

Librarian's Shelf
By Mimi Ernst

Giving a Successful Book Review

Note: This is the second half of a column. Part one was published in this space last Sunday.

Now it's time to relate the story to your life. Explore some of the following questions. Have any events in the story happened to you? How would you react to the same situations? If the setting is a particular time period, what would be the advantages or disadvantages of living in that period? Would you like it? Why or why not? What if it's science fiction? Look at the jacket. Is it one you would have chosen?

How does the title relate to the story? Could you suggest a better title? Did the story change your opinion of a place, event, time period? How so? What next will happen to the characters? If the story were to be made into a movie, whom would you pick to play the characters?

Note, you do not retell the story or follow events in chronological order. These pitfalls are harder to avoid than you might think, but they mire you in details, make your review too long, and tend to be boring. Instead allow yourself to jump around. Remember you are giving your listeners only a tree view of the book. Let them read it themselves to savor the details and make their own discoveries.

Think how disappointing it is to a child who has labored to put a puzzle together, only to have an adult come along and lay the final puzzle piece in place. The child has been robbed of the satisfaction of completion and closer. Feeling the pleasure of a task well done was stolen. So what does this situation have to do with giving a book review? **DON'T TELL THE ENDING.**

Finally, a successful review includes a short biography of the author, and quotes from some professionally published reviews. This is where the Columbus Public Library can help. There is an online link, called NebraskaAccess that can lead you to synopses, professional reviews, shopping lists, books in a series, and more. Your Nebraska drivers license number can be the password or call the city library at 402-564-7116 to get the current password, then click on Biography/Genealogy/People. Enter your author's name and go from there. Another good resource is an annually updated book entitled Reading Group Choices: Selections for Lively Book Discussions.

I hope some of this information will lead to many stimulating conversations centered on a good book. Best of luck this year to all book club members, including the Columbus Public Library Book Club.