



Fight back with words

Remind youngsters heading back to school that getting picked on is tough—but that words can also heal as much as they can hurt, as one anthology proves. *Dear Bully: 70 Authors Tell Their Stories* (Harper Collins; \$18) compiles essays from popular young adult authors like R.L. Stine, Heather Brewer, Mo Willems, Ellen Hopkins, Cecil Castellucci, Eric Luper, Carolyn Mackler, and Alyson Noël, all of whom have come out against bullying. Inspired by last year’s intense media coverage of bully-prompted suicides, the project will donate a portion of the book’s proceeds to the organization STOMP Out Bullying™ (stompoutbullying.org). Learn more at dearbully.com

60

the possible number of “falling stars” during the Perseids Meteor Shower

Sky time

Front-load on sleep in the nights leading up to August 12 and 13, when the **Perseids Meteor Shower** will provide a good reason for staying up way past bedtime. The annual show of falling stars occurs when the Earth moves through a cloud of debris left in the atmosphere by the colorfully named comet Swift-Tuttle, allowing us to view the otherworldly sight with our naked eyes. Which, incidentally, is the best way to watch, according to NASA scientist Bill Cooke. “You don’t want to use a telescope or binoculars, because you want to see as much of the sky as possible,” he says. Take a blanket into your backyard, lie flat, and look straight up, anytime between midnight and dawn.

Party with a purpose

You certainly don’t need a good reason to throw a block party, but here’s one anyway: On August 2, the National Association of Town Watch is sponsoring National Night Out (nationaltownwatch.org/nno), **an annual community-building happening that raises awareness about crime- and drug-prevention.** Now in its 28th year, the event calls on families and individuals across the country to get involved with a collective, festive show of community spirit—by organizing front-porch gatherings, block parties, cookouts, and town parades. So why not throw a bash?

Fair territories

Don’t tell us there’s nothing to do during the dog days of summer: It’s State Fair season! August is when some of the biggest, most anticipated in the bunch—Minnesota (Aug. 25–Sept. 5), Indiana (Aug. 5–21), and Illinois (Aug. 12–21) among them—roll out their old-fashioned fun. Shameless plug: Head to Iowa’s (Aug. 11–21). *BHG’s* home state extravaganza is the granddaddy of them all (the inspiration for the musical “State Fair”), and its celebrated 600-pound sculpted butter cow is turning 100 this year. Other states will feature more usual attractions, such as Minnesota’s and Indiana’s showcasing of Nickelodeon phenom Big Time Rush. Also worth checking out: New York (Aug. 25–Sept. 5, with a performance by Sugarland), Western Idaho (Aug. 19–28, featuring a competitive lumberjack show), Missouri (Aug. 11–21, with a bluegrass festival), and Maryland (Aug. 26–Sept. 5, with concerts by All Time Low, Blake Shelton, and Selena Gomez). Find a full list at the State Fair Directory (ncstatefair.com). ■

