

# Helpful Hints From Children's Librarians Across the State

## CREATE A COMMERCIAL

Have you read a good children's book lately? Can you "sell" your book to children, parents, and/or teachers? An innovative method combining children's books and advertising allows the reader a chance to announce his/her book as if it were a commercial.

The commercials should not be more than 1½ minutes. If entire classes participate, the best from each class is selected to appear on video-tape. If done within a public library system, the best book commercials can be selected by a branch and brought together for video-taping or slide presentations.

The commercials should be judged on clarity, originality, and conciseness. The title and author of the book must be mentioned at some point in the commercial. Props may be used. No more than two readers may be used besides the person doing the commercial.

Winners could receive ribbons, the book they have advertised, and/or "see" themselves on a local TV or radio station.

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## LITERARY QUIZ BOWL

Children in grades 3-6 were informed that the library would be having a literary quiz bowl. Sign up sheets were posted in the library two months before the actual participation date. Two different categories of books were used.

The first category contained easy picture-format books such as *Andy and the Lion*, *Story About Ping*, *Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears*, and *The Hundred Penny Box*. The second category included such titles as *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, *The Borrowers*, and *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. Each category consisted of approximately 26 titles.

Students were given lists of the books in their chosen category so they could begin reading as many of the books as possible before the contest date. Since only titles appeared on the lists, the students gained much practice in using the card catalog as they attempted to locate the desired books on the library shelves.

Several questions from each of the books on the lists were formulated and written on individual strips of paper. These were then placed in separate boxes for Categories I & II. On the appointed dates, participants came to the library and were told to draw a question from the appropriate box. If it was answered correctly, the participant remained in the contest. Several preliminary rounds were held due to the number of children participating. The finalists were brought together as a special program for the entire school/library to observe.

Prizes were awarded to the winners and runners-up of each category. These literary quiz bowls require little funding for the tremendous "return". Various categories such as science fiction, biography, fantasy could be used.

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## "KITES 'N SPRING THINGS"

A good after school program is a kite-making workshop. Demonstrations of various types of kites, questions and answers concerning kite trivia, and handouts on kite-making "how-to" can be given out.

If you are making kites, be prepared with more than enough materials. Depending upon the age of the children (if you require a sign-up, you should know this) you may want to pre-cut string, have dowel rods or wooden frames pre-cut and/or design the kite so it only has to be assembled.

There is some expense with materials unless they can be donated or each child is required to bring his or her own materials.

Remember when planning any type of celebration, one must be very sure that everyone knows the whens and wheres. That all-important factor, publicity, determines program success or failure. Newspaper and radio features are important pre-program planning. Bookmarks listing program times, dates and what is being offered are an excellent means of getting the word out.

Posters for school halls and shop windows as well as for children's departments in branch libraries will draw attention to future attractions. Many schools will feature public library activities during their regular school announcements. Here is a PR tip: try an unusual, even wacky title for your after-school program. The curious mystique of the program will draw some to find out "what it's all about."

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