



## 2007 Sponsors:

A Northwest  
Indiana  
reading event  
for all ages!



## READING GUIDE

2007 Theme:

Our Choices, Our World



Selections for four reading levels:

**ADULT** - *Into the Forest*

**TEEN** - *Never Cry Wolf*

**MIDDLE READERS** - *Flush*

**PICTURE/EASY** - *The Great Kapok Tree*

e/o Purdue University Calumet  
Library  
2200 169th St.  
Hammond, IN 46323-2094  
[www.books2bridge.org](http://www.books2bridge.org)  
E-mail: [info@books2bridge.org](mailto:info@books2bridge.org)



## Introduction

**Books to Bridge the Region** is a reading initiative encompassing seven Northwest Indiana counties: Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Newton, Porter, Pulaski and Starke. Participants of One Region, One Book, formerly sponsored by the *Post-Tribune*, wanted to continue the synergy found in that four-year project by creating a new initiative to include readers of all ages. **Books to Bridge the Region** is a collaborative effort, not owned or managed by any one entity and does not intend to replace other area “One Read” programs. On the contrary, **Books to Bridge the Region** encourages participation in all programs that foster reading.

## Rationale

**Books to Bridge the Region** uses a themed approach with selections at four reading levels so that families can read together and readers of all ages can enjoy the conversations generated by these books. The books chosen for this year’s theme, “*Our Choices, Our World*,” focus attention on different environmental issues and the effect our individual choices have on our world. Jean Hegland’s *Into the Forest* provides the opportunity to address our consumption of goods and resources and the potential effect on our future. Farley Mowat’s *Never Cry Wolf* broaches the idea of understanding the animals that inhabit our world, while Carl Hiaasen’s *Flush* opens the door to discussing pollution and efforts to stop it. Lynne Cherry’s *The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest* offers insight into the effect deforestation has on the animals that inhabit the rain forest.

The goals of **Books to Bridge the Region** are to promote literacy, to create conversations among communities, and to foster critical thinking related to a theme. The theme and the books were selected last winter by a committee comprised of educators, librarians and booksellers. The books were selected for their subject matter, writing quality, and reading pleasure. The views of the authors are not the views of the **Books to Bridge the Region** committee, its funders, or participating entities. We hope participants will enjoy the books and find much to discuss with members of their families and communities.

## 2007 List of Titles

**Adult Selection:** Jean Hegland’s *Into the Forest*

**Teen Selection:** Farley Mowat’s *Never Cry Wolf*

**Middle Readers Selection:** Carl Hiaasen’s *Flush*

**Picture/Easy Selection:** Lynne Cherry’s *The Great Kapok Tree*

## About the Author: Lynne Cherry

Lynne Cherry’s philosophy of life is to “compensate for [her] existence by trying to make the world a better place.” She has done this by writing and/or illustrating over thirty books, including several award winners.

Cherry hopes that her books highlight nature’s beauty and inspire readers to make a difference through the choices they make. Although her works are classified as children’s books, she intends them for adults also, as their themes are ageless. She has worked on projects for the Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, and the Natural Resources Defense Council and founded the Center for Children’s Environmental Literature.



Photo by Lynn Krebs

## Related Readings

Graeme Base	<i>Uno’s Garden</i>
Lynne Cherry	<i>The Dragon and the Unicorn</i>
Bruce Coville	<i>The Prince of the Butterflies</i>
Jean Craighead George	<i>Everglades</i>
Chief Seattle	<i>Brother Eagle, Sister Sky</i>
Dr. Seuss	<i>The Lorax</i>
Donald M. Silver	<i>Backyard</i> [Non-fiction]
Nancy Wallace	<i>Recycle Every Day</i> [Non-fiction]
Douglas Wood	<i>Old Turtle</i>

2007 Picture/Easy Selection:

# *The Great Kapok Tree*

by Lynne Cherry



Courtesy Harcourt, Inc.

Lynne Cherry uses vividly colored illustrations to depict the simple story of a man who lies down to rest before chopping down a kapok tree. The creatures living among the branches, leaves and roots of the great tree take turns whispering into the sleeping man's ear. They remind him that the kapok tree is home to many animals, insects and birds. In Cherry's lush full-page paintings, anteaters, butterflies, a jaguar, and others beg the man to spare the tree. A softly buzzing bee urges him to remember, "All living things depend on one another."

## Discussion Questions

- The climate in the rain forest is always hot, which is why plants and trees grow so tall and lush. What is special about the climate where you live? How does that climate affect the plants and trees around you?
- Were you surprised at how many birds, insects and animals live in or near the Great Kapok Tree in the story? How does that one tree affect the lives of the various creatures in the rain forest?
- The bee reminds the sleeping man, "All living things depend on one another." What things in your life affect the living creatures near you? How do the actions of other creatures affect your life?
- The three-toed sloth asks the sleeping man, "How much is beauty worth? Can you live without it?" Can you think of beautiful things in your region that you would not want to live without?
- Is there a place near to where you live that you would like to protect? Think about what you would whisper to someone who might destroy that place.



## Schedule of Major Events

### **Saturday, September 15**

9:00 a.m. Coastal Cleanup Activity: Get inspired by Noah and his friends from *Fish!* Join us on a beach cleanup project at Indiana Dunes State Park East, Chesterton.

### **Saturday, September 22**

12:00 p.m. Presentation on Wolves: To coordinate with *Never Cry Wolf*, Gail Motter from Lafayette's Wolf Park will give a presentation on wolves at Purdue University Calumet.

### **Friday, October 5**

4:00 p.m. Children's Story Hour: Storyteller Dan LeMonnier will appear at Lake County Public Library's St. John Branch, with a program on *The Great Kapok Tree*.

### **Saturday, October 6**

10:00 a.m. Children's Story Hour: Storyteller Dan LeMonnier will appear at Calumet College of St. Joseph, with a program on *The Great Kapok Tree*.

### **Friday, October 12**

10:00 a.m. Book Signing: Jean Hegland, author of *Into the Forest*, will be signing books at Borders in Highland.

4:00 p.m. Author Presentation: Jean Hegland will give a presentation on her book, *Into the Forest*, at Ivy Tech Community College, Valparaiso Campus.

### **Saturday, October 13**

10:00 a.m. Author Presentation: Jean Hegland will give a presentation on her book, *Into the Forest*, at Indiana University Northwest's Savannah Hall.

For more events and activities in Northwest Indiana, please visit our website at [www.books2bridge.org](http://www.books2bridge.org)

2007 Adult Selection:

# Into the Forest

by Jean Hegland



Courtesy Random House

This near-futuristic story of two young sisters' changing relationship with each other and their environment, charts their struggle to cope in a world vastly altered by excessive goods consumption, technological failure, and societal decay. Nell (17 years old) narrates this story of the struggle to survive that she and her sister, Eva (18 years old) face when energy sources, transportation, and communication avenues cease to exist and their lifestyles change. Initially consuming and scavenging the goods in their home on the edge of a forest, the teenagers ultimately must reshape their lives and their attitudes toward the items they need to survive, the challenges and threats to their existence, and the source of their future emotional and physical welfare. This book evokes a tale of the human will to survive, the coping mechanisms individuals develop in the face of catastrophic events, and the ingenuity necessary to sustaining oneself when the rules of life change.

## Discussion Questions

- Based on clues from the book, what might have happened prior to the beginning of the story? Do the radical changes in lifestyle that Nell describes in her diary seem possible in reality?
- Nell and Eva have different approaches to surviving. Discuss the events in the story that affect their plans, their values and their relationship to each other. How would you (and your siblings) survive in a similar situation?
- Human consumption plays a key role in the book. As a citizen of a wealthy, industrialized nation, do you have the right to live, as Nell says, “with the careless grace of a consumer, instead of ... fretting over bits and scraps”? Where is the line between living comfortably and living carelessly?
- Nell and Eva have two homes — the house and the stump. Discuss the physical changes in each “home,” their relationship to one another, and the choices they make concerning them. What role does the house play in the story? What role does the stump play?
- Near the end of the story, why did Nell choose the three books, and what relationship do those books have to the story that Nell writes for us? What three books would you need to survive physically, emotionally, or intellectually?
- Do you find the ending hopeful or bleak?

## About the Author: Carl Hiaasen

As a child, Carl Hiaasen spent his days exploring the swamps and lagoons of Southern Florida and cultivating a deep appreciation of nature. His mother, a teacher, instilled him with a love of books and reading. These two passions intersected in Hiaasen's adulthood as he became increasingly incensed by developers' destruction of Florida's natural areas. He uses his columns in the *Miami Herald* and his best-selling books to shed light on environmental destruction and the need to choose to respect and preserve our world.



Photo by Tim Chapman

## Related Readings

Susan Cooper	<i>Green Boy</i>
Cynthia DeFelice	<i>Lostman's River</i>
Carl Hiaasen	<i>Hoot</i>
Megan McDonald & Peter Reynolds	<i>Judy Moody Saves the World</i>
Gary Paulsen	<i>Hatchet</i>
Dr. Art Sussman	<i>Dr. Art's Guide to Planet Earth: For Earthlings Ages 12-120 [Non-fiction]</i>
Robin Vaupel	<i>My Contract with Henry</i>

# Flush

by Carl Hiaasen



Courtesy Random House

With their father jailed for sinking a river boat casino, thirteen-year-old Noah and his younger sister set out to vindicate their dad by searching for proof that the casino owner is illegally dumping raw sewage, polluting the beaches of their Florida Keys community. Though two town bullies (including the casino owner's son) try to interfere and their mother is threatening divorce, Noah and Abbey persist in looking for evidence, getting unexpected help from two former employees of the casino and a 'pirate' with a mysterious past. In an attempt to restore his family's shaky relationships and to make a real difference in saving the environment he has come to love, Noah comes up with a novel but potentially dangerous plan to catch the flusher.

## Discussion Questions

- Noah's dad decides to sink a gambling boat that he believes is illegally dumping sewage and polluting the nearby beach. He believes in standing up for his convictions about what is right. Does this belief make what he did okay?
- Noah and Abbey want to find evidence that their father is right about the Coral Queen's illegal dumping. What do you think of the plan they used? How might their method be preferred over their father's approach?
- Noah speaks of his family's habit of picking up litter wherever they go and quotes his dad as saying, "the smart humans owe it to every other living creature not to let the dumb humans wreck the whole planet." How do people in the book harm the environment? How do others help?
- How do we negatively influence our environment? Do you think this is a serious problem? If so, why? If enough smart humans do their part, can their choices make a difference in preserving the world?
- Are there any activities or objects in your daily life that contribute to the destruction or preservation of our environment?

## About the Author: Jean Hegland

With a mother and father who both taught English, Jean Hegland had little choice but to love books. Hegland, herself a creative writing instructor, realized her deep attachment to land and nature when she moved from Washington to Northern California. Living in an unfamiliar area left her feeling isolated and alone, until she and her husband purchased fifty-five acres of forest, which they would call home. At this time, she began to "realize with increasing certainty and despair that human need and greed might well ruin [nature's] endless bounty forever." From this realization and a night of insomnia, *Into the Forest* was born, carrying with it Hegland's belief that, although many of us are disconnected from the natural world, a connection is still possible if we can "listen" to the land and truly respect it.



Photo by Tessa Fisher

## Related Readings

Julia Alvarez	<i>A Cafeñito Story</i>
Bill Bryson	<i>A Walk in the Woods</i> [Non-fiction]
Al Gore	<i>An Inconvenient Truth</i> [Non-fiction]
Daniel H. Gottlieb	<i>The Galileo Syndrome</i>
Judith Levine	<i>Not Burying It</i> [Non-fiction]
Cormac McCarthy	<i>The Road</i>
Bill McKibben	<i>Deep Economy: The Wealth of Nations and the Durable Future</i> [Non-fiction]
Crissy Track	<i>It's Easy Being Green: A Handbook for Earth-Friendly Living</i> [Non-fiction]
Julia Whitty	<i>A Tortoise for the Queen of Tonga</i>

2007 Teen Selection:

# Never Cry Wolf

by Farley Mowat



Courtesy Random House/Knopf

With reports of bloodthirsty wolves killing unprejudiced numbers of arctic caribou, the Canadian Wildlife Service sends naturalist Farley Mowat to investigate. Dropped alone and unprepared on the frozen tundra, Mowat quickly encounters a wolf pack and observes them throughout the summer. As he tries to befriend the local Eskimos who are puzzled by his strange behavior, Mowat also develops an emotional connection to the wolf family. He gradually realizes, especially after witnessing wolves on a deer hunt, that his (and the government's) assumption that wolves are savage, ruthless killers is completely wrong. "We have doomed the wolf...for what we deliberately and mistakenly perceive it to be — which is, in reality, ... the reflected image of ourselves."

## Discussion Questions

- Alone in the wilderness, Mowat claims the noises of the dog pack sound "of an almost human voice." Does he project human qualities onto animals, or are we more similar than it would first appear?
- Discuss which of Mowat's preconceptions about wolves turned out to be wrong.
- Ootek shows Farley how the wolves and caribou are connected and explains how wolves actually benefit the deer population. How are humans connected to animals in the environment?
- When the wolves kill, they use/eat most of the animal with the exception of the bones. Is that different than the way we kill and consume?
- Mowat describes the tundra plains as belonging "to the deer, the wolves, the birds and the smaller beasts. We two were no more than casual intruders. Man never dominated the Barrens." To whom does nature belong?

## About the Author: Farley Mowat

Farley Mowat is one of Canada's premier authors. Many of his award-winning works deal with man, nature, and their relationship. Mowat grew up wandering the Canadian woods, writing, and reading. As his father was a librarian, he always had access to plenty of books. After serving in World War II, Mowat returned to Canada, seeking solitude and refuge in nature and learning a great deal about wildlife. Mowat's books warn "that we must change our attitudes toward the species with which we inhabit this earth. We must, in every sense, share the planet with them or we will become its ultimate destroyers...We have a responsibility to look back in anger and to use that anger to try to salvage the present and ensure the future."



Photo by Peter Bregg

## Related Readings

Richard Adams	<i>Watership Down</i>
Julia Butterfly Hill	<i>One Makes the Difference: Inspiring Actions that Change the World</i> [Non-fiction]
Gail Gauthier	<i>Saving the Planet and Stuff</i> [Non-fiction]
Al Gore	<i>An Inconvenient Truth: Teen Edition</i> [Non-fiction]
Will Hobbs	<i>The Maze</i>
Alice Hoffman	<i>Green Angel</i>
David Klass	<i>California Blue</i>
William Rathje	<i>Rubbish! The Archaeology of Garbage</i> [Non-fiction]

Additional discussion questions and related resources may be found on our website at [www.books2bridge.org](http://www.books2bridge.org)