



BOOK REVIEW by Carol Hardin

THE KIDS' OUTDOOR ADVENTURE BOOK

BY- Stacey Tornio and Ken Keffer

(By FalconGuides)

This book is a great adventure book to get kids out of the house and away from the electronics and into the fresh air which may improve their health and their attitudes!! The 70's and 80's brought the first generation of kids with home video games and hundreds of cable television channels and home computers. THE INTERNET TOOK OVER! But kids still played outside in those days. But that might be the last generation to have outdoor time as a daily part of their lives. Parents didn't feel the need to schedule every waking moment and didn't think twice about sending kids outdoors to play. Some of my best childhood memories are of playing detective or explorer in the woods behind our house.

“Now, the very nature of childhood has changed, and the sad reality is that there's not much nature left in it. Today, in America, the average school-aged kid spends almost eight hours a day indoors in front of electronic media, sedentary. By the time a child goes to kindergarten, the average television watching time has hit over 5,000 hours. AND, childhood obesity rates have skyrocketed; childhood diabetes is on the rise and most kids can now name more corporate logos than they can tree or bird species that live in their own neighborhoods. If this doesn't frighten you, it should,” says David Mizejewski, Naturalist with the National Wildlife Federation, in the foreword to this excellent book.

It is not that technology is bad. The problem is that it has taken over the lives of today's children at the expense of outdoor time and has skewed a healthy balance. Modern parents' obsession with scheduling structured activities has resulted in burned out kids who never got to just run around and be kids. That's the bad news. The good news is that it is not too late. We can still do something about it! We can change our overscheduled “indoor kids!”

One of the authors' nine-year-old son Ian said one day, “Before I grow up, I want to jump off a boat into the middle of the lake. It's on my list.” His mother was fascinated that he had a list of things to do before he grew up and she and her friend decided to make their own lists of fun outdoor things for kids to do before they grow up and ergo: this book!! Some things were: Learn to skip rocks; milk a cow; try fly fishing; grow your own veggies; paddle a canoe; catch a frog, find a bird's nest and the list goes on and on for 448 ideas total! Organizations like the National Wildlife Federation and the Earth Day Network have been encouraging parents to get kids outside for years.

Recent studies show that kids who play outside regularly are healthier, happier and more well rounded as a whole. But this book isn't about why it's important to get kids outside, you already know that. It's not about how to compete with technology. The authors say they don't think it is an either/or situation. We live in a world filled with technology and we are surrounded by nature. They can co-exist. They must co-exist! (This would be an excellent Christmas gift for a child (or parent!)) So, this book is about celebrating the great outdoors and all it has to offer. It is about creating your own fun...about discovering the awe of something in nature for the first time. You don't have to travel anywhere. Nature is all around you!

The book is divided into Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter with suggested outdoor activities best planned in each season and with fifty checklist items (and a challenge for each item) anchoring each section. An example of something to do in Spring: Make Leaf Prints. Collect a few nice new leaves from trees and pour your favorite paint into a paper plate and gently dip the leaves into the paint. Press the dipped leaf firmly onto a blank piece of paper to make your print. Repeat to make as many as you like. Another one is how to grow veggies and they even give you recipes to try with food grown in your own garden!

The authors said, “We hope “The Kids’ Outdoor Adventures Book” helps you discover places, hobbies and things in the great outdoors that you’ve never experienced before. And we hope it inspires you to create your own list, just like Ian did, for the things you want to accomplish outside. By the way, Ian did take a leap off the boat and, in his own words, “It was awesome!” So, go ahead and jump into the season you’re in right now to get started. It’s time to go outside!”