

Continuing Diversity

continuing diversity by Renee Rude

"Continuing Diversity" reviews three new serials for youth: *All Round*, *Kahani*, and *Real News for Real Kids*. One, *Kahani*, is specifically multicultural, while the other two present topics related to cultural diversity as part of their overall mission. In terms of that mission, *All Round* takes a global focus, with an emphasis on the environment, while *Real News for Real Kids* began locally, with the aim of serving schoolchildren and those who are home schooled in north-central Alabama.

All Round. ISSN 1547-6474. Number 11, Spring 2004. Editor: Tilke Elkins. Publisher: Woodley and Watts, Inc., P. O. Box 10193, Eugene, OR, 97440; phone (888) 669-6991; web site: www.allroundmagazine.com. Semiannual. Subscriptions: Single issue \$6.95 USD, \$9.95 CAN; one and half year (three issues) \$19 USD, \$27 CAN; three years (six issues) \$36 USD, \$51 CAN. Back issues: \$9.00 USD, \$13 CAN.

"*All Round* is a radical magazine for children ages 1 to 100 and up." This new serial is produced twice a year by Woodley and Watts, Inc. and printed on 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper. Its editor, researcher, and illustrator is Tilke Elkins.

The web site states: "All Round is a low-tech hand-drawn magazine by and for people who love the world and are happy to be in it." The front cover of the spring 2004 issue boldly announces, "Issue number 11! all about inventing, all different, all the same, all together, incredible new inventions, artists who invent, be a super hero!" A round circle graphic displays the title. The reverse of the front cover of this ebullient 8" x 10" magazine gives ordering details.

Each issue is themed. The first issue was "All About Color," followed by "All About Trees," "All About Night," and "All About Flying." Other themes have included animals, magic, shelter, being born, and music.

The "All About Inventing" issue is 40 pages. The illustrations, in cartoon style, enhance articles on games, recently published books on inventing and inventors, and activities to keep the reader "movin'." In addition, there is an invention contest and a section of responses from readers. Rather than inviting letters to the editor, youngsters of all ages are encouraged to send in their drawings, complete with questions to be printed in a subsequent issue.

A new section is named "Ecovillages—Inventing a New Way to Live." The facts and cartoon illustrations depict dwellings and communities in a variety of places throughout the world. This superb new publication has tons of color and exciting graphics and is deserving of much praise. Surely all

public libraries and elementary schools need a subscription. **Kahani: A South Asian Literary Magazine for Children.** ISSN pending. Premier issue, 2004. Editor: Monika Jain. Publisher: Kahani, P. O. Box 590155, Newton Centre, MA 02459; phone: (617) 515-1676; web site: www.kahani.com. Bimonthly. Subscriptions: \$29.

Kahani, which debuted in fall 2004, offers a unique resource to children and teachers at the elementary level. Its focus is on South Asian culture and literature. In the words of founder and business director Leena Chawla, "The goal of our magazine is to reflect the experience of our children as they grow up here, and to develop in them a sense of pride in their rich cultural heritage and values. Another goal is to provide a platform to showcase the tremendous talent of South Asian writers and illustrators for children's literature." Among the notable South Asian writers featured in the premiere issue are Mitali Perkins, Vandana Singh, and Uma Krishnaswami, with illustrations by Mallika Sundaramurthy, Natasha Jain, and Shaila Desai.

Perkins's short story, "Take 3," features Bobby Singh, a Sikh immigrant who tries to reconcile the parents he sees at home with the image Americans have of his parents. Singh's story, "The Kite," celebrates the parental love that gives young Sameera the confidence to make friends in a new home. Krishnaswami depicts an Indian-American family preparing for visits, at the same time, of grandparents living in India and England in "Meera's Grandmothers."

A section entitled "Spotlight" profiles a prominent South Asian American, in this case Indian-American scientist Tejal Desai, whose experience of family members with diabetes led her to research ways to make the disease more manageable. A puzzle; book, movie, and/or software reviews; and a colorful, appealing cartoon (with inside jokes directed to South Asian American youngsters) round out this 24-page issue.

This delightful magazine is a welcome addition to public libraries and elementary schools with Indian or other South Asian populations. Another target audience is individual families, who will find information, inspiration, and affirmation in the various stories and other features of *Kahani*.

Real News for Real Kids. Volume 2, Issue 1, September 24, 2004. Editor-in-Chief and Publisher: Carol Mader. Real News, Inc., 792 Siena Vista Dr., Madison, AL 35758; phone: (256) 464-9492; web site: www.realnewsforrealkids.com. Biweekly. Contact publisher for subscription information.

Mader publishes this local newspaper with national ambitions with the help of a group of regular feature writers from

north-central Alabama. She also prints the work of youth writers and cartoonists. Among them are Mader's sons and several other youngsters from local middle and high schools. Mader invites young folks to have a pivotal role in creating the newspaper so that they find it exciting to read the final product.

The subtitle to this eight-page newspaper, geared to students in elementary and middle schools, is "Making News Readable and Relevant for Children." For its mission, she writes, "To encourage a strong sense of civic responsibility, we need to groom a new generation of newspaper readers—a literate electorate. We challenge ourselves to set new standards in journalism, upholding the truth with integrity."

Bill Hey, who contributes the "Hey, Bill" column for each issue, is a board-certified licensed professional counselor with Huntsville Mental Health Center. His column is geared to parents of school-aged children.

The front page of this biweekly publication presents national, world, and state news in brief. Consistent with the goal of producing "a literate electorate," much of the news is of the war in Iraq and politics on a national, state, and local level. The news articles are careful not to endorse candidates, though the information, slant, and tone parallel those of the mainstream media. In several places, including

the "Ask Will" advice column of the September 24, 2004, issue, there is content in support of the Iraq war.

Word Busters is a vocabulary worksheet from which children can learn and apply new words. An online section titled "Faith Follow Ups" for private Christian schools offers simple but effective spiritual lessons. For teachers in public schools, there are also secular lessons, discussion questions, and assessment tools for many of the news stories.

The newspaper reflects the ethnic, political, and religious makeup of the region where it is published. African-American writers and persons profiled appear prominently. There is also a pronounced Christian presence. While home schooling and Bible studies are certainly worthwhile, the "Faith Follow Ups" column begs the question of inclusion. Quakers? Mormons? Jews? I think not. The newspaper is supported by a number of local advertisements, including a large ad from the Kroger supermarket chain.

Mader encourages educators and students to use content from *Real News for Real Kids* as the basis for their own publications, and to encourage businesses in other areas to sponsor these efforts. Unfortunately, many of the stories are too local or too narrow in perspective to recommend this. 📖

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