

**Friday, May 25, 2007**

**Debbie Reese, Nambe Pueblo**

**Kenneth Thomsma's books**

A casting call is making the rounds in Indian Country... Too bad it is for the lead in a feature film based on *Naya Nuki*, one of the books in Thomsma's "Amazing Indian Children" series, which should more aptly be called "Amazing White Man's Indians." Those familiar with books about images of Indians will know my title for the series borrows from Robert F. Berkhofer's excellent book (published in 1979), *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*.

As you will read in the review essay below, Thomsma's books for children are quite a mess. And they're old, too, which should have been a heads-up to the film company. They're not classics or best sellers, but they do get put on lists (such as the Accelerated Reader program) by people who haven't read critically on bias and stereotyping.

Too bad the film makers didn't do more research. Ah, but I err. They're not into it for educational purposes, but for money. *Naya Nuki* is a Lewis and Clark story. The film makers missed the boat, I think, in the timing for this film, but I suspect they know it will get used again and again in classrooms.

Hmmm.... I wonder. If enough people wrote to the casting company (which is all the info we've got in terms of contacts), might the company drop the book and select another one? I think its worth a try. Write to Rene Haynes at [nayanuki@rhcasting.com](mailto:nayanuki@rhcasting.com). Let's see what we can do. Read the review below to prep for your letter to Rene. (Note: The review is used by permission of its author and may not be published elsewhere without written consent. You can quote from it and cite this blog as your source. Even better, though, is to buy a copy of [\*A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children\*](#), from Oyate. The review and many others are in the book. )