

The **READ TO ME** Planet

Sharing the love and joy of reading

A Read To Me International Publication

Winter 2008 / Spring 2009

Take Your Kids to the Movies

by James Rumford

Oops! I forgot the word “read.”
Read and Take Your Kids to the Movies.

By this, I don’t mean “read then go to the movies.” I mean, “Read because it is like taking your kids to the movies.”

In the twelve years I have been writing and illustrating for children, I have come to realize how much a picture book is like a movie.

Just look at the cover. It is like the poster announcing the coming attraction. And just as you would if you and your child were standing in front of a movie theater, take a moment to talk about what is to come. Share your anticipation and excitement.

Open the cover and carefully look at these first pages, easily skipped over in a rush to get to the story. The color of the paper, the designs, if any, have been carefully chosen in order to put you in the right mood. Some books, like *Olivia*, even begin on these inside cover pages.

“Shh!” I want to say in the theater as the movie starts, trying to ignore all of the whispering and crunching and package opening. “You’re missing the most important part! This is the moment that carries you out of your everyday self to the edge of a world where imagination reigns!”

And so it is with a book. Settle down and take it all in. The inside cover is where the magic begins.

As you turn to the next page, you see the title and the “credits.” Here the author and the book designer as well as the illustrator have another opportunity to entice you into the story with a sneak preview of what is to come, with fancy letters in the title, sometimes superimposed over the

opening scenes of the book.

Turn the page. Now, the build-up is over and story begins. Now, unlike the movies, you become the actor, playing not one but all of the roles. You read with that special voice of yours, the one that bonds you to your child forever.

You’re the projectionist, as well, creating a different kind of movie theater, where the film can go forward or backward, or stop, freeze-frame-like, at any moment; a place where it is okay to ask questions, to talk about a particular scene, and take in a new word or two.

When the story ends, the book may not. Look at the endpapers, even the back cover. There may be more for you to see and think about: specially chosen colors and designs, even the main character making a reappearance for a last goodbye.

There won’t be ten minutes of credits. I promise you. In a picture book there is no crew of thousands to list, although many may have helped in its production. Instead, the end of the book will bring you back to the front cover to the name or names of the author and illustrator

who acted as script writer, set designer, camera man, and casting director, to name just a few of their many roles.

So read to your kid. Take him or her to a special kind of theater, the one you both create each time you pull a picture book off the shelf. Enjoy this art form, which is like no other, where pictures and words and friendship come together.

Only two things are missing: 1) the popcorn (easily remedied) and 2) the music (working on that). While we’re waiting for digital technology to catch up and provide good music chips with each book, just pop in Ravel, Debussy, or Brahms; press play, and settle down to a good “movie” with your kid.





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If we take the time to search, every once in a while we discover a book that treats us to more than a good story. It elevates our minds and draws us into the very world it describes. How fortunate that we have found two such books in *Wabi Sabi*, written by Mark Reibstein and illustrated by Ed Young, and *The Pet Dragon: A Story about Adventure, Friendship, and Chinese Characters*, written and illustrated by Christoph Niemann.

What gives *Wabi Sabi* additional meaning and interest are the haiku—short, traditional Japanese poems of three lines with 5 syllables in the first, 7 syllables in the second, and 5 syllables in the third. Though simple in text, the meanings are often deep and insightful.

In *The Pet Dragon: A Story about Adventure, Friendship, and Chinese Characters*, Lin receives a special gift of a baby dragon. Lin and the dragon quickly develop a close relationship, doing things together until one day, while they are playing soccer, the ball hits an old vase, and the dragon is confined to a cage. The next day, when Lin checks on her pet, the dragon is gone! Off Lin goes to find her pet.

What gives the story special appeal is how the author ingeniously uses Chinese characters in the illustrations to embed their meanings. If words could be so cleverly used in illustrations of stories in English, perhaps our children would be better readers than they are. See if you aren't enamored with the way the story unfolds through the use of Chinese characters in the illustrations.

Let us go beyond the first layer of meaning as we read to our youngsters, and take the time to find books that help our children become discerning listeners and readers.

Happy reading!

Lynne Waihee





artwork by Rosemary Wells

Going from Good to Great at the Kalihi-Palama Public Library

by **Aunty Brenda Freitas-Obregon**

Great things are happening in libraries today. Take the Kalihi-Palama Public Library, for example.

Four years ago, high school students from Farrington High School initiated a read-aloud program as a KEY Club community-service project. Then, Farrington High School senior Nikki Luong, along with other KEY Club members, adopted **Bee Readers**, an after-school program in which teens read to about a dozen children of all ages from neighboring schools. Each month, the teens read stories, followed by hands-on arts and crafts developed by the club. By the third year, the program had expanded from 30 minutes to 45 minutes, but not attracting many participants.

Children's Librarian Brenda Freitas-Obregon wondered about changing the library program to one which would provide more direct service and support students' proficiency in reading. As luck would have it, a reading-comprehension workshop at an Alpha Delta Kappa summer conference entitled "Challenge of Change" offered a solution to "Aunty Brenda's" search for a replacement program.

Coincidentally, Mai Jones, a graduate student in Curriculum Development, needed a community-service opportunity. Jones's situation provided the missing piece to Aunty Brenda's puzzle for a new program. The Farrington High School Key Club teens would serve as mentors to the elementary school students, and Jones would train the teens and organize and monitor the program. Thus, was born **KEYS to Nurturing Young Minds**.

KEYS to Nurturing Young Minds is a one-on-one reading mentoring program geared to enhance reading comprehension for second- and third-grade students in the Farrington Complex. Ten elementary school students are paired with Farrington High School Key Club

members for one-hour weekly sessions from September 2008 through May 2009.



Today, teen mentors undergo continual training, providing opportunities for the younger children to learn fluency, vocabulary, contextualization (relating prior experiences to books

being read), and comprehension. With teen mentors waiting eagerly for their students at each meeting, it is easy to see why the students look forward to their weekly visits to the library and why there is a waiting list for the program.

The elementary-age students enrolled in the program arrive at the library, ready to listen to a picture book, read aloud to their mentors, practice the comprehension strategy of the week, and work on a simple art activity. One-on-one, one-by-one, Key Club members from Farrington High School are putting the love of reading into the hearts of their younger students. Who knew learning could be so much fun, or that young people could make such a difference in the lives of others?

Visit your library to see what else is going on there. What you learn may surprise you!



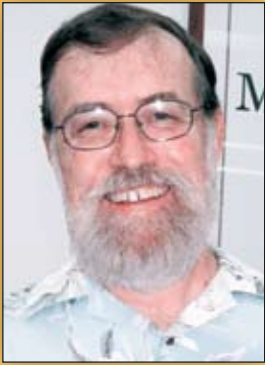
Reading aloud is the single most important activity to prepare children for school



For more information, visit www.ReadToMeIntl.org

James Rumford Man of Knowledge

by Leanne Cardwell



Jim Rumford has lived and traveled in many places around the world:

- Chad
- Afghanistan
- Rwanda

These adventures have inspired many of Jim's books, including:

Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta, 1325-1354

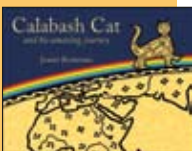
(Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001). The eloquent tale



of a fourteenth-century Moroccan man and his 75,000-mile, 29-year expedition beyond conventions and borders.

Calabash Cat and his amazing journey (Houghton Mifflin

Company, 2003). A tale about a Chadian Cat



that goes on a journey to find the end of the world, learning a valuable lesson along the way.

It is a warm Tuesday afternoon when Jim Rumford makes a guest appearance at the foot of the table in Read To Me's Waikiki office. Rumford removes from his bag an unpublished copy of *Margaret, Cat Magnet*, and he begins to read aloud.



know something, both the child and parent can look it up and create an opportunity to explore—to go online and learn!”

Rumford began writing and illustrating children's books at the urging of retired librarian, Harriett Oberhaus. Had it not been for Oberhaus' encouragement (“I knew you could do this, Jim, when I read that first sentence”), Rumford would not be the esteemed writer that he is today. As for his work ethic, Rumford is a very prolific writer and artist. However, he always makes time to follow up with people. In fact, he walked over to Read To Me from a printmaking class, fingers still stained with ink, at a last-minute request. Yet, as much as he enjoys the company of people, he is reclusive by nature. Rumford explains: “To be able to write, you have to like to be alone to some extent.”

While the writing process might be a reclusive activity, the reading process is not. Rumford often reads aloud to children. His recent book, *Don't Touch My Hat!*, about Sheriff John's reliance on his ten-gallon hat, was even dedicated to the students at Waipahu Elementary School.

On reading aloud to children, Rumford has noticed that when children are read to, “they don't even move.” He never ceases to be surprised at how much children pay attention when a story is being read to them. Part of this stillness he attributes to children's realization that he is the author telling his own story. His belief is that there is something about an author telling his own story that makes people listen a little bit harder.

While Rumford is quick to downplay any natural ability as a storyteller, his role as creator resonates through his stories when he reads aloud. At the core of it all, he knows these stories better than anyone else. This is obvious as he concludes the tale of Margaret. There is a pause as the listeners take a moment to digest his final words before the room erupts into an enthusiastic round of applause.

Around the table are ten pairs of unblinking eyes focused on Rumford. These eyes belong not to children but to adults who are about to be hard at work on the planning of the 2009 Read To Me Conference, *Open a Book, Open the World*.

As Rumford slowly flips each page of the story, the audience chuckles and strains for a closer look at the whimsical illustrations. The story follows a little redheaded girl named Margaret on her quest for a pet cat. Rumford, who is known for his ability to write and illustrate in new and inventive ways, follows the advice he provides to aspiring writers of all ages: “Write your interests and the rest will come.” Given his diverse mix of interests, it is not surprising, then, that each of his sixteen published children's books is unique in both appearance and subject.

According to Rumford: “To write, you must love language.” However, he is quick to point out that writing isn't the only way to share stories. “Writing is only one way of communicating. People communicate passions in other ways, which is something that we must recognize as well.”

While Rumford's books are usually for older children, he feels that there is no real cut-off age for reading to children. Many of his books expose children to cultures across the globe and, as a result, cause young readers to want to learn more. He explains: “I like [to write] books that can help create a bond; if the parents don't



Other James Rumford Titles

Visit your local bookstore to find and enjoy these and other books by James Rumford.

The Cloudmakers

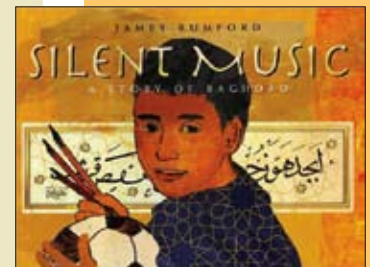
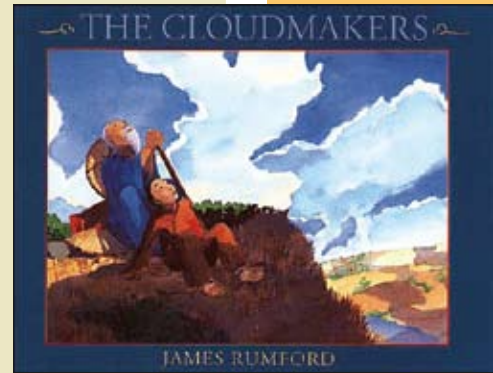
(Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996). A tale of how papermaking spread throughout the world.

Nine Animals and the Well

(Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003). A shared journey of friendship, pride and humility.

Dog-of-the-Sea-Waves

(Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004). A story showcasing the appreciation and respect for all things of Hawai'i.

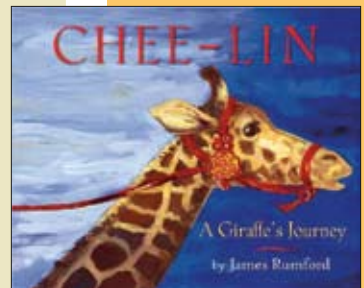


Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing

(Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004). An award-winning book which tells how Sequoyah created a written language for the Cherokee people.

Don't Touch My Hat

(Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2007). A humorous tale set in the Old West about Sheriff John and his prized ten-gallon hat.



Beowulf: A Hero's Tale Retold

(Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007). A version of the popular tale using only words of Anglo-Saxon origin.

Silent Music

(Henry Holt & Company, Incorporated, 2008). A story about how a child, surrounded by the sounds of battle, can find lyricism in language and an understanding of how the pen can truly be mightier than the sword.

Chee-Lin

(Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008). The bittersweet tale of a Qilin (Chee-lin or Giraffe), an omen of good luck, its captivity and struggle, and its travels from Africa to Bengal to China.



Dan Yaccarino



Dan Yaccarino, one of two national authors featured at the upcoming 2009 Read To Me Conference, reveals his favorite children's book, his thoughts on writing and illustrating, and the secret to why his children are such voracious readers.



You currently live in New York City—are you originally from there?

DY: I grew up just outside of New York City in Montclair, NJ. My family and I would go to NYC often to visit museums or see Broadway shows.

Where was your favorite place to read when you were a child?

DY: I guess my favorite place to read was at the library or in my room. I didn't grow up with many books around, believe it or not, but my mom used to drop me off at the library and I'd go around and pick up books, then end up in the corner and read.



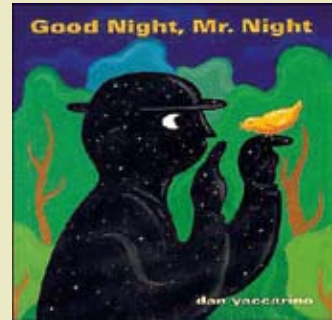
Do you have a favorite book from childhood?

DY: One of the major books from my childhood was a picture book by author/illustrator Robert Tallon called *The Thing In Dolores' Piano*. It was a strange blend of offbeat humor and an almost psychedelic approach to illustration. I loved the zany imagery, but most of all, I loved Dolores. She was completely unlikable and couldn't play the piano for beans, which was why all the notes inside the piano complained.

About 10 years ago, I found a copy online, then I looked up the author and sure enough, he lived in Manhattan. Since then Bob and I have become friends. If I were a kid who loved baseball, it would've been like meeting Joe DiMaggio.

Every Friday tells the story of a tradition that you and your son share in going to a diner for breakfast. Do you have any other family traditions that might one day appear on bookstore shelves?

DY: I'm not sure if this would be interesting enough for a book, but I read to my son and daughter every night for about an hour, and they love it (I do, too). I think it's made them into the voracious readers they now are, and I hope that if they





have children, they would do the same for them.

When did you realize that you wanted to both illustrate and write?

DY: There was never a specific moment I decided to do what I do. It may be hard for some people to understand, but writing and illustrating have always been part of me; it's who I am. It wasn't something I would've even been able to make a decision about. I think that if you need to *decide* if you're going to be a writer or illustrator, then perhaps it's not for you. You can't learn how to write or illustrate by taking classes; you can only enhance or refine the ability you were born with. It doesn't come from outside; it comes from inside.

My advice to anyone (young or old) who wants to write and illustrate for a living is, "Just keep doing it!"



Is there a particular book that you've written or illustrated that is your personal favorite?

DY: I always love the book I'm currently working on. Just this morning I finished the illustrations for a new book I wrote called *Lawn to Lawn*, and I love that darn book. I suppose that when I start my next book, *The Sorrento Shovel*, the story of my great grandfather coming to America, it will be my new favorite.



As a writer and an illustrator, is working with other writers or illustrators frustrating or a creative collaboration?

DY: I love both collaborating and working alone. I left Adam [McCauley] alone

on *The Lima Bean Monster*, and he came up with stuff that I wouldn't have thought of, which was why I wanted him to illustrate the book in the first place. I've written several of the Oswald books as well, which was fun. I also enjoy illustrating manuscripts from other authors such as Margaret Wise Brown and Jack Prelutsky. And, of course, I love writing and illustrating my books.

As a television producer, I work with dozens of talented people and find it exhilarating, but it's a very different experience from working on a book, which is more intimate. I love doing both and am grateful that I can.

Is there anything specific that you would like to tell children and parents who are big fans of your television show Oswald?

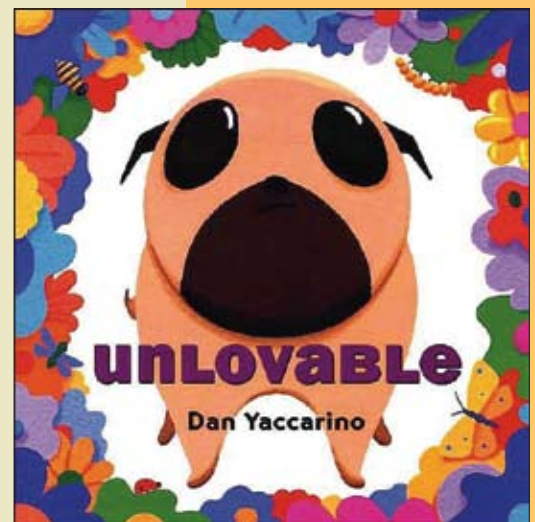
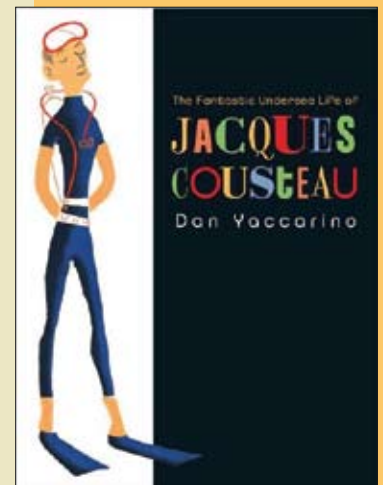
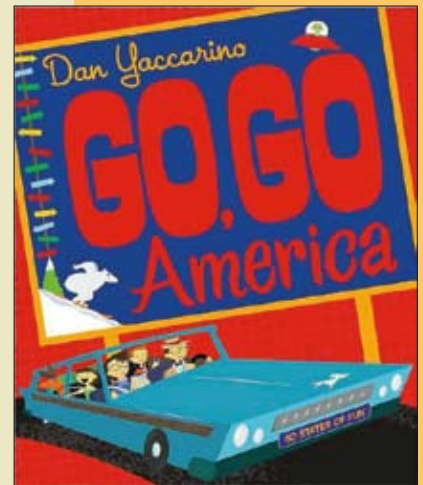
DY: I'm grateful for their emails telling me how much they enjoy and appreciate the show. It means a lot to me. So many people that write to me can see the care and love put into the show. They thank me for creating a quiet, contemplative show with a polite and empathetic character. It makes me so happy to know that people want something other than loud, rude shows.

Have you been to Hawaii before?

DY: I've been to Maui, and it was beautiful! I was looking forward to seeing the cave that Greg, Peter and Bobby were trapped in on *The Brady Bunch*, but someone told me it wasn't real. I'm very disappointed, although I do have high hopes of finding my very own cursed tiki idol.

Dan Yaccarino Titles

For bibliography of Dan Yaccarino titles you may be able to find through your local bookstores, please go to www.ReadToMeIntl.org for more information.





Dan Yaccarino and his inspiration for *Every Friday*

I guess the *Friday* breakfasts came about because like most dads, I sometimes didn't feel like I saw my son enough. Some weeks, our *Friday* breakfasts were the only time he and I had to talk or just share some time together.

I look back on when we started what became our little tradition. He was in preschool and had to start sharing his mom and dad with a new little sister. I wanted him to have some time when he didn't have to put up with a crying baby who yanked his ears, which he patiently tolerated. He and I soon looked forward to Fridays and the diner's owner, Nick, as well as a variety of regulars, warmly greeting us. To their continued astonishment, he consumed an entire adult-size order of pancakes and a side of bacon, of which I was very proud. I have fond memories of us watching people trudging through the snow and rain as he and I were cozily nestled in a booth, a little oasis from the outside world. As much as we loved Nick's Diner, I think we both preferred the small journey we took each week to get there. It may have been a mere four blocks, but it was full of adventure: greeting familiar faces, window shopping and monitoring the progress of a building on the corner going up story by story.



Nick's Diner has since closed, so our breakfasts have been relocated to another building and like that building, my son is now tall and strong. I look back on his wonder of the world and fascination of even the smallest things. Even though it was only a few years ago, life seemed a bit less complicated. My hope for *Every Friday* is for dads and moms to set aside some time to be with their children. It doesn't have to be breakfast on Friday, but it should be some time that they can count on to be with just you. And perhaps many years from now, they will carry on the tradition with their own children.



"My hope for Every Friday is for dads and moms to set aside some time to be with their children. It doesn't have to be breakfast on Friday, but it should be some time that they can count on to be with just you."



Not-to-be-missed Events!



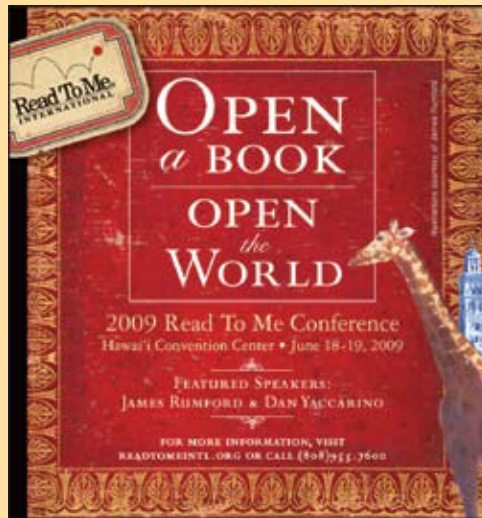
Saturday, May 2, 2009
Kapi'olani Community College
Ōhi'a Dining Room
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Join us for a magical evening filled with great company, fine wine, delicious pupus, and amazing auction items, including a Mini Cooper! Bid on home-baked desserts donated by board members or an item for Mother (Mother's Day will be right around the corner!).

Tickets to *Moonlight Magic*, Read To Me International's second fundraiser, start at \$100 per person, and corporate tables are also available. So set aside a few dollars each week and join us for a good time! More importantly, you can take pride in knowing you are making a difference in the literacy development of Hawai'i's children.

For tickets or to donate a silent auction item, please email read@ReadToMeIntl.org.

Thank you to our sponsors



Register for the Fifth Biennial Read To Me Conference!

Hawai'i Convention Center
Thursday & Friday, June 18 – 19, 2009
Speakers: James Rumford, Dan Yaccarino & Lee Cataluna

Go to www.ReadToMeIntl.org for details and a downloadable registration form.

- Regular Registration \$200 (before May 30, 2009)
- Late Registration \$225 (June 1 - 15, 2009)
- Registrations after June 15, 2009 will be on a space available basis.

Conference fees include continental breakfast, lunch and conference materials for both days. Please call (808) 955-7600 to inquire. Walk-ins will not be accepted.

Whether you're an early childhood educator, an elementary or middle school teacher, a librarian, a parent, a caregiver, a children's program manager, or just someone who is interested in sharing the love and joy of reading aloud, this conference is the destination for you!

Help your child fly with **40% higher vocabulary!**



Reading aloud to your child every day can increase his/her vocabulary up to 40% more each year!



For more information, visit ReadToMeIntl.org



Toad-in-a-Hole

by Leanne Cardwell

Many creatures come from eggs—chickens, turtles, alligators, penguins. So it's always a surprise when they hatch into something unexpected, as is the case in Leo Lionni's *An Extraordinary Egg*, or when they don't hatch at all in Mem Fox's *Hunwick's Egg*.

Whether we're waiting for a little bird to emerge or, with the aid of all the king's horses and all the king's men, unsuccessfully reassembling a mangled Humpty Dumpty, eggs hold an important shell in children's literature.

Eggs are also a delicious meal. The next time you work up an appetite reading any of these egg-cellent stories, consider making my favorite egg-y treat: a Toad-in-a-Hole. Also known as a "bird in the nest" or an "egg in the hole," this way of cooking an egg is fun, especially if you try out cookie cutters in a variety of shapes. Even to this day, I still enjoy cooking a Toad-in-a-Hole with my older sister.

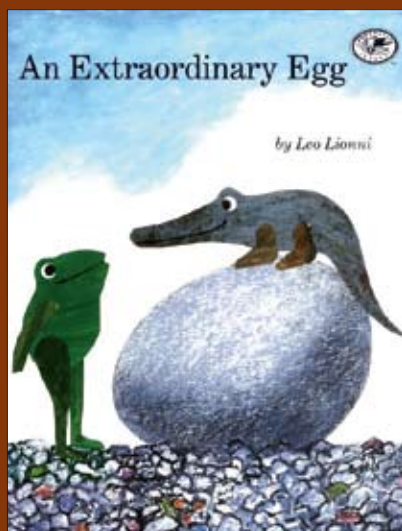
You will need:

- 1 slice of bread
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 egg*
- cookie cutter (can be any shape)
- desired spices
- spatula
- frying pan with lid
- measuring spoons

Directions:

1. Butter both sides of the slice of bread.
2. Using the cookie cutter, remove the center of the bread.
3. On a medium heat, brown both sides of the bread.
4. Break into the hole of the bread 1 egg.
5. Cover pan and let egg cook until the egg no longer jiggles in the center of the toast.
6. Add desired spices and eat with bread cut out.

* Use fresh, local Kalei Eggs.





Just for Fun!

Newspaper Hat Instructions

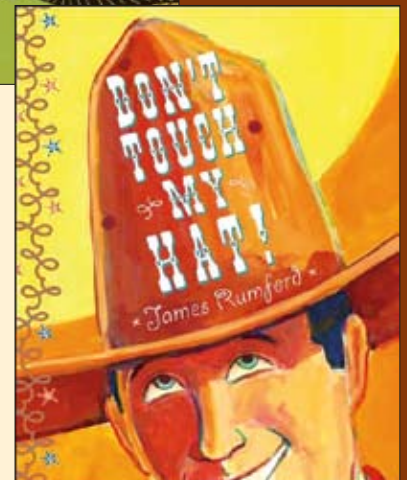
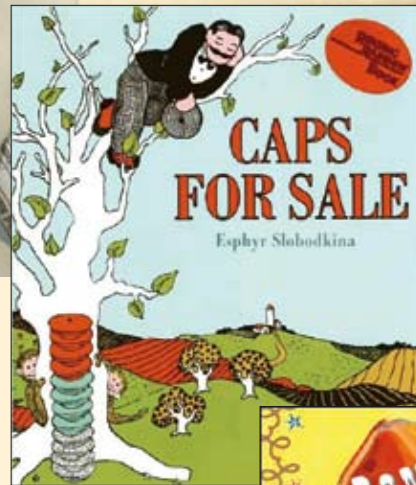
From James Rumford's popular tale of Sheriff John, who needs his hat to defend the town of Sunshine in *Don't Touch My Hat!*, to the peddler who sells caps in Esphyr Slobodkina's book, *Caps For Sale*, stories about hats are everywhere in children's literature. For this month's craft, find a hat story of your choice, and then have some fun creating the hat of your dreams!

Supplies needed:

- Newspaper
 - Masking tape (optional: blue masking tape)
 - Feathers, flowers, glitter, buttons, tempera paint, etc.
- Optional:
- An extra set of hands to position the hat
 - Head model (child or willing participant)

Instructions:

1. Unfold and diagonally overlap two full newspaper sheets.
2. Place and hold the overlapped sheets of paper on top of the model's head.
3. Starting at the forehead, wind the masking tape to encircle the head, wrapping the tape from the forehead to the back of the head, just under the spot where the bone protrudes farthest. Continue to wind the masking tape back to the forehead in one continuous motion, form fitting the newspaper to the model's head. Make the hat snug, but not too snug.
4. Starting from the front of the person and rotating in one direction only, roll the edges of the newspaper into a carefully formed brim. Depending on your hat fancy you can roll the newspaper into a unique look, perhaps that of a cowboy hat, a fedora, or a derby.
5. Decorate the hat with feathers, flowers, glitter, buttons, tempera paint, etc.



Newspaper Hat picture is provided courtesy of www.mayamade.com. Browse the maya*made blog for many more inspired ways to create earth-friendly crafts.



Or Current (Resident)

Due to the USPS Move Update effective November 23, 2008, Read To Me International Foundation added an "Or Current Resident" line to our addressees. In these trying economic times, this additional line will save on Read To Me International's mailing costs.

If you would like to update the address information that we have on file or remove your name from our mailing list, please call us at (808) 955-7500 or email us at read@ReadToMeIntl.org. Mahalo!

Tales with a Twist!

For some really zany stories, check out books we call Tales with a Twist. These are modern versions of your favorite classic nursery rhymes and fairy tales.

The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs
by Jon Scieszka



The Wolf's Chicken Stew
by Keiko Kasza



The Stinky Cheese Man
by Jon Scieszka



More recommended reading titles are listed on our web site at www.ReadToMeIntl.org where you can buy books by clicking on the title or book cover. You'll save money while supporting Read To Me programs (5%-15% of every purchase will be donated back to Read To Me International).


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