

# The **READ TO ME** Planet

Sharing the love and joy of reading aloud

A Read To Me International Publication

Spring 2006

## **TALK STORY**

By Katherine Nichols

It's not about books, really. The worn pages, colorful illustrations and printed words are important, but confined to the role of catalyst. It's really about human touch.

Reading to my children before bedtime is a way to facilitate that touch, and this subtle contact sparks a thousand memories.

"You picked last time!"

"We always read what you want!"

My son leaps from the couch and stands on his head, falling over and thumping to the floor. For a moment I consider skipping the story. Instead, I open the book. My finger brushes the crude letters of my name, printed decades earlier ("That's your writing, Mom? No way!") before turning the page.

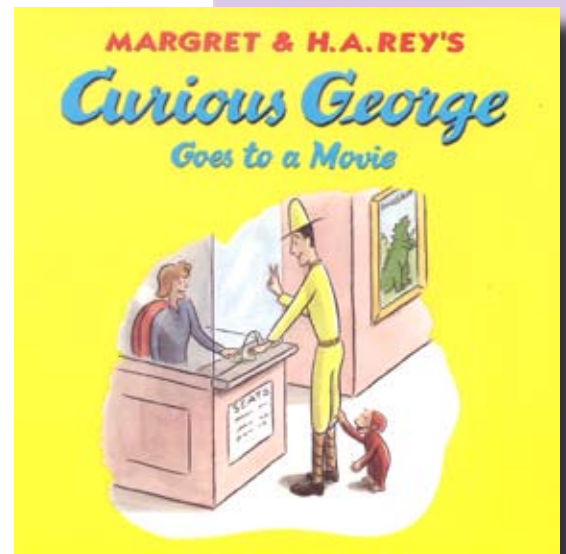
"He was a good little monkey and always very curious."  
Everything changes when they hear my reading voice. My son, just old enough to stiffen at public displays of affection, lets his lanky body melt into mine. Younger and more open to my touch, my daughter rests one hand on my knee.

I am speaking the words, but hearing my father's voice as he reads to me. I feel my children's cotton pajamas and smell the strawberry shampoo in their damp hair. But I am recalling the tattered blanket between my own fingers.

When Curious George the monkey became tangled in the massive amounts of spaghetti or painted a jungle scene in an old woman's apartment, my father adopted an overly dramatic tone. ("Will you look at that mess!") But my sister and I welcomed his corny sense of theater.

Of course, George was ... "Curious!" we said together. My father left blank the ends of the same sentences. He read the same books, because we chose them over and over.

Only when I am pulled back to my childhood one scene at a time do I understand the bickering between my kids. The attention and proximity were so fulfilling that my sister and I wanted them all to ourselves. This closeness, I now realize, is a parent's simplest and most cherished gift.





Executive Director  
Liane Kam Akana

Community Outreach Director  
Jenny Teo

Program Director  
Pat Mizuno

Newsletter Design & Editor  
Bettina Mehnert

Board of Directors 2005-2006

Honorary Members  
Sharon Darling  
Jim Trelease

Advisory Members  
Wally Amos  
Tom Barlow  
Patricia Hamamoto  
JoAnn Schindler

President  
Lynne Waihee

Vice President  
Frank Haas

Secretary  
Mary Matayoshi

Treasurer  
M. Jan Rumi

Board Chair  
Lynne Madden

Directors  
Sue Berg  
Harold Dias, Jr.  
Ed McNulty  
Bettina Mehnert  
Earl Miyamoto  
Jim Myers  
Zale Okazaki  
Nolan Pong  
Ken Slavik

Read To Me International  
1833 Kalakaua Avenue, Suite 301  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815  
Phone: (808) 955-7600  
Fax: (808) 955-7601  
www.readtomeintl.org

## President's Message

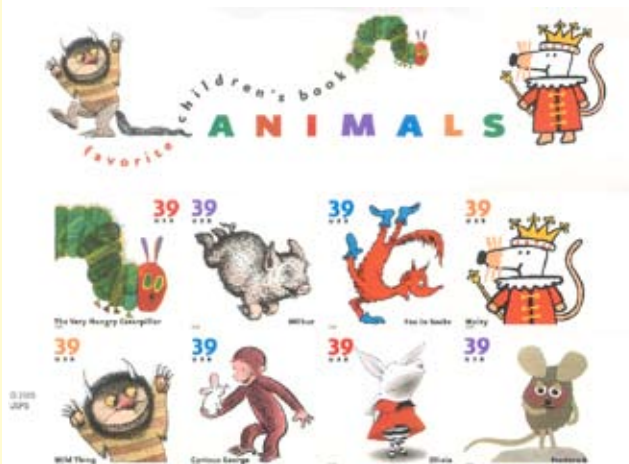


Many moons ago, I tutored at an elementary school where I was introduced to Frederick. Leo Lionni's Frederick, that is. If you are not familiar with this endearing, not-so-new children's story (a children's classic published in 1967), you should be.

Frederick, who seems to be doing nothing while all the other mice are busy scurrying around, getting ready for the winter months ahead, insists he is preparing for the possible harsh days ahead. In the end, Frederick really does come through, as you will discover on reading this story.

We have Fredericks in our lives, those with poetic voices who inspire us and stir our imagination. In this age, when No Child Left Behind sometimes causes us to leave behind reading aloud to our children, let us not forget our Fredericks, but let us nurture them.

Read aloud, every day, to those special children in your life.



p.s. You may wish to send a note to that special child in your life by slow mail. The U.S. Post Office has the perfect stamp for you in their "Favorite Children's Book Animals" series. My personal favorite? Why, Frederick, of course! Well, at least one of my favorites.

*Lynne Waihee*

(continued from Page 1)

So I read to them, not because I was a teacher and a writer and have a passion for books. I read aloud to keep my two children close to me for a few minutes each day.

With passing years, my daughter leaves George on the shelf in favor of novellas about spunky girl detectives. But she still wants me to read to her each night. I relish it because I know it won't last.

My son, lurching into pre-adolescence, prefers to read by himself. Offers to read aloud to him are met with "No, thanks" and a scowl.

Once in a while he acquiesces. And when he does, that serenity blossoms, and again I realize that the most effective way to communicate with my children is often through the pages of a book.

Forget the brain. Reading aloud in our house is all about the most basic human need: touch

*This edited article appeared in its entirety in the September 2004 issue of Honolulu magazine.*



## Welcome Jenny

Read To Me is pleased to introduce our new Community Outreach Director, Jenny Teo. Jenny comes to us from the private sector with a wealth of experience in marketing and project management.

Jenny was never read to as a child; her parents were first generation Singaporeans and neither of them were read to as children. However, as soon as Jenny learned to read on her own, she discovered her love for it and developed a voracious appetite for reading, devouring any and all printed materials she could find. When she was in elementary school, she loved reading so much that she would hide her storybook under her desk and read it even while class was in session.

We first met Jenny several years ago when she was an account executive at StarrTech Interactive. Jenny oversaw the first redesign of our Read To Me website. These many years later, Jenny has come full circle, and one of her tasks will be to expand our outreach through the World Wide Web.

We all agree that the kinds of books we love and our favorite characters tell a lot about who we are. We asked Jenny to share her favorite character from a children's book. Here is what she had to say:

"Of all the characters from children's books that I can remember, the one that springs to mind is the goose that laid the golden eggs. I've always thought what a wonderful gift it would be to produce something so extraordinary and valuable.

In the story, the goose was able to lay a golden egg each day as long as it was fed well and treated right. But the farmer grew impatient and greedy and thought he could harvest all the golden eggs at once by killing the goose and slaying it open. To his dismay and regret, there weren't any golden eggs to be found, and all the farmer was left with was the dead goose.

In a way, all of us are that goose. If we take care of ourselves and remember to renew ourselves each day, we would have the ability to produce "golden eggs" for the world to enjoy. But we often forget and run ourselves into exhaustion, to the point where we're no longer able to produce any more golden eggs.

Educators and parents need to remember to take the time to renew and replenish themselves so they can continue to lay golden eggs for their children to enjoy!"



## Celebrating Dr. Seuss



### **CELEBRATING DR. SEUSS' BIRTHDAY AT BARNES AND NOBLE**



On March 2, Barnes & Noble at Ala Moana Shopping Center celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday as part of Read Across America Day by inviting first graders from Ma`ema`e Elementary School for a bookstore tour, read aloud and craft-making session.

Alison Anteau, community relations manager, led a class of eager first graders on a tour of the bookstore while pointing out the different sections and topics allocated within each zone. Along the way, students picked up envelopes that had been strategically placed, only to learn later that they contained illustrations of some of Dr. Seuss' well-known characters when they engaged in a fun game of matching the characters with the books titles that they appeared in.



Within the Barnes & Noble Junior section, staff members Jariisse & Nat took turns reading aloud while Nat taught the kids how to fashion a maraca from brown paper bags, magic markers, colored strings, and the surprising ingredient - coffee beans! The air was filled with the aroma of coffee beans as the first graders rattled their home-made maracas, which they adorned with Happy Birthday wishes and Dr. Seuss' characters.

It was a great morning for all who attended. The kids learned that myriad subjects can be found in the bookstore, deepened their connection with Dr. Seuss and his colorful characters, and learned an alternative use for coffee beans. Kudos to Alison and her team at Barnes & Noble Ala Moana for making Read Across America Day interesting and memorable for these first graders!





## Celebrating Dr. Seuss

### **INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT DR. SEUSS**

Born : March 2, 1904

Birthplace : Springfield, Massachusetts

Died : September 24, 1991 (at the age of 87)

Cause of death : Cancer

Real name : Theodore Geisel

First illustrated children's book : *"And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street"*

Year published : 1937

Awards : Pulitzer Prize in 1984 and Academy Award in 1945

Why the pen name "Dr. Seuss"?

Dr. Seuss' mother was an immigrant from Germany, and Seuss was her maiden name. She would have pronounced Seuss more like "zoice" but the name is now pronounced universally with an initial "s" sound and rhyming with "juice".

Apparently, Dr. Seuss' father wanted him to earn a doctorate at Oxford, so "Dr." was an acknowledgement of his father's unfulfilled wish.

Under this pen name, almost 50 children's books have been written, the most famous ones being *"The Cat in the Hat"*, *"Green Eggs and Ham"*, *"Horton Hears a Who"* and *"One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish"*.

Dr. Seuss also used another pen name - "Theo. LeSieg" - (which is his real last name, "Geisel," but spelled backwards). He used this alternate pen name for books he wrote but didn't illustrate.

Another pen name he used was "Rosetta Stone."

Source: [www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com)

Other Read-To-Me Dr. Seuss Favorites:

*"The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins"*

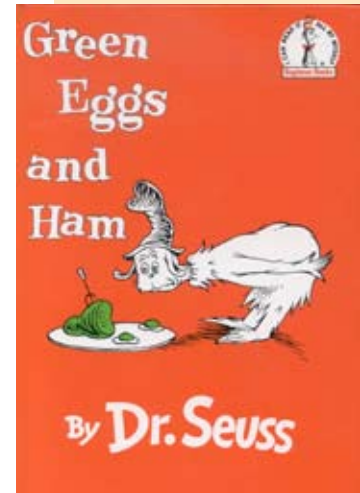
*"Horton Hatches the Egg"*

*"McElligot's Pool"*

*"My Many Colored Days"*

*"Oh, the Places You'll Go"*

*"Seussisms: Wise and Witty Prescriptions for Living from the Good Doctor"*



# Reading Checklist

There are many ways that you can encourage your child to become a reader. Here are some questions you can ask yourself to make sure that you are keeping on track:

## **FOR BABIES**

(6 weeks to 1 year)

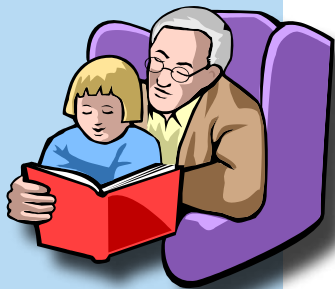
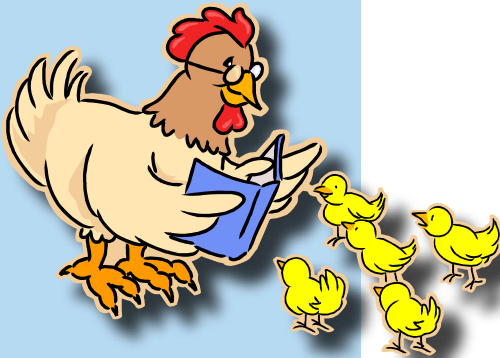
- Do I provide a comfortable place for our story time? Is my child happy to be in this place?
- Am I showing my child the pictures in the book? Am I changing the tone of my voice as I read to show emotion and excitement?
- Am I paying attention to how my child responds? What does she especially like? Is she tired and ready to stop?

## **FOR TODDLERS**

(1 to 3 years)

All of the questions above, plus:

- Does my child enjoy the book we are reading?
- Do I encourage my child to “pretend read,” joining in where he has memorized a word or phrase?
- When I ask questions, am I giving my child enough time to think and answer?
- Do I tie ideas in the book to things that are familiar to my child? Do I notice if he does this on his own?
- Do I let my child know how much I like his ideas and encourage him to tell me more?
- Do I point out letters, such as the first letter of his name?





# Reading Checklist

## **FOR PRESCHOOLERS**

(3 and 4 years)

All of the questions above, plus:

- Do I find ways to help my child begin to identify sounds and letters and to make letter-sound matches?

## **FOR KINDERGARTNERS**

(5 years):

All of the questions above, plus:

- Do I find ways to help my child begin to identify some printed words?
- Do I let my child retell favorite stories to show that she knows how the story develops and what's in it?

## **FOR BEGINNING FIRST-GRADERS**

(6 years):

All of the questions above, plus:

- Do I give my child the chance to read a story to me using the print, picture clues, his memory – or any combination of these ways that help him make sense of the story?

Remember: Children learn step by step in a process that takes time and patience. They vary a great deal in what holds their interest and in the rate at which they progress.

*Source: U.S. Department of Education*

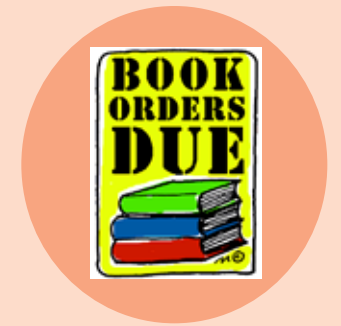
## **SAVE THE DATES!**

Want to learn more practical ideas, tips and techniques for reading aloud? Come join us at the Fourth Biennial Read To Me Conference happening June 28 and 29, 2007!

Gain more research-based information on why reading aloud is important at every stage of a child's development as you meet and interact with teachers, librarians, caregivers, service providers, parents and authors of children's books.

Our featured speakers are renowned children's authors/illustrators, Mem Fox and Rosemary Wells. This two-day conference will not only educate and entertain, but also provide you with the inspiration to enhance your read-aloud experience with your child.

So save the dates and stay tuned for more information and updates!



**Save Money  
AND  
Raise Funds for Read  
To Me!**

By visiting the Read To Me website, [www.read-tomeintl.org](http://www.read-tomeintl.org) and purchasing books through the [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) link, you can get great discounts on books and help Read To Me International raise funds for its projects.

For every book purchased through the Read To Me website, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) will donate 5-10% of the purchase price to Read To Me International.

The site offers book lists and reviews for all types of children's literature and parenting resources.

Check it out!





## Feedback



### **GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK!**

That's right! We would really love to hear from you and find out what you think about our newsletter: what you like about it, what you wish you could see more of, and the types of articles, content or features you would like us to incorporate in future issues.

We are interested in what you think and we are constantly working to improve and provide information that we hope is meaningful and relevant to you. So please give us your feedback as we would love to hear from you!

Here are the ways you can reach us:

BY EMAIL: [read@readtomeintl.org](mailto:read@readtomeintl.org)


BY PHONE: 1 (808) 955-7600

BY FAX: 1 (808) 955-7601

BY MAIL: Read To Me International Foundation  
1833 Kalakaua Avenue  
Suite 301  
Honolulu, HI 96815

“Reading to your little one is just like putting gold coins in the bank. It will pay you back ten-fold. Your daughter will learn and imagine and be strong in herself. Your son will thrive and give your love back forever.”

*Rosemary Wells, writer and featured speaker at the upcoming Read To Me Conference on June 28 and 29, 2007. See page 7 for more information about the conference.*



**Read To Me**  
INTERNATIONAL  
1833 Kalakaua Ave. Suite 301  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815  
Read To Me International Foundation

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
Permit No. 00577

