

inadequate or the food tainted. And my unrest is further compounded when I consider other children, all the other children. Your children. My commitment to bring good news to all the children of God cannot dismiss anything that could diminish their well being, their ability to prosper, their longing to live freely in the reign of God. All this comes into play when I begin to plan a program, plot out a retreat, or publish a newsletter.



Rachel Carson 1907--1964

Time magazine named Rachel Carson one of the 100 most influential people of the last century. And yet, the introduction to the book says: "Carson was an outsider who had never been part of the scientific establishment, first because she was a woman but also because her chosen field, biology, was held in low esteem in the nuclear age. Her career path was nontraditional; she had no academic affiliation, no institutional voice. She deliberately wrote for the public rather than for a narrow scientific audience. For anyone else, such independence would have been an enormous detriment. But by the time *Silent Spring* was published, Carson's outsider status had become a distinct advantage. As the science establishment would discover, it was impossible to dismiss her."

"She was a revolutionary spokesperson for the rights of all life. She dared to speak out and confront the issue of the destruction of nature and to frame it as a debate of the quality of all life." In light of all the current discussion and debate about toxins we continue to expel into our environment and the compounding damage that results, Carson seems to have been a timely prophet indeed. Even though I waited till the 40th anniversary issue of her book was published, neither its relevance nor

urgency are dated.

Like Gandhi, Rachel Carson believed we must be accountable for our actions. Anyone, therefore, who shops at a local grocer, purchases energy, or buys products to tend a lawn or garden has labels to read, choices to make, and alternatives to consider. Our decisions will always make a difference.

Rachel Carson died of breast cancer less than two years after her book was published. But it had caught the attention of President John F. Kennedy and millions of readers. Investigations were launched as voices were raised. Nothing would be the same. And more than forty years after publication, *Silent Spring* is still serving as a wake-up call.

Finally, I think there is room for one more book, a skinny one. *And to Think That We Thought That We'd Never Be Friends* came home with me from a workshop on bullying. Written by Mary Ann Hoberman and illustrated by Kevin Hawkes, it moves easily and in rhyme from a backyard brawl to a celebration worldwide. Kids will love this book and the parents and older siblings who are asked to read it will enjoy repeated encounters.

The story suggests that resolution to conflict is always within reach. It just takes a little more courage and creativity than the players are usually willing to muster. That's where the delightful turns of events in this tale serve us best.

In a dozen or more bullying programs Beacon Street has offered this past year, students and adults were quick to admit that alternatives to violence were as readily available as a better word, an act of restraint, a gesture of inclusion, or moral support from friends. In most instances, however, no one reached for the remedies. Hoberman's book offers a colorful encouraging word.

Three books. One about a little brown man; another about an unassuming biologist. Both about passion, the truth, and hope for a better world. The third is a much shorter read that suggests delightful alternatives to conflict. You may already be familiar with one, the other, or all three. If not, there is plenty of summer left to leaf through some of these recommended pages.

*"Children are the messages we send to a time we will not see." Author unknown*