

# news & notes

## Teacher Resources

*Teaching State History: A Guide to Developing a Multicultural Curriculum*, by Ava McCall and Thelma Ristow. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003. State history is a required component of social studies standards in each of the 50 states, according to the authors. Their work offers new insights into the rationale for teaching state history, provides valuable resources for planning, describes useful teaching strategies, and gives the reader a glimpse into exciting projects and units of study that have been used by elementary school teachers and their students.

*History Makers: A Questioning Approach to Reading and Writing Biographies*, by Myra Zarnowski. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003. Zarnowski draws upon her 15 years of experience teaching history through biographies. Her approach to studying biography with children is compelling, and she speaks to the motivational and critical thinking components of the discipline. Teachers will find helpful examples of children's projects, guidelines for completing a biography study, and bibliographies of useful trade books accompanying each chapter.

## AFRICAN CULTURE

*Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2003. Thirty-two traditional and contemporary folktales from every corner of Africa invite the reader to explore Africa's oral tradition of storytelling. Commissioned, imaginative artwork accompanies each story. Readers identify probable origination points of each story on a map. For example, "The Mother Who Turned to Dust" is from Malawi; "The Hare and the Tree Spirit" is a Xhosa tale from South Africa; and "The Clever Snake Charmer" is from Morocco. Thirteen stories hail from Mandela's beloved South Africa. About his purpose for compiling these stories, Mandela writes in the book's foreword, "It is my wish that the voice of the storyteller will never die in Africa, that all the children in the world may experience the wonder of books, and that they will never lose their capacity to enlarge their earthly dwelling place with the magic of stories." These folktales should be a welcome addition to school and personal libraries.

## Books Received

### CIVICS

*Yankee Doodle Riddles: American History Fun*, by Joan Holub, illustrated by Elizabeth Buttler. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman, 2003.

This charming book, celebrating American history, features a wide range of topics. Children and their teachers will enjoy trying to solve the riddles, and the imaginative illustrations by Buttler provide helpful context. For example, in a double-page spread, "Name That American Invention," a host of inventions—peanut butter, ice cream cone, steamboat, Morse code telegraph, sewing machine, and airplane—are depicted, which challenges students to think about form and function.

*Happy 4th of July, Jenny Sweeney!*, by Leslie Kimmelman, illustrated by Nancy Cote. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman, 2003. Neighbors in a small town get ready for the Fourth of July celebration by hanging flags, organizing a picnic, and preparing for a parade. From morning until the evening's fireworks display, townspeople celebrate the day in various ways: from sipping lemonade to marching in the parade. Cote's detailed illustrations are filled with good humor. The story is expanded with a section at the end, "About America's Birth," which includes interesting facts about America's Independence Day.

### HISTORICAL FICTION

*Anna the Bookbinder*, by Andrea Cheng, illustrated by Ted Rand. New York: Walker, 2003. Ages 5-9.

Cheng's story, evoking the moral "Slow but steady wins the race," introduces the reader to Anna at the turn of the twentieth century. Anna's father is an independent bookbinder, priding himself in the quality of his work and eschewing the new, quick fixes being used by the large bookbinders. Anna loves to work in her father's shop where, by watching him, she learns his trade. The family comes to appreciate how much Anna knows when she finishes an important job for her father during the birth of her baby brother. Rand's illustrations transport the reader back in time one hundred years.

### THE WORKPLACE

*My Dad's Job*. Peter Glassman, illustrated by Timothy Bush. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003. As he hears his father describe his job, a young boy pictures wonderful scenes in response to hearing about "working on a great team," "riding the bull and bear market," and "fighting a hostile takeover." He wonders if his father's work is as fun as it sounds. Finally, he gets to go to work with his father and finds the job to be as much fun as he had imagined. This book is a good introduction to learning about the economy and the stock market. It includes a simple glossary.