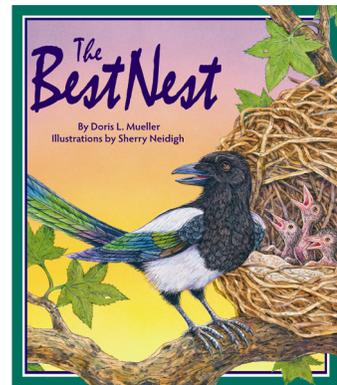


# *A Conversation with Doris Mueller,* *author of **The Best Nest!***



## **Why did you write *The Best Nest*?**

This is a retelling of an old English folktale, which features birds native to the United States. I wrote the manuscript because I remembered, when I was growing up, if I neglected to listen to my mother's instructions for baking cookies, running an errand, or taking a telephone message, she would re-tell the old English tale of how, when the magpie tried to teach the birds how to build a beautiful, strong nest like hers, all but one failed to attend to her instructions and went off to build inadequate nests. So I retold the story, substituting birds native to this country, and added factual information telling how various birds build their nests. It not only provides an amusing story but also provides factual information about birds as well as reinforcing the importance of good listening.



## **Tell us a little bit about yourself...**

I live with my husband on a small lake outside Fenton, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis, and have many bird visitors at our bird feeders—woodpeckers, humming birds, nuthatches, and goldfinches, among others. I have been a teacher and professor at every level, from kindergarten through graduate school. I enjoy traveling and have visited 35 countries to date. I am semi-retired and currently teach two writing courses and an occasional class in Children's Literature at the St. Louis Community College. I sometimes substitute in the local Special School District; and I have taught Sunday School for many years. My previous publications include short fiction and nonfiction, poems, puzzles, and devotionals for children, as well as articles, poems, and devotionals for adults.

## **As an author, what questions are you asked most frequently?**

- Where do you get your ideas?
- Do you make lots of money writing?

- How long does it take to write/publish a book?
- Would you be willing to look at the book I'm writing?

### **What sparks your creativity?**

All kinds of things! For example, I love hearing about quirky news stories. I also often think back on fragments of overheard conversations. Inspiration often comes from dreams, as well.

### **What have you learned about yourself through writing?**

- How to better tolerate frustration and delays.
- To be persistent.
- That while I'm organized, I'm not organized enough!
- That I too often base my self-concept on the opinions of others—for example, publishers, editors, and critique group members.



**For more information about The Best Nest  
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