirmed our right to such access. In 1977, the Carter administration — overruling previous decisions by the Nixon administration — came out in favor of the Transbus, a low-floor, wide door, ramp-equipped model that had been developed with government funding. The disabled community was elated, but we were not prepared for the power and persistence of the American Public Transit Association, a consortium of transit vehicle manufacturers that had developed their own less accessible alternative to the Transbus and local transit authorities. When Transbus contracts were put up for bids in 1978, there were no bids from manufacturers. In spite of attempts by disabled activists to save the Transbus, the concept currently seems like a dead issue, although there is still hope that it can be revived.

Access to transportation continued to be an issue nonetheless. In May, 1979, the Department of Transportation issued its own Section 504 regulations requiring that mass transit become accessible and available to most people with disabilities. Significant improvements were initiated under these regulations, but the impetus for change was recently severely curtailed when the federal transportation regulations were rescinded and relevant decisions were left to the states.

In spite of setbacks in transportation, the future looked promising for disability rights until June, 1979, when the Supreme Court decided its first 504 case, *Southeastern Community College vs. Davis*. Frances Davis, a severely hearing impaired vocational nurse, was denied admission to a registered nursing program solely because of her disability. In deciding the Davis case, the Supreme Court argued that accommodation to provide equal opportunity constituted affirmative action and that 504, which is a



*Disability rights activists are now making alliances with other activists. Above, members of Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York at a rally protesting U.S. involvement in El Salvador; from left, Freida Zames (author of the accompanying article), Michael Imperiale, Paula Wolff and Diane Orr.*

non-discrimination statute, was therefore not applicable. The Court failed to understand that non-discrimination for disabled people *necessitates* various accommodations. Without ramps, braille, sign language interpreters and other similar accommodations, disabled people are in effect barred from the "equal opportunity" mandated by 504 and prevented from realizing their full potential. The Court further ruled that while it is illegal and discriminatory to deprive "genuinely qualified" handicapped persons of the opportunity to participate in a covered program, Section 504 does not require the imposition of undue financial and administrative burdens. The impact of this decision has been considerable.

Within weeks of the Davis ruling, in fact, the American Public Transit Association filed suit against the Department of Transportation for its 504 regulations. The suit cited the Davis decision, claiming that transit accessibility would involve excessive expense, burdensome modifications, technological problems and limited benefits for few disabled people. The Reagan administration accepted the Federal Court of Appeals unanimous decision extending the Davis rationale to transit recipients.

In 1980, Terry Halderman, a retarded resident of Pennhurst State School and Hospital, brought a class action suit against Pennhurst claiming conditions were unsanitary, inhumane and dangerous and that such conditions denied the class members various specified constitutional and statutory rights. In ruling against Halderman's suit, the Supreme Court also cited Davis — as have other court decisions concerning disability rights.

As this *Bulletin* went to press, another significant case was decided by the Supreme Court. It ruled, in *Board of Education vs. Rowley*, that a school district was not obligated to provide a sign language interpreter for a deaf fourth grader under the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142). This is the first Supreme Court decision concerning this Act and will probably set the tone for other PL94-142 cases. The ruling's full impact is of course not yet clear, but there is already concern that it will be used to undermine PL94-142 just as the Davis decision has been used to weaken 504.

Considering these negative decisions, the conservative make-up of the courts (particularly the Supreme Court) and the difficulty that civil rights cases have encountered in the courts, legal experts suggest that it is now best to stay out of court unless the suit involves a cost savings or deals with highly technical and specific issues.

Other recent developments have been equally discouraging as the current administration seeks to both cut back funding in social areas and weaken the federal legislation that we and other activists struggled so hard to obtain. For instance, both the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board and centers for independent living were threatened when federal funding was slashed, but fortunately, sufficient monies were replaced by state legislatures to allow them to continue. Funding for the Legal Services Corporation, which provides free legal services for poor people, has already been curtailed and is now further threatened; this will seriously impact on all poor people including disabled people, who often re-



quire legal services to obtain essential basic needs and to test disability rights legislation.

In November, 1980, the Department of Justice (DOJ) was given the responsibility for 504 implementation that had previously been held by the Department of Health and Human Services. The Attorney General is now reviewing *all* existing regulations and it is likely that there will be considerable weakening of all civil rights legislation, including Section 504 (disability rights), Title VI (rights of racial minorities) and Title IX (women's rights). The following substantive modifications are being considered for Section 504:

1. Replacing provisions requiring "equality" of opportunity with requirements that specify "substantially equal" opportunity;

2. Exempting employment practices from 504 requirements;

3. Requiring "comparable and equivalent" mass transportation instead of "equal access";

4. Incorporating "means tests" for auxiliary aids and services such as readers, braille and large print for blind people, sign language interpreters, canes and hearing aids;

5. Applying the "reasonable accommodations" standard to all areas; thus cost can be used as an excuse not to provide accommodation;

6. Requiring that a "qualified handicapped individual" meet certain performance standards as well as "essential eligibility" criteria. Only people who require minimal accommodation would be considered qualified.

The administration is also planning to

weaken the Education of All Handicapped Children Act. (The DOJ is, for example, advocating the elimination of the appeals process for parents of disabled children dissatisfied with their children's educational process.) Federal funding for this act is also scheduled to be severely cut.

Cuts in federal funding have already seriously affected the social sector. For instance, hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities have already had their benefits cut off. They have been forced either into dependent situations with family or friends, out on the streets or into institutions; some who have suddenly lost benefits have committed suicide in despair. There are, for example, 36,000 homeless people on the streets of New York City alone. Many are ex-mental patients who lost their social security benefits when the Reagan administration ruled that mental illness is no longer to be considered a disability.

Many of us wonder where to turn. We can not turn to the president because he continually votes against our issues in spite of his "safety net" rhetoric. We can not turn to Congress, although we have many allies there, because it too threatens our laws and programs. We clearly can not rely on the courts when the laws are being weakened or misinterpreted. What we can and must do now is continue to organize.

First, we must continue to organize on a national level. The Disability Rights and Education Defense Fund recently formed the National Committee on 504, a coalition of disabled individuals and disability organizations working for a strong national policy of Section 504 en-

forcement. We also must keep alive the concept of cross-disability coalitions on a national, state and local level.

We must also work with state governments, to develop disability legislation that will compensate for the loss of federal legislation. Several states, including California and Massachusetts, have already passed strong disability legislation. In New York, activists are presently working with state legislators on a civil rights law similar to 504. The New York City Coalition on Housing for Disabled People, organized in 1980, is working with a state task force to include "adaptability" in the state housing code. (Adaptability is a new, inexpensive architectural concept which would make every new apartment adaptable to the specific needs of the disabled person(s) living there.)

In addition, we must organize locally. In New York City, we have never been successful at organizing a city-wide cross-disability coalition but we have organized very effective coalitions on specific issues. For instance, a coalition brought about the creation of a home attendant program that allows severely disabled people to recruit, hire, train, supervise, pay for and fire their attendants without intervention from agencies. The Mobility Through Access coalition seeks to obtain access to mass transit (see box on opposite page).

In spite of the weakening of federal protection, access to the law is crucial, and there are current efforts to obtain more effective legal services for the disabled community. Getting legal assistance is often difficult; architectural, communication and attitudinal barriers are tremendous problems — as are economics. (Until recently, in fact, many disabled people who were also poor were unaware of the availability of free legal services.)

Disabled people must also begin to use the power of the vote. Older people in this society have a lot of political strength because they are known to be voters. Many disabled people don't vote because of the obstacles put in their path. We must demand that the entire voting process — including polling places and polling booths — become more accessible to people with disabilities. We need a Voting Rights Act for disabled people.

Finally, we must join broad-based coalitions. In 1976, the July 4th Coalition, which marched in Philadelphia for peace and freedom, asked Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York for support. Some DIA members thought that we

## The Special Significance of the Transportation Issue

Although accessibility to mass transit primarily affects people with mobility impairments, it has been strongly supported by groups representing other disabilities. There are several reasons for this. First, access to the mainstream is crucial to the integration of all disabled people. People with visual impairments need access to print; people with hearing impairments need access to verbal information (radio, TV and telephones as well as the spoken word) and people with mobility impairments need access to buildings and transportation. In all cases, the lack of access creates the same problem—the disabled person is cut off from society. Recognition of the commonality of all access struggles has mobilized the support of all disability activists around this issue.

In addition, no single disability issue has been met by such a formidable opponent as the American Public Transit Association (APTA), a national consortium of local transit authorities and the manufacturers of transit vehicles and equipment such as General Motors. APTA has political and economic power, which in turn enables it to get media coverage and legislative support for its positions. APTA's successful suit against the Department of Transportation's 504 regulations, which stressed highly exaggerated cost factors, initiated a backlash against the fulfillment of all disability rights.



should stick to disability issues since there were so few of us working in a relatively new movement; they also feared that joining such a coalition would be a political liability and risk the loss of our tax exemption. But the membership voted to support the coalition. Since that time, DIA has joined many broad-based coalitions and we have raised the consciousness of non-disabled people about our access needs and our ability to participate in society. For example, some 500 people formed a disability contingent at the recent nuclear freeze rally in New York City and still more joined other contingents.

Alliances must also be made with other activists—particularly those combatting racism and sexism. There is a higher percentage of disability among all poor people in our society due to inadequate housing, improper nutritional and medical care, etc.; minorities, being disproportionately poor, are therefore also disproportionately disabled. Nonetheless, the disability rights movement is primarily white. One explanation is that people of color are struggling with basic survival issues, while the disability rights movement has focused primarily on transportation and other access issues. It has also been suggested that most disabled people who belong to racial minorities consider that questions of race take precedence over disability. (One Black disabled woman described herself as a triangle—different aspects of her identity took precedence depending on the situation in which she found herself.)

On the other hand, most white disabled women view their disability as more significant than their sex. Disabled women's groups have sprung up recently to deal with such issues as employment, education and medical care, which impact more negatively on disabled women than on disabled men. (See "Disabled Women: Sexism without the Pedestal" by Michelle Fine and Adrienne Asch in the *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, July, 1981, pp. 233-248.) Disabled women want to exert more power in the disability rights movement. In addition, women with disabilities want to gain recognition and influence in the feminist movement, which they see as exclusionary. Given the current legislative and financial picture for all oppressed people, we have much to gain by recognizing the commonality of our struggle and goals. (A step in this direction was taken at a recent conference on disability and women's issues; "Access to

## A Tale of Two Cities

New York City has the most extensive mass transit system in the world, but it has been virtually inaccessible to most of the 400,000 disabled and elderly New Yorkers. The struggle to make the system accessible has been marked by controversy between disability activists and members of New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), which has inflated the costs and misrepresented the extent of improvements needed to provide accessibility. (Other transit authorities around the country also gave inflated estimates for making mass transit accessible. Eventually, these estimates frightened the courts and the Congress into substantially reducing requirements.)

Several transportation lawsuits have been filed in New York City. These lawsuits and the DOT 504 regulations forced the MTA to purchase lift-equipped buses, but they picked a model with rear door lifts that is disliked by the disabled community. In November, 1980, activists frustrated and angry by the MTA's stalling and inaccurate propaganda held a sit-in at the MTA executive offices. It gained considerable media coverage, but it was almost a year before the MTA finally agreed to start the lift program on three bus routes. Unfortunately, even those few buses rarely work. When activists attempted to use the buses on a recent Ride-A-Bus-Day, they encountered police brutality, a surprising response considering that only a few years ago the police were afraid to touch or arrest disabled people. This may indicate that our political strength is growing and that we are seen as a threat to the status quo.

It is interesting to contrast New York's experiences with those of Seattle, Washington, which has the most successful program in the country. With only 275 accessible buses, Seattle recently estimated that there are 4000 to 6000 one-way bus trips by disabled riders per month. This comparatively high ridership is attributed to two factors: 1) System reliability—the lift used in Seattle works most of the time, and 2) normal marketing techniques—the assumption that disabled riders are no different than non-disabled riders and will use lift-equipped buses if they are safe, reliable and arrive at reasonable intervals has proven to be true.

Equality," the first national conference on disabled women and girls, was held in Baltimore in July.)

My 1977 article began by describing a 1950 movie, "The Men," which portrays a disabled World War II veteran whose "recovery" is signalled when he finally asks for help. I noted then that the film reflects very dated attitudes and that a contemporary film would probably end with that veteran organizing to break down societal barriers. Soon after that article was published, a film with just such a character did appear. "Coming Home" also features a severely disabled veteran, but unlike his self-pitying, self-indulgent counterpart in "The Men," this Vietnam veteran refuses to give up on himself. A vital, attractive man, he begins to lead an active personal and political life. He has a love affair, speaks to high school students about his experiences and protests poor hospital treatment of veterans.

Although both "The Men" and "Coming Home" focus on disability, they reflect significant changes in attitudes. Where "The Men" is concerned with fertility, "Coming Home" is concerned with sexuality. Where "The Men" deals with the necessity of sacrifice, adjustment and acceptance, "Coming Home" deals with

the importance of self-fulfillment, struggle and growth.

"Coming Home" reflects the growing awareness that people with disabilities have a right to equal opportunity. It seems so simple and obvious. Yet many consider the idea revolutionary, even now. Nothing, however, is stronger than an idea whose time has come. There is no turning back. Disabled people will accept nothing less than equality. □

## References

The following materials were used in the preparation of this article:

"Disability Civil Rights," Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, 2032 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94702.

"Moving On" by Terry Moakley and James Weisman, *Paraplegia News*, October, 1981.

"Accessible Public Transit" by Helen Meier, United Cerebral Palsy Association of San Francisco, 1981.

## About the Author

DR. FRIEDA ZAMES is a member of the board of Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York; she is Assistant Professor of Mathematics at the New Jersey Institute of Technology.



*Some current films provide non-stereotypic portrayals of people with disabilities*

## Films about People with Disabilities

By Donna Barkman

Filmmakers have been responding to the awareness generated in large part by the activism of many disabled people. As a result, people with disabilities are becoming particularly visible in the short, 16mm film (usually documentary, sometimes known as "educational"), with many films being directed toward young viewers.

Films for lay audiences now exist on many disabling conditions: leukemia, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, paraplegia, learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, as well as visual and hearing impairments. All major film distributors now provide some films on disabled people; several smaller companies specialize in disability or rehabilitation films.

The problem becomes not simply locating a film about disabled people, but selecting films which treat their topic with accuracy, humanity and film-making excellence, avoiding all stereotypic images, exploitation, sensationalism and sentimentalizing.

White women who are disabled are fairly well represented in film, unlike other topics where males—particularly white males—predominate. Disabled minority people, however, are not represented at all fairly in proportion to their numbers, especially when "the most frequent victims of disability are working class people, most particularly Third World people and females—that is, people who already face massive discrimination" (*Bulletin*, Vol. 8, Nos. 6 & 7).

The following annotated list does not attempt to cover the spectrum of films on disabilities; it is simply a tip-of-the-iceberg list of films which illuminate with integrity the lives of some disabled people.

### FILMS

**Best Boy**, 104 minutes, color, 16mm. Filmmaker: Ira Wohl. Distributor: Documentary Films, Inc., 159 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019. Junior high and up.

The life of Philly Wohl, a developmentally delayed fifty-two-year-old man, is thoughtfully and lovingly examined, as he learns to become more independent and his elderly parents learn to let go. This film won an Academy Award in 1980.

**A Fine Line**, 1980, 57 minutes, color, 16mm and video. Filmmaker and distributor: Allen Rogers, 2 Elgin Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5R 1G6. High school and up.

The film presents two men, one moderately and one severely, disabled with cerebral palsy, one socially and physically active and one an activist on behalf of disabled people. Their uncoordinated bodies and speech, at first discomfiting to many viewers, become just another facet of complex and individual human beings, whose "handicap" is a society with inconsiderate and hostile attitudes towards those who are defined as different. (N.B. This film uses a female voice-over narrator, almost unheard of—pun intended—in films about men while *vice versa* is normal.)

**Gravity Is My Enemy**, 1977, 26 minutes, color, 16mm. Distributor: Churchill Films, 662 N. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069. Junior high and up.

Paralyzed at twelve, Mark Hicks, now in his 20s, is described as an artistic genius. His pictures are painted and drawn by holding implements in his

mouth. Realistic, both resigned and driven, Mark paints because he has to. (It should be noted that the content of Hicks' artwork is rather grotesque, with much female nudity.)

**I'll Find a Way**, 1978, 26 minutes, color, 16mm and video. Filmmaker: Beverly Shaffer. Producer: National Film Board of Canada. Distributor: The Media Guild, P.O. Box 881, Solana Beach, CA 92075. Middle school and up.

Part of a series of portraits designed "to give kids a chance to meet other kids and see how differently she or he lives—to see how different kids might look, but yet how much they're the same." This profile of a nine-year-old born with spina bifida does just that. Nadia is an energetic and positive child who acknowledges her disability (she hates being stared at and working hard at physical therapy), describes herself and her disabled schoolmates (shown in many scenes) as ordinary and participates naturally and fully in everything she does.

**See What I Say**, 1981, 24 minutes, color, 16mm and video, available with or without captions. Filmmakers: Linda Chapman, Pam LeBlanc, Freddi Stevens. Distributor: Filmmakers Library, Inc., 133 E. 58 Street, New York, NY 10022. Middle school and up.

Holly Near, activist and feminist folksinger, and Susan Freundlich, American Sign Language interpreter, perform in concert nationwide. Intercut with scenes of their performance are moving interviews with four deaf women explaining the isolation of the hearing impaired and the importance to them of sign language as an accepted communication. The film closes with a large audi-

Continued on page 24



# Resources on Disability Rights

By Emily Strauss Watson

## Organizations

Organizations are listed below in four categories: (1) disability rights organizations; (2) advocacy groups; (3) service agencies, including governmental agencies; and (4) professional organizations. The extent of policy control that is exerted by people with disabilities varies from group to group, but is most prominent in the disability rights organizations. These are also the most politically active of the groups. The groups below indicate the kinds of resources available; the list is not comprehensive.

### Disability Rights Organizations

**American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD)**, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1124, Washington, D.C. 20036.

ACCD is the largest cross-disability coalition. It is composed of national, state and local disability rights organizations pressing for the rights of people with disabilities. ACCD publishes monthly newsletters for organizations and individuals. Annual membership dues for individuals is \$5.

**Disability Rights and Education Defence Fund (DREDF)**, 2032 San Pablo, Berkeley, CA 94702.

A relative newcomer, DREDF is counsel to the National Committee on Section 504 which is actively opposing attempts to deregulate Section 504 (see p. 18). DREDF publishes valuable information, including an organizing manual for disability rights organizations as well as an excellent book entitled *No More Stares*. Write for information and/or *The Disability Rights Quarterly*, a free publication.

**Disabled In Action National (DIA National)**, Emily Strauss Watson, National Coordinator, c/o Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York, P.O. Box

1273, New York, NY 10009.

DIA National is composed of several chapters actively concerned with and involved in the struggle for the rights of people with disabilities. DIA of Metropolitan New York (address above) was the founding chapter and is active in civil rights, transportation, independent living, health care and housing issues. Write the New York office for chapter addresses.

**Center for Independent Living (CIL)**, 2539 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704.

CIL is a non-profit, community-based, non-residential organization run for and primarily by disabled people. CIL provides such services as welfare advocacy, housing and attendant referral and wheelchair repair.

**Center for Independence of the Disabled of New York City (CIDNY)**, 853 Broadway, New York, NY 10003.

Both an advocacy and resource center, CIDNY is based loosely on the CIL model and provides peer counseling, benefit advocacy and housing assistance. CIDNY also publishes an informative newsletter, *Alternatives*. Subscription rate is \$12 per year.

### Advocacy Organizations

**Mainstream, Inc.**, 1200 15th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Mainstream provides disability rights information primarily in the areas of employment and affirmative action. Their publication, *Mainstream*, is useful.

**National Information Center for the Handicapped/Closer Look**, Box 1492, Washington, D.C. 20013.

*Closer Look* is an excellent source of information on the educational rights of children with disabilities. Their publications and newsletters are free.

**Children's Defense Fund**, 1520 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington,

D.C. 20036.

This organization, which is concerned with many issues relating to children, publishes a useful booklet, "94-142 and 504: Numbers that Add Up to Educational Rights for Handicapped Children." Price prepaid, \$2.50 (includes postage).

**PACER Center, Inc.** (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights), 4704 Chicago Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

A relative newcomer, PACER provides updated information on PL 94-142 and other educational laws for parents of disabled children. Their newsletter, *Pacesetter*, and other publications are excellent sources for parents and teachers alike.

**National Center for Law and the Deaf**, Gallaudet College, 7th St. and Florida Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Established by the National Law Center of George Washington University and Gallaudet College, the only post-secondary school for deaf and hearing impaired people, this center provides information and legal advice to the deaf and hearing impaired population.

**Council on Exceptional Children (CEC)**, 1920 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091.

Largely a professionally oriented organization, CEC also provides helpful information on educational rights and works for improved educational legislation and services.

### Service Organizations

Organizations like the American Foundation for the Blind, American Association on Mental Deficiency, Easter Seals Society, Muscular Dystrophy Association, etc., provide certain services for disabled persons, but may also engage in community outreach and educational activities. For information and addresses of these agencies, consult the "Directory of Services for Handicapping Conditions" available in your public library or write for the "Directory of Organizations Interested in the Handicapped," Committee for the Handicapped, People to People Program, Suite 610, LaSalle Bldg., Connecticut Ave. and L Street, Washington, D.C. 20036.

A comprehensive listing of service organizations and of government agencies appears in the special Convention Issue, 1982, of *The Exceptional Parent*; see listing in periodicals section below.

### Professional Organizations

The American Speech and Hearing Association  
Continued on page 24



## FILMS

Continued from page 22

ence learning the sign language lyrics to a song of support and singing it silently in sign and musically in words.

**Sign of Victory**, 1982, 22 minutes, color, 16mm, available with or without captions. Filmmaker: Marshall Grupp. Distributor: Filmmakers Library (address above). Middle school and up.

The development of a basketball team at a school for deaf children is shown to be critical to the maturing confidence and self-concept of each girl on the team. Athletic demands and accomplishment, a challenging group experience, family involvement and support—especially difficult for a Hispanic girl who is learning two languages (sign language in English) unknown to her parents—are common to the building of any school sports team. What makes this fast-paced documentary special is the recognition by the school and by the filmmaker of the commonality of these needs to disabled and non-disabled alike.

**Steps**, 57 minutes, color, 16mm. Filmmaker and distributor: Eric Neudel, 319 Faneuil St., Boston, MA 02135. High school and up.

Using interviews, home movies and snapshots, letters and *cinéma vérité*, the filmmaker traces the long friendship between two young women. Started almost in infancy, carried on through girlish correspondence when one friend moves away and then challenged, modified and ultimately enriched when Pam sustains paralyzing injuries in a car accident, the relationship is the central theme of this eloquent and intimate double portrait, although for a time Pam's disability becomes central to the relationship.

**Survival Run**, 12 minutes, color, 16mm film and video. Filmmakers: Robert Charlton and Joaquin Padro. Distributor: Pyramid, P.O. Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406. Intermediate grades and up.

A dangerous marathon course is conquered by blind Harry Cordellos and his sighted partner and friend, who guides him only with a few *sotto voce* instructions and a gentle touch. The excitement and beauty of this race and the courage and skill of the runners are unencumbered by narration; the camera tells the story.

## Resources

Childhood Disabilities Office, UNICEF, New York, NY 10017 for "Background Information on the Disabled Child," which includes a list of audiovisual materials.

Educational Film Library, 43 West 61 St., New York, NY 10023 for information on films and distributors.

Filmmakers Library, 133 East 58 St., Suite 703A, New York, NY 10022, for films on disabilities.

Rehabfilm, 20 West 40 St., New York, NY 10018 for rental catalog, newsletter, film festival information.

The Stanfield House, P.O. Box 3208, Santa Monica, CA 90403 for films on disabilities.

### About the Author

DONNA BARKMAN is Director of the Rhode Island Library Film Cooperative.

### Additional Recommended Films

The films below, which portray people with disabilities as active, independent and contributing members of society, have previously been reviewed in the *Bulletin*.

**Angela's Island**, 23 min., color, 16 mm. Distributor: Films, Inc., 733 Green Bay Rd., Wilmette, IL 60091. Junior high school and up.

Angela, a ten-year-old with severe physical disabilities, is featured in a film that emphasizes that the potential and abilities of people with disabilities must not be overlooked (Vol. 10, No. 7).

**Crip Trips**, 16 min., black and white, 16 mm. Distributor: Canyon Cinema Co-op, 2325 3rd St., Suite 338, San Francisco, CA 94107. High school and up.

Disabled people discuss their disabilities, lives and aspirations (Vol. 8, No. 8).

**Like Other People**, 37 min., color. Distributor: Perennial Education, 1825 Willow Rd., Northfield, IL 60813. High school and up.

The difficulties that disabled people have because society assumes that they are not — and should not be — loving, sexual people is the focus of this film (Vol. 9, No. 7).

**Mimi: This is Who I Am**, 16 min., black and white, 83 frame filmstrip with record or cassette. Distributor: Billy Budd Films, 235 East 57 St., New York, NY 10022. Middle school and up.

A woman, disabled since birth, describes how she combines marriage and artistic interests (Vol. 8, No. 8).

## RESOURCES

Continued from page 23

sociation, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Education Association and similar groups are made up of professionals in their respective fields. They also provide services and information related to disabilities. Consult your local library for full listings and addresses.

A comprehensive listing of professional organizations appears in the special Convention Issue, 1982, of *The Exceptional Parent*; see listing in periodicals section below.

## PERIODICALS

As noted above, most disability advocacy groups and organizations publish newsletters or other materials. Listed below are several other publications that are particularly useful and informative.

*The Exceptional Parent*, 296 Boylston St., Third Floor, Boston, MA 02116. Articles and guidance for families of disabled children. Subscriptions are \$15 for individuals, \$22 for institutions. See the Convention Issue, 1982, for a comprehensive list of a wide variety of organizations and agencies related to disabilities (copies of this issue are available at no cost).

*Equal Play*, Women's Action Alliance, 370 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017. Subscriptions are \$10 for individuals, \$20 for institutions. See especially Vol. 11, No. 1-2, Winter-Spring 1981, an issue on Mainstreaming. Also available is a set of picture resources depicting mainstreamed children and adults with disabilities.

American Civil Liberties Union, 22 East 40 St., New York, NY 10016. ACLU publishes a set of paperback books on the rights of people with disabilities, the mental patient, teachers and developmentally delayed individuals.

## FILMS

Recommended films are listed in the article on p. 22.

## BOOKS

See Hits & Misses, p. 29.

### About the Author

EMILY STRAUSS WATSON, active in the disability rights movement, is currently National Coordinator of Disabled in Action National. A speech-language pathologist in the Ramsey (NJ) Public Schools, she is also serving on the New York State Department of Education Advisory Panel on Education of Children with Handicapping Conditions.



In the BOOKSHELF, a regular *Bulletin* feature, all books that relate to minority themes are evaluated by members of the minority group depicted.—Editors.

## Hey, Remember Fat Glenda?

by Lila Perl.  
Clarion Books, 1981,  
\$9.95, 168 pages, grades 3-6

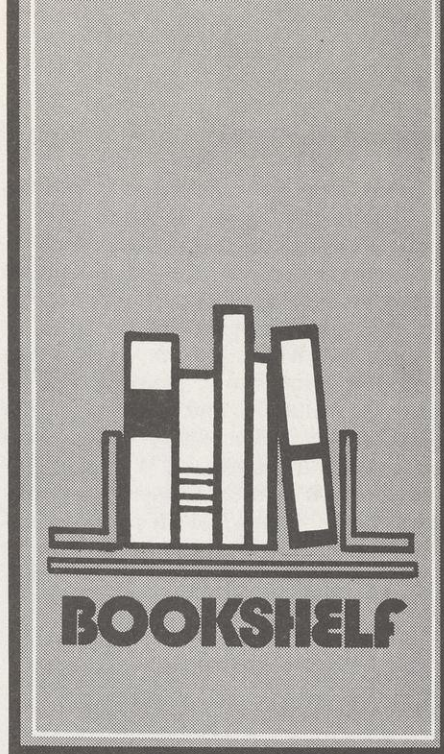
In this sequel to *Me and Fat Glenda*, a twelve-year-old struggles to lose weight and live through a crush on her English teacher.

Glenda has lost 18 pounds over the summer with the help of her friend Sara, who has moved away. Glenda now feels friendless, but two girls seek her out for help on assignments, and they become off-again, on-again friends. At her mother's urging, Glenda joins a dancercise class and shortly thereafter Mr. Hartley—the tall, handsome and very charming English teacher—announces tryouts for a musical revue. These events motivate Glenda to lose even more weight so she can try out for a part in a dance routine.

Glenda has a momentary triumph when she attends a Halloween party as a slim, glamorous dance-hall queen, but her struggles with weight are renewed when she is not chosen for the revue. Mr. Hartley does ask her to be his assistant for the program, but through this experience she comes to see that he is using her, and that she means nothing to him.

Glenda's increasing sense of self-worth enables her to quit the assistant's job and continue with her attempts to lose weight. She has made some good friends, especially with herself, and discovered that she has been an inspiration to a classmate in his own struggles with weight.

Although its themes are of genuine concern to preteen girls, the novel does have its problems. Adults are generally treated in a stereotypic manner. Glenda's mother is portrayed as having no self control when it comes to overeating, and she does not respect Glenda's attempts to reduce. (She is also obsessed with mud being tracked on her white living-room rug.) Glenda's father is a sweet, helpless pushover when it comes to dealing with his daughter, and he is patron-



izing toward his wife's interests and female dealings in general: "It sounds like hens fighting in a backyard. Haven't I heard enough noise for one day?" (p. 26). Mr. Hartley is a charmer and a user of women (and girls) who doesn't hesitate to take advantage of his students' crushes on him. Miss Esme (the dancercise teacher) is an independent, sympathetic character, but with tinges of "Old Maidishness."

The preteen characters are more fully drawn. Glenda herself is a likeable girl with tenacity and some self-knowledge, but her new female friends are depicted as nasty and unsupportive. The boys fare better. Two of them are sensitive and believable children, not afraid to show feelings and able to be plain "friends" with Glenda.

All in all, this is not a book to be recommended. [Sally Smith]

## Indian Legacy: Native American Influences on World Life and Cultures

by Hermina Paotgieter.  
Messner, 1981,  
\$10.79, 192 pages, grades 7-up

U.S. history books, particularly those for children, frequently have a chapter on "our" Indian heritage. That is essentially what *Indian Legacy* is about. The standard acknowledgments are made—foods,

medicines, sports, the influence of the Iroquois League on the formation of the U.S. Government, etc. The chapter "Lessons in Conservation from the First Americans" attempts to deal with the spiritual relationship with the Earth that was central to pre-conquest civilizations in the Western hemisphere—and its importance for the survival of modern humanity. The "American Indian Inventions" chapter includes rubber, cigarettes, popcorn, snowshoes, the canoe and the concept of zero (known also to the Hindus and the Babylonians).

The writing is an odd mixture of honesty and insensitivity. Many statements show a respect for Native peoples and cultures. The author speaks of Indian leaders with respect and notes that "most . . . Indian peoples . . . held democratic beliefs that were not common among English colonists. . . . This love of liberty eventually began to rub off on the colonists." The Europeans are named as invaders who completely disrupted a way of life that had been successful for millennia, "and could have continued for centuries more." On the other hand, the author can also write:

The average non-Indian in the United States today thinks of the Indian life of earlier times as adventuresome, romantic, even ideal. . . . Learning to live in the wilds [sic] "like an Indian" is considered important to the character development of a young person. . . . Many adults consider a temporary return to the wilds the most enjoyable kind of vacation. . . . They feel lucky if they have a "real" Indian guide to help paddle their canoe and catch fish or shoot deer.

Contemporary life and culture don't get very much attention. A few writers, musicians, actors and artists are named, but there isn't a photograph of one of them. Contemporary tribal leaders are most notable for their absence; also missing is any discussion of the pressures to which Native peoples are now being subjected in both North and South America. The primary focus remains on those things that have been of material benefit to whites, and the book reinforces the notion that Native people are for the most part no longer a vital presence in the Americas.

There is a great deal of information here of the kind frequently sought for traditional school assignments, and the book is temptingly easy to use. It contains nothing, however, that cannot be searched out in other sources. Those con-



cerned about the attitudes children learn from books might be advised to help them to do so.

The author has dedicated her book "To the American Indian children, who should know the great gifts that their people have given the world." If we really were incapable of telling our children the things that they need to know, this would not be my first choice of a book to hand them. [Doris Seale]

## Working Kids on Working

by Sheila Cole,  
photographs by Victoria Beller-Smith.  
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1980,  
\$8.95, 219 pages, grades 5-up

This resource book represents an important perspective on young people at work. The author interviewed 20 youngsters ranging in age from nine to fifteen who have a variety of traditional and non-traditional jobs. All the young people view themselves as serious, competent individuals who are able to perform quality jobs. Included are newspaper carriers, housekeepers, a factory worker, restaurant helpers, young people supporting their families, a model, an actor and a computer programmer. The workers represent a good mix of racial, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and have jobs in urban, suburban and rural workplaces.

The young people are honest, realistic and direct about describing their jobs. They speak about the benefits as well as the hardships and oppressions. One young woman states that she is viewed as incompetent because of her age. Another discusses her court challenge to her employer, who was paying her less than minimum wage. A Mexican boy talks candidly about working illegally in Arizona.

It is important to note that although a variety of jobs are presented, some seem more accessible to white, upper-class children (actor, dancer, violin prodigy). Also, the boys tend to be in the more active, traditionally male professions (newscarriers, fishermen and farm workers), while girls are featured in traditional "women's" jobs (baby-sitters, waitresses and file clerks). The one exception to this rule is a young woman who works as a stablehand.

In addition, because the author relies so heavily on the young people's comments, the text sometimes rambles. Several remarks are insulting to old people (disagreeable "old ladies") and to disabled people ("crippled").

However, *Working Kids on Working* makes the important point that kids' labor is valuable and a contribution worth money in our society. It ends with a very helpful chapter on "Working Kids and the Law" which answers questions about hours, wages and the provisions of child labor laws. This is a good resource for upper elementary and junior high school classrooms. [Jan M. Goodman]

## Revolutionary Cuba

by Terence Cannon.  
T.Y. Crowell, 1981,  
\$16.95, 368 pages, grades 9-up

*Revolutionary Cuba* is an interpretive history combining dramatic historical descriptions, personal narratives, excerpts from official documents, periodicals, news accounts and interviews. It is an exciting, energetic history built on respect for the Cuban revolution. The author is a sympathetic participant/observer who has lived, worked and traveled extensively in Cuba.

The first half of the book concentrates



on the problems Cubans struggled to overcome during the four centuries prior to the overthrow of Batista. Included in this section is a discussion of Cuba's relationship with the U.S.: U.S. foreign policy in 1823 sheds light on its current policy toward Cuba, and the descriptions of how the Monroe Doctrine determined Cuba's future and how Cuba was cut off from the rest of Latin America are telling. Students will find this information very useful in developing a complete understanding of the dominant forces in U.S. history.

Several chapters detailing the conditions in Cuba after the overthrow of the repressive Batista government will help U.S. readers understand the significance of Cuba's recent accomplishments. (In spite of tremendous scarcities and in the face of constant sabotage, Cubans built the best educational system, health services and neighborhood organizations in all Latin America.) The remaining chapters discuss the building of governmental structures and processes, the creation of mass national organizations and their impact on Cubans.

Cannon does have a tendency to dwell on the goals of the revolution, neglecting information on its actual accomplishments. To some readers, particularly those who have never been to Cuba and those influenced by U.S. "establishment" material, this account will seem too rose-colored. Cannon's interpretation, however, will help to counteract the mass of negatively biased reports written by Cuban exiles, U.S. State Department analysts and scholars cynical about Cuba's achievements. [Jamila Gastón-Colón]

## Willie Blows a Mean Horn

by Ianthe Thomas,  
illustrated by Ann Toulmin-Rothe.  
Harper & Row, 1981,  
\$7.95, 24 pages, grades k-3

Ianthe Thomas often writes about how older children and adults take care of young children. This theme was used beautifully in *Walk Home Tired*, *Billy Jenkins* and is central to *Willie Blows a Mean Horn*. This story is also anchored in the importance of jazz, that significant African American art form. We see events through the eyes of Willie, who



loves his Daddy, a jazz artist who plays the trumpet.

The text is lovely. The book has a nice rhythm—a late-night, sleep-time, love-my-Daddy, like-to-see-my-Daddy-play-late-at-night rhythm. The story focuses on the details of the father-son relationship and the special things about that relationship that would thrill a child: waiting for the end of the performance, wiping the sweat from his Daddy's face, getting carried home after falling asleep, learning the care of the horn.

However, the illustrations are a serious drawback. The portrayal of the characters is inconsistent and the rhythm, energy, color and cultural clues that figure so importantly in the text are missing. The jazz combo, for instance, is shown facing away from each other, which is unfortunate and unlikely, though this seems to be a fairly prevalent practice by white artists who draw groups of Black people. Also, the people in the club do not seem to be Black. It is sad that the illustrations do not reflect in any way the community from which jazz springs. Nor do the illustrations—with the exception of a jazz poster—match the sense of history and culture that one gets from the text. [Geraldine L. Wilson]

## I Love You, Stupid!

by Harry Mazer.

T.Y. Crowell, 1981,

\$10.10, 185 pages, grades 10-up

*I Love You, Stupid!*, which reinforces the old theme that women exist for men's sexual pleasure and satisfaction, underscores the need for feminist novels about adolescent sexuality.

Marcus Rosenbloom, an aspiring high school writer, is obsessed with sex. He sees every young woman as a sexual object ("She was like a ripe juicy Florida orange, like whipped cream and chocolate flakes") or a seducer ("She'd always been something of a witch, a spider luring him into her web"). Marcus reduces women to "the three B's: bones, boobs, and butts." He takes a baby-sitting job because he's infatuated with Karen, the child's mother, not out of a desire to earn money or care for small children. When he finally makes a sexual overture towards Karen, he is rebuffed and decides to develop a sexual relationship with his friend Wendy. They make a pact to cross

the wall of virginity that separates childhood from adulthood together. It's interesting to note that although they talk about birth control methods and Marcus even buys some prophylactics, there is no mention of using any birth control devices when the two finally "do it."

Marcus and Wendy's relationship is characterized by one sexual encounter after another until Wendy comes to the realization that Marcus is interested only in sex. (Most young women would probably have deduced this sooner.) The conflict is simplistically resolved when Marcus tells Wendy, "I love you, stupid" and Wendy appears satisfied that things will be different.

There is a parallel plot about Marcus' development as a writer (he submits a story to *Playboy*, of course). When a story of his is accepted by a local newspaper, it seems that he is on his way to a successful writing career. In contrast, Wendy's desire to go to Forestry School is not taken seriously; friends refer to her as "Ranger Wendy." The adult females have fairly traditional occupations—a preschool teacher, an office worker and the curator of a small art museum.

As Wendy says, "Sex is not a good enough reason for sex." And writing a sexist book about sex is not a good enough reason for writing a book. *I Love You, Stupid!* depicts the excitement and confusion of the awakening of male sexuality, but there is little effort to place them in the context of a respectful, equal relationship. Young men may need stories to help them understand their sexual feelings, but not at the expense of the humanity of young women. [Lauri Johnson]

## A Jar of Dreams

by Yoshiko Uchida.

Atheneum, 1981,

\$9.95, 131 pages, grades 5-9

Eleven-year-old Rinko is a Japanese American girl who lives with her family in Berkeley, California, during the Depression. She feels different, left out and not as good as her white classmates. In addition, Rinko doesn't like her small eyes and skinny legs.

Her family is struggling to make a living. Because Papa's barbershop is not doing well, Mama opens a home laundry. When the laundry business begins to be



successful, the family faces violence and hostility from a competing laundry run by whites. Meanwhile, Aunt Waka comes to visit from Japan for the summer. Rinko soon learns that her aunt is not what she expected. Aunt Waka is strong, spirited and believes in following your dreams. When the family's laundry business is threatened, she tells Rinko's parents to be strong and stand up for themselves. As a result of her visit, each family member experiences some personal change.

The author raises several issues about being Japanese American—Japanese values, looking different, reactions to being different and discrimination. These issues are resolved in ways which promote a healthy and positive self-concept about being Japanese American. In addition, stereotypes of Asian Americans, especially Japanese Americans, are dispelled. The characters are not passive, submissive nor "inscrutable." They are individuals with feelings and unique personalities who initiate and react to situations.

Although *A Jar of Dreams* takes place during the Depression, its messages are still relevant. However, it should be pointed out that the story focuses on what happens within a family in terms of its interpersonal relationships. The racism against Asian Americans, espe-



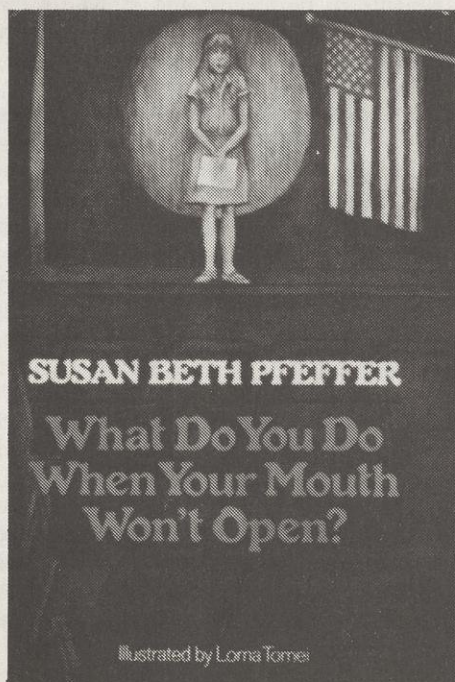
cially those of Japanese ancestry, that pervaded California prior to World War II is not discussed. Although individual family members do learn to confront others, their impact on institutional racism is highly questionable. *A Jar of Dreams* would be best used with appropriate background materials. [Gloria Kumagai]

## What Do You Do When Your Mouth Won't Open?

by Susan Beth Pfeffer,  
illustrated by Lorna Tomei.  
Delacorte, 1981,  
\$8.95, 114 pages, grades 5-8

Here is a clever, entertaining story with some practical suggestions for overcoming a fear of speaking before an audience. As the winner of an essay contest, twelve-year-old Reesa Nathan must represent her school by reading her composition out loud at the county-wide competition. With the help of an understanding psychologist, she learns relaxation techniques and overcomes her inability to speak in public.

It is refreshing to find adult women portrayed in a variety of career roles—as a psychologist, a copywriter for an advertising agency and a school principal. (It's



also nice to see another school principal named Mr. Sanchez.) Although the characterizations are somewhat shallow, the psychological techniques are graphically and accurately described in terms that should be easily understandable and helpful to most young readers.

In a gooey, sentimental ending, Reesa ad libs a speech extolling the virtues of the U.S., Franklin D. Roosevelt and the ability to change. But overall this book offers sound insights into a problem that is familiar to everyone. [Lauri Johnson]

## The Dark Side of Nowhere

by Genevieve Gray,  
illustrated by Nancy Inderieden.  
EMC Corporation (180 East 6th St.,  
St. Paul, MN 55101), 1977,  
\$3.50 (paper), 40 pages, grades 3-9

Young Tony Diaz, who lives in the South Bronx, copes with street life and deplors the daily shakedowns by youth gangs. He listens to Mrs. Padilla scolding her five kids, an occurrence the author assures us is "usual." We meet Tony's sister Eloise who is studying to be a public health nurse.

Tony and Eloise are home alone in their apartment when a black-out hits New York City. In the hours that follow, Tony and his neighbors catch a thief, Mrs. Padilla goes into labor with her sixth child, Eloise and Tony deliver the baby, and everyone in the building comes together in the friendliest way. The black-out transforms the people of the South Bronx.

The story has several positive aspects. The neighbors rally to each other's assistance during the black-out. Eloise's ambitions are vindicated by her heroic leadership during the delivery of Mrs. Padilla's baby. A thief in the building is nabbed by an alert police officer and several tenants. Tony overcomes his discomfort about helping Eloise and also helps to find the policeman. Following the excitement Tony enjoys his sister's strength and the warmth of neighbors drawn together by the black-out.

Unfortunately, the story also has serious drawbacks. The author misses opportunities for sharing the richness of the characters' lives and relationships. Instead, readers are given brief, superficial

glimpses of cultural habits (and a few Spanish words) and incomplete glimpses of relationships. On the first page, for instance, we are told that Eloise had raised Tony and "was more of a mother to him than Mama." The reader is left to wonder if this situation is typical of Hispanics.

Mama, who is away visiting her sister, schemes to have Eloise marry rather than become a nurse. Mrs. Padilla, the pregnant neighbor, also comes off as silly. She is forgetful, hysterical and irresponsible. When the lights go out she leaves Tony's apartment shrieking because she left her young children playing with wire coat hangers. Later she leaves her apartment door open and a thief takes her family's belongings. To top it off, she goes into labor at a most inconvenient time.

All in all, this book fails to be culturally authentic, non-racist and non-sexist. [Jamila Gastón-Colón]

## Picture Me in a Poem

by Jeanette Adams (548 Bramhall Ave.,  
Jersey City, NJ 07304), 1980,  
\$4 (paper), 20 pages, grades k-6

## Black Child

by Joyce Carol Thomas,  
illustrated by Tom Feelings.  
Zamani Productions (31 W. 31 St., New  
York, NY 10001), 1981,  
\$5 (paper), unpagged, grades 4-up

These two slim but impressive volumes of verses celebrate the emotions of Black childhood in a way that recognizes the universality of emotions but also highlights the uniqueness of the Black perspective.

*Picture Me in a Poem* is attractively illustrated with appealing photographs and line drawings. A discussion guide for parents and teachers has been supplied by the poet. In *Black Child*, the elegant black-and-white drawings by Tom Feelings blend perfectly with the exquisite poetry. In short, lyric but forceful verses, Thomas develops the themes of pride in the African heritage, self-pride, identity and family-love.

These books complement each other in style and content. They are highly recommended for parents and teachers searching for innovative materials to use with children. [Beryle Banfield]



Hits & Misses reviews material intended to assist adults working with children in the classroom, the library and at home. Professional literature, parenting materials and other resources are reviewed.

## Images of Ourselves: Women with Disabilities Talking

edited by Jo Campling.  
Routledge & Kegan Paul (9 Park St.,  
Boston, MA 02108), 1981,  
\$9.75 (paper), 140 pages

It is a rare and genuine pleasure to come across a book which deserves unqualified accolades; *Images of Ourselves: Women with Disabilities Talking* is such a work. The book presents a broad spectrum of ideas, values and thoughts from women with all types of disabilities, a range of ages and backgrounds, all of whom confront the double handicap of being a woman and disabled. As one woman so aptly notes, "Since women are still seen as the 'weaker sex,' it logically follows that the disabled (especially disabled women) will continue to be seen as the weaker and less able members of society (and) . . . that total acceptance of disabled people as no different from anyone else in society is necessarily connected with the equality of sexes in society."

Contributors write about the broad psychological, educational and social aspects of disability as well as some very personal and yet equally powerful personal insights. Single women with disabilities talk about the difficulty of recognizing their own sexuality and of finding same- or different-sex partners; married women with disabilities talk about the medical profession opposition when they decide to have and/or raise their own children (this opposition is even more evident when a single disabled woman is determined to be a parent).

There is a unanimous outcry for recognition of one's ability, not disability. One woman so eloquently states: "Dismiss me if you will, as society has dismissed the feelings and protests of Blacks, Jews, gays and women for centuries. Historically, it has been proven that powerless groups are not given recognition until they demand and fight for it. Likewise I am not asking for my rights and humanity to be given a place in this society, which like it or not, I belong to—I demand it."

Things often taken for granted by non-disabled women (finding comfortable, at-



tractive clothing or changing a tampon, for example) are discussed in an open, forthright and clearly educational manner.

Hearing from women whose ages range from seventeen to seventy-five allows a glimpse of an earlier, more limiting life-style as well as the changes taking place today. The editor must also be commended for obtaining contributions from women with such a broad spectrum of disabilities, including severe verbal and written communication difficulties. The unique and yet common threads expressed by these women cannot but bring them—and us—closer to common humanity.

*Images of Ourselves* is a beautiful and enlightening book; it is must reading for women or men, disabled or non-disabled, professional or casual reader. (It could also be read by sophisticated high school students.) In short, it is a book for every reader. [Emily Strauss Watson]

## Mainstreaming the Hearing Impaired Child

by Janice Satzman Orlansky,  
illustrated by Danial B. Fairchild and  
Thomas N. Fairchild.  
Teaching Resources Inc. (50 Pond Park  
Rd., Hingham, MA 02043), 1977,  
\$7.75, 111 pages

In spite of its positive title and good intentions, this work leaves a lot to be desired. Although the book does make an effort to correct common stereotypes about deafness, it also perpetuates mis-

conceptions. It states, for example, that "All hearing impaired people have a communication problem to some degree, either in expressing ideas or in understanding language." At best, this is an overgeneralization; what is not mentioned is that the "language" referred to is English, which is a language meant to be heard and spoken, not seen. It is vital for educators to be aware that many hearing impaired people have a language of their own—one that is dependent on a visual mode of communication, and that spoken English, which depends on an auditory mode, is in many cases a second language for them. Deaf people are perfectly capable of expressing ideas and understanding language if they are communicating with someone who understands and can communicate in *their* language.

This book's emphasis is on bringing the deaf child into the hearing world. The deaf child is frequently compared to the hearing child—to the deaf child's disadvantage. There is no attempt to inform readers about the socio-cultural aspects of the deaf community, and about the language used by deaf people, American Sign Language (ASL).

Very little attention is given to interpreters and their functions in the classroom. What is presented is condescending. "The interpreter only helps the hearing impaired person," is the message to the reader, although, in reality, the interpreter also serves the hearing people *as well*. Interpreters are needed only if a situation involves *two* or more people who either do not share a common language or do not share one form of the same language.

While the text has other flaws as well, it is the cartoons that are the most offensive in spite of the editor's disavowal ("I sincerely hope that these cartoons do not offend any children, parents or professionals . . ."). The deaf children are usually depicted as puzzled, bewildered and frustrated, although to be fair, most adults come off as rather dimwitted as well. In one illustration, a deaf child is depicted as a monkey and in another illustration an interpreter is depicted as a monkey. What's the message in that? Most of the women are depicted in a sexist fashion, with over-emphasized bosoms. The teacher—a Black woman—is portrayed in a stereotypic fashion. There's a white person in a "coolie" hat, pulling a child in a rickshaw-like contraption (the only wonder is that no one has slanted eyes).

Although the book contains some positive educational suggestions, teachers involved in mainstreaming deaf and



hearing impaired children do not need the negative stereotypes and misconceptions about hearing impaired children presented in this book. [Janet W. Acevedo and Glenn Anderson]

## Resources on Disability

By Kipp Watson

The books below are recommended for further reading on the subject of disability and handicapism.

### The Handicapped Speak

by William Roth.  
McFarland (Box 611,  
Jefferson, NC 28640), 1981,  
\$15.95 (plus \$1 p. & h.), 211 pages

These 13 interviews with adults and children with disabilities make fascinating reading, and those interviewed provide a lot of information about disabilities and societal barriers and attitudes. The speakers represent several racial groups, but there is less diversity in terms of the disabilities discussed. None of the interviewees is deaf, and only one is blind. None is affiliated with any national disability rights organization, so it is not surprising that the idea that "handicap" and "disability" are interchangeable words goes unchallenged.

### Handicapping America: Barriers to Disabled People

by Frank Bowe.  
Harper & Row, 1978,  
\$9.95, 254 pages

This book does an excellent job of illustrating the distinction between disability and handicap. It shows vividly how architectural, communicational and attitudinal barriers "handicap" disabled people. Through the skillful use of facts and vignettes, it shows how the U.S. continues to design a nation for the average, non-disabled majority.

The book is marred by a sexist historical overview, and no indication is given that the experience of being disabled differs for each sex (the stereotype that disabled people have no sexual identity also goes unchallenged). In the main, however, the book eloquently argues that

handicapism cannot be tackled in isolation, for it is "linked inseparably to an entire constellation of societal and individual attitudes toward other groups in America."

### The Hidden Minority: America's Handicapped

by Sonny Kleinfield.  
Little, Brown, 1979,  
\$9.95, 213 pages

These profiles of people who have disabilities will acquaint readers with diverse lifestyles and individual coping strategies. The book also gives a flavor of the disability civil rights movement over the past decade, although it gives the erroneous impression that the disability civil rights movement has been forged only by people who have mobility impairments. (Very little mention is made of the vital roles that people with other types of disabilities, such as hearing and sight impairments, have played in the movement.) Although the historical chapter is marred by some handicapistic language, the narrative style is interesting and easy to read and a lot of information is conveyed.

### Rehabilitating America: Towards Independence for Disabled and Elderly People

by Frank Bowe.  
Harper & Row, 1980,  
\$11.95, 203 pages

A sequel to *Handicapping America* (see above), this work tackles a basic civil rights issue: How much should we spend on removing barriers that limit the independence of disabled and elderly people? The surprising answer: We can't afford *not* to remove barriers. The author states

that investing \$22 billion annually to remove barriers could result in the savings by 1990 of over \$1 trillion per year in governmental and private spending and lost wages if disabled and elderly people are not permitted to become self-sufficient. Their independence must be fostered by making job requirements truly work-related, making buildings and transportation fully accessible, and changing attitudes by focusing on what disabled and elderly people *can* do.

### The Unexpected Minority

by John Gliedman and William Roth.  
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980,  
\$17.95, 525 pages

This comprehensive study, commissioned by the prestigious Carnegie Council on Children, is a landmark work on the oppression of disabled children and adults. Adopting a civil rights "lens," the book notes many similarities between handicapism and racism, but it also notes differences. It makes a very important contribution to the understanding of handicapism by noting that governmental policies are overwhelmingly influenced by the medical model, which assumes disabled children are "different." This difference is viewed as a problem to be treated in a general way, much like a measles epidemic. Until the disability is "cured," there is something "wrong" with the child, and the child is excluded from the mainstream.

### Voices: Interviews with Handicapped People

by Michael D. Orlansky and William L. Heward.  
Charles E. Merrill, 1981,  
\$9.95, 263 pages

Some 50 short interviews with people who have disabilities give a provocative panorama of ideas, feelings, values and thoughts that prove, as one interviewee puts it, that people with disabilities "are as diverse as the rest of the population." (Those interviewed are indeed diverse with respect to type of disability and racial background.) This is one of the few new books to note that activists prefer the word "disabled" to "handicapped."

#### About the Author

KIPP WATSON is President of Disabled in Action of Metropolitan New York; he is an attorney specializing in the civil rights of people with disabilities.





---

New Filmstrip

# UNLEARNING ASIAN AMERICAN STEREOTYPES



An appealing approach to help students “unlearn” common myths and stereotypes about Asian Americans, while they learn a great deal about Asian American history. A Chinese American teacher invites a group of Asian American youngsters to spend a day discussing experiences that have hurt them or their families. Though the children did not know one another previously, they find that they share many common experiences.

The 8-to-12 year old youngsters—Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Vietnamese Americans—examine stereotypes of Asians in children’s books, comics, movies, cartoons and joke books. With their teacher-host, they explore the historic use of racist stereotypes in the oppression of their peoples.

Akemi tells of her grandmother’s internment in a U.S. prison camp during World War II, while her grandfather fought for the U.S. Army. Kenny talks about being stereotyped when other kids assume he knows Kung Fu. And all the children discuss how they are teased about the shape of their eyes.

Though designed for elementary and junior high school history and human relations classes or assemblies, the filmstrip will also prove useful for teacher training.

**A color-sound filmstrip and cassette. Includes *Asian Americans in Children’s Books*, plus information about Asian American history. Grades 4-9. \$32.50**

Send check or purchase order to:  
Council on Interracial Books for Children  
1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023

---



## SUBSCRIBERS—PLEASE NOTE!

Will you help us save the expense of renewal mailings? It is really very easy. Unlike many periodicals which have long, puzzling codes on the first line of your address label, ours is simple. The single number near your name indicates both the volume (first two figures) and the issue number (last figure) that ends your subscription. Thus, if the number is 138, your subscription ends with Volume 13, Number 8.

You are now reading Volume 13, Numbers 4 & 5. If your mailing label shows 134 or 135, your subscription expires with this issue; please renew as soon as possible to avoid missing any issues. If your mailing label shows 136 or 137, renewing now will prevent interruption of service. (If you renewed very recently, your present mailing label may not yet reflect the change of expiration date. Please be patient; the next one will.)

Please note that the *Bulletin* is not published monthly; if you write to us about a particular issue, please indicate the relevant volume and issue number.

## SUBSCRIBE TO THE BULLETIN!

Interracial Books for Children Bulletin  
1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023

134 & 5  
8 ISSUES A YEAR

( ) New ( ) Renewal

INSTITUTIONS

1 yr. 2 yrs. 3 yrs.  
( ) \$15 ( ) \$25 ( ) \$35  
Please enclose payment if possible; we will bill you only if a purchase order is enclosed or upon request.

INDIVIDUALS

( ) \$10 ( ) \$18 ( ) \$25  
Personal subscriptions must be paid for with a personal check. Please enclose payment; the cost of billing individual subscriptions has become prohibitive.

( ) I am pleased to enclose a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
All contributions are tax deductible.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Bulk rates** for subscriptions or single copies are available on request.

**Foreign subscriptions** (excluding Canada) should, if possible, be paid by international money order or by a check payable through a U.S. bank. Otherwise, please add \$5 to the rates given above. Subscriptions outside the U.S. will be sent via surface mail; if air mail is preferred add \$15 per year to the subscription cost and check the following box.  
☐

Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc.

1841 Broadway  
New York, NY 10023

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

The COBC  
4290 Helen C. White Hall  
600 N. Park Street  
Madison, WI 53706

Cooperative Childrens Bk Ctr. 138R  
Ginny Moore Kruse  
600 No. Park St.  
Madison, WI 53706

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U. S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
NEW YORK, N. Y.  
PERMIT No. 5090

## WHAT IS THE COUNCIL ON INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN?

CIBC is a non-profit organization founded by writers, librarians, teachers and parents in 1966. It promotes anti-racist and anti-sexist children's literature and teaching materials in the following ways: 1) by publishing the *Bulletin*, which regularly analyzes children's books and other learning materials for human and anti-human messages; 2) by operating the Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators, which publishes reference books, monographs, lesson plans and audio-visual material designed to develop pluralism in schools and in society; 3) by conducting workshops on racism and sexism for librarians, teachers and parents; and 4) by initiating programs that bring to public attention the unrecognized talents of Third World writers and artists. For more information about CIBC and a free catalog of its Resource Center materials, write us at 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023.