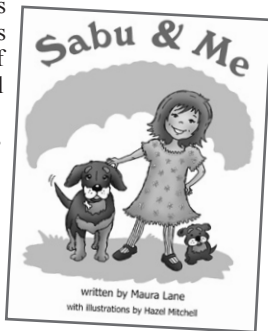


Doggone Special

With a little help and inspiration from her father, Chicago resident Maura Lane, age 7, has published her very first book. *Sabu & Me* (Alton Road Publishing), shares some of Maura's earliest memories of her beloved animal companion, Sabu. Cheerful illustrations by Hazel Mitchell complement the endearing text. And since Sabu was a rescued dog, Maura thought it was only fitting to donate the profits from her book to the humane organization PAWS Chicago. To purchase the book and encourage your kids to express their affection for family pets, head to www.sabuandme.com.



Toss the Jug

Method, an innovator in eco-friendly household and personal care products,

presents a breakthrough in the laundry category. Packaged in a handheld pump bottle, Method Laundry Detergent with Smartclean Technology uses a specialized formula to deliver outstanding cleaning power at only one-fourth the dose of the leading national brand. Pick up Method Laundry Detergent on shelves across the country and even in Canada.

Go Green

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day this month with a copy of *Girls Gone Green* (Puffin). Lynn Hirschfield's fresh and fun book personifies the green movement for teens. It is chock full of tips to be eco-savvy as well as profiles of everyday girls taking action to save the environment. Add the celebrities featured in the book, such as Hayden Panettiere, Ellen Page and Alicia Silverstone, along with the environmental activists and experts, and your kids who are keen on going green are sure to be encouraged to maintain their efforts to save our planet. Find the title at www.amazon.com.

Dirty Little Secrets

Shark Euro-Pro unleashes two product innovations to make cleaning easier and more enjoyable. The world's most powerful lightweight portable vacuum, the Shark UltraLite Never Loses Suction Multi-Vac combines power with unprecedented versatility as it transitions between a swiveling stick vacuum, portable vacuum and handheld vacuum. Versatile in its own right, the Shark Cordless StikVac features two power settings and converts quickly into a handheld vacuum for lightweight portability. Both models are available at www.sharkclean.com.

Getting Organized

Even families getting by on a shoestring budget can afford to be good to the environment with CableOrganizer.com. Log onto the Web site to discover a variety of unique and economical green gadgets designed to suit the tightest budget. Some star items to look for include the JuiceBar Pocket Solar Charger, SmartStrip Power Saving Surge Protector and Electronic Seven-Day Timer. Learn more online.

Staying Safe

For any parent who has experienced the panic of being separated from one's child in a public place comes *Staying Safe When I Go Out* (AuthorHouse). This recently published read by Donna M. Hahn is an important resource for parents and children. Packed with real-life situations and safety precautions, it doubles as a whimsical story. Teach your kids to avoid stranger dangers and other risky situations by getting the tome at www.staysafekidsbooks.com.

Earth Day Toys

April 22 brings Earth Day. Target stores nationwide commemorate the occasion by offering new eco-friendly toys. The My Natural line is comprised of plush toys that are as gentle on the environment as they are to the touch. Choose from characters like the Cat in the Hat or cuddly animal friends depicting a rhino, gorilla, elephant or crocodile. All toys are made of an all-natural cotton fabric, are nontoxic and chemical free, and have packaging made from recycled materials. Find out more by visiting www.mynaturaltoy.com.

In Full Swing

Ah, the signs of spring: green grass, fresh air, sunny skies. Outdoor play season will be here before you know it, and Backyard Discovery is ready for springtime splendor. Families can customize their backyards into areas for enjoying hours of exercise and making lifelong memories with the company's latest array of swing sets and play sets. Head to www.swingsetsonline.com to browse a multitude of safe and durable play structures, as well as cool accessories like steering wheels, rock walls, swiveling telescopes and trapeze bars.



Book It

Love and family are the dominant themes in new picture books by Jane Yolen, an award-winning author of more than 290 books for children and adults. Her three latest releases celebrate love at first sight in *Come to the Fairies' Ball* (Wordsong/Boyd's Mills Press), plenty of hugs and kisses in *How Do Dinosaurs Say I Love You?* (Blue Sky Press/Scholastic) and an incredible trip to ancient China in *The Seeing Stick* (Running Press Kids). For the full list of the author's books, explore www.janeyolen.com.

Looking Sharp

Want to write your kids' names on the inside of their garments so they don't get mixed up with other kids' stuff at camp? Sharpie does away with the problem of markers and other writing instruments bleeding through clothing, and even paper, with the Sharpie Retractable Pen. Available in black, red and blue, the pen combines a fine point tip with the acid-free, water-resistant and nontoxic formula of the original Sharpie. Sharpie Retractable Pens are available at retailers nationwide, including Walmart, Target and Walgreens.

Donald McDermott is an associate editor.