

### Owl Hoots and Screeches . . .

By Mrs. Helen M. Sanders  
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formula, we write about real people in real-life situations, are frequently considered controversial. These are the authors whose books we have been reading for the last month in preparation for our conference in New Bern this week. Stories such as **SOUNDER** by William H. Armstrong, or **HOW MANY MILES TO BABYLON** by Paula Fox, or **SEASON OF PONIES** by Zilpha Snyder, or **SHADOW OF A BULL** by Maia Wojciechowska are a far cry from the run-of-the-mill shallow story so often considered proper for children. The discussions should be stimulating, to say the least. I, for one, am looking forward eagerly to the reactions of the other librarians. Many of them have never read children's books like these, I dare say.

**SCREECHES**  
**GAS LINES**—In the course of the three and a half years that I have been writing this weekly column, I have done my writing in all sorts of places and at some rather strange times but this week sets some sort of record for peculiar circumstances: I am making use of the hour and a half wait in the line at the filling station to pen these lines. So much has been said about the gasoline shortage that I can think of no original way to describe my annoyance at the inconvenience. Since my job entails the supervision of a three-county area with a great deal of driving necessary, the inability to get gas interferes with my duties as well as my pleasures. But being a natural-born Pollyanna, I try to see some good in every misfortune. One thought which occurs to me is that we are being forced to take the poet Longfellow's advice: "Learn to labor and to wait." Another bright side to this dark cloud is that walking (one of my favorite forms of exercise) might become popular again.

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**HOOTS CHILDREN AND STEREOTYPES**—Where do children get the ideas which define their images of themselves and other people? Certainly, a great deal is absorbed from their home environment, from what their parents tell them, from the stories and advertisements they see on television, and from talking to playmates. But there is one source for stereotypes with which librarians are particularly concerned: portrayals in books.

A recent publication which I have been studying is entitled **DICK AND JANE AS VICTIMS**. It is a scientific analysis of the readers used in the elementary schools. The findings were truly astounding in relation to sex stereotyping but, upon reflection, shouldn't surprise anyone who stops to remember their own childhood primers. Boys are always portrayed as active, athletic, brave, resourceful and larger than girls who are pictured as passive, domestic, fearful, helpless and petite. Not very true to real life!

The writers of juvenile fiction who defy this traditional

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DOUBLE STAMP DAY

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