



FOCAL Points ~ ~



VOL. XXXII No. 4

Fall 2010

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY

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PICKING A WINNER: *REDWOODS* by Jason Chin

What an honor it was to be the chairperson of the 2010 FOCAL Award committee. Even as my esteemed colleagues and I began reading from our very hearty list, I was struck by the richness of this year's crop of books that fit the FOCAL Award criteria: a creative work which enriches a child's appreciation for and knowledge of California, either fiction or nonfiction, to be judged on literary and/or artistic merit, interest and readability. By the end of our first meeting we had narrowed the list down to six novels and one work of nonfiction.

Yet this was no ordinary nonfiction book, for it was both factual and adventuresome, with illustrations that drew the reader in from the very first image. When the committee met for a second time, we did what we were asked to do: we discussed, we deliberated, and finally we reached a consensus. The book *Redwoods* by Jason Chin was our clear winner, for it achieved something that few books do. They say that a great storyteller is one who loves the story he's telling; in this case, Jason Chin's obvious love of the redwoods was evident on every page of his marvelous book.

Redwoods is so well constructed, so informative, and yet so entertaining, that we could easily imagine it attracting readers of different ages and grades who would appreciate it on many different levels. We pictured teachers using the book to discuss California's precious natural resources, both ecologically and historically, while at the same time encouraging students to peruse the marvelous illustrations for clues that might easily spark a deeper consciousness of the human impact on the environment.

Just think about standing before something that began its life at the time of the Romans, that is taller than the Statue of Liberty, that starts from a seed the size of a tomato seed and yet is so large, so enduring that it can survive a fire, make its own rain, and grow a whole forest in its crown. These brief yet enthralling facts, both written and illustrated, combine to celebrate the majesty of one of California's most unique and beloved natural wonders, and make *Redwoods* a worthy bearer of the FOCAL Award. Add to that the fact that this is the first book the talented Mr. Chin has both written and illustrated, and what you get is a work that is an absolute pleasure to read, share, and honor.

Teri Markson, FOCAL Award Chair, 2010

MARVELOUS MAUREEN

On Saturday, November 2, Maureen Wade will receive an honor from the Children's Literature Council of Southern California. It is the Dorothy McKenzie Award, given to one who has made a major impact on the field of Children's Literature. Her selection has cheered all her many friends and colleagues, but few realize how one little decision in her life led to this singular honor. *FOCAL Points* interviewed longtime FOCAL member Maureen.

FP: We know that you grew up in small towns in the San Joaquin Valley. What prompted you to become a librarian?

M: When I was in college, I took a course in the Oral Interpretations of Children's Literature where I was assigned to tell stories at the Turlock Public Library, discovered the joys of storytelling, children's literature, and what a children's librarian does. I changed my major, moved to Southern California where my husband's family lived, and enrolled at USC Library School.

FP: How did you wind up working at Los Angeles Public Library?

M: While still in library school, I was hired as student librarian in the Literature and Fiction Department at LAPL, then directed by Helene Mochedlover. Soon I transferred to Children's Literature Department, because my studies emphasized children's librarianship. It was fun to watch seemingly mild-mannered Ruth Robinson enthrall her audiences with blood-curdling Halloween stories.

FP: I remember when you came to work at Brentwood Branch as half-time Young Adult Librarian in 1974. You launched several memorable programs. And then you left.

M: I wanted to be a Children's Librarian, so transferred to Woodland Hills, then Westchester, followed by Chatsworth, because of my husband's job relocation. In the 1980's I was recruited by Burbank Public Library to run their Children's Services Department. During my three years there, I applied the wonderful skills taught by LAPL's Senior Children's Librarians to improve Burbank's training of children's librarians and service to the community.

FP: You were working in Children's Literature Department at the time of the Central Library Fire in April, 1986.

M: Yes, I had returned to LAPL, because I wanted to work part-time in order to raise my family. After the fire I transferred to Will and Ariel Durant Library. In 1988 I heard that Children's Services was interviewing librarians for a Federal/State Grant position to develop a program to recruit and train older adults to read to children. The grant, called Grandparents and Books, was written by Dr. Virginia Walter and Susan Patron. They selected me to develop the recruitment strategy and training workshops.

FP: It has been a great success. How did your experience prepare you for this job?

M: I think my many years of working in different branches and different communities have helped me with an overview of our city, and my leadership role at Burbank certainly was a benefit. But I believe my upbringing played a role in my empathy with older citizens. Both of my parents had physical disabilities. But that didn't stop them from having two daughters, and instilling in us that no matter your life circumstances, you can always make a positive difference in people's lives.

FP: This program has been copied throughout California, and across the country. How did this come about?

M: I introduced the program and trained other librarians through the California Library Association from 1991-1998; and at national conferences of the American Library Association from 1995-2001; and through the Bega Valley Shire Library system to 90 libraries in New South Wales, Australia in 2007. So, you see, it is now an international program as well.

I think the GAB program, as it is affectionately called, has been so successful for over 20 years because LAPL has allowed me to continually change and adjust our recruitment and training strategies to fit ever-changing communities. They also have supported the recognition luncheons or teas for volunteers, and most important, the bond that children's librarians and staff establishes with their volunteers.

FP: Thanks, Maureen. I am looking forward to the Children's Literature Council Fall Gala. If FOCAL members want to attend, they can learn more about the organization and make a reservation at <http://www.childrensliteraturecouncil.org>.

EDITORS' NOTES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: (from the author's website, jasonchin.net)

Jason Chin is an author and artist living in Brooklyn whose work includes the illustrations for Simon Winchester's *The Day the World Exploded*. He was trained in illustration at Syracuse University and began his children's illustration career while working at Books of Wonder in New York City. His other books include: *The Master Spy Handbook*; *The Master Detective Handbook*; *Chinese New Year*; and *The Silver Sorceress of OZ*.

Redwoods is the first book he has written and illustrated for Roaring Book Press.

BOOK SALES

Congratulations to Lara and her hardy crew of volunteers for our successful "Back to School" sale...hundreds of nonfiction books flew off the shelves, snapped up by parents and teachers.

Lara also reports that attractive hand-made book bags are available for sale at the book sales. They were donated by the Parent and Advice Learning Support (PALS) team at the John Tracy Clinic, a service center for parents of children with hearing loss.

On Saturday, November 20, there will be another special sale...just in time for pleasure reading during school vacations. Middle-grade hardback fiction will be featured: BUY ONE, GET ONE FREE !!!! Shelves are full of Harry Potter, Lemony Snickett titles, and books by popular authors Betsy Byars, Ann Cameron, Laurence Yep, and many others.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM

This year's program was a huge success. A total of 951 kids signed up at Central Library alone. Many summer camps brought their campers to the department. Every day saw between 500 and 600 kids walking in. Storytimes and crafts events had over 40 children at each program. The staff did a phenomenal job of making these most impressive statistics happen.

FOCAL

Essay Contest

The **FOCAL Essay Contest** is open to students of grades 3 through 8. Three winners will be selected, one each from grades 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8. Each winner will receive two free tickets to the luncheon honoring this year's winner of the FOCAL Award, a signed copy of the award-winning book, and a chance to meet the author at the FOCAL Award luncheon on Saturday, January 15, 2011. Essays must be postmarked no later than Friday, November 10, 2010 and the winners will be notified by December 15, 2010.

CONTEST RULES

Entries should include the following: **1)** Discuss your personal reaction to this book; **2)** describe a character or scene that you found memorable and tell why; and **3)** explain why you would like to meet the author.

WRITING GUIDELINES

Entries should be no longer than 300 words. Shorter entries are acceptable. Please include the word count at the bottom of the page. Essays that exceed 300 words will be disqualified.

Entries should be submitted on plain white paper, preferably typed. Handwritten entries should be written in black pen on lined paper. Whether handwritten or typed, all entries should be final edited copies with all errors corrected. Entries sent on 'cute' paper or with illustrations will be disqualified.

Entries should include the writer's name **ON THE BACK** of the essay, as well as on the entry application.

All words should be spelled correctly. Entries with misspellings will be disqualified.

No more than 3 entries should be submitted from a single classroom. These, if part of a class project, should be the best of the group.

Winners should be prepared to read their winning essays at the FOCAL Award Luncheon.

The originals of the winning entries will be presented to the FOCAL Award winning author at the luncheon.

Sponsored by FOCAL, Friends of Children and Literature
Los Angeles Public Library

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TO ENTER THIS CONTEST,
write an essay of no more than 300 words about this year's FOCAL
Award winning book,

Redwoods

By Jason Chin

discussing your personal reaction to the book, describing a character or scene that you found memorable and explaining why you would like to meet the author.
Mail entries to Caroline Gill, 4335 Marina City Drive, #534, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292 POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 10, 2010.

Entry Form

Student's First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____

Student's Last Name: _____ Phone _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

School: _____

Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

PLEASE READ CONTEST RULES on first page
WINNERS WILL BE NOTIFIED.

Entry forms also available at http://www.lapl.org/kidspath/focal_entry

THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL FOCAL AWARD LUNCHEON
and
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

HONORING
The 2010 FOCAL Award Winner

REDWOODS

by
Jason Chin

Saturday, January 15, 2011
at

Border Grill
Formerly Ciudad

445 South Figueroa Street #100 • Los Angeles CA 90071

PARKING

Westlawn Garage • 524 S. Flower St. (\$1.00 with library validation)
Union Bank Garage • 445 S. Figueroa St. (\$5.00 with restaurant validation)

11:00 a.m. Social Hour
12:00 noon Luncheon

Reservation Form

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____
Email _____

Reservations	Number	x	Price	Amount
Luncheon FOCAL Members @ \$40.00 ea.		x	\$40.00	
Luncheon Non-Members @ \$45.00 ea.		x	\$45.00	
Lunch + 2010 Basic Membership @ \$50.00 ea.		x	\$50.00	
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED				\$

Please send this completed form and checks, made payable to FOCAL and postmarked no later than Wednesday, January 5, to: Renny Day • 15221 Via De Las Olas • Pacific Palisades CA 90272

TICKETS WILL BE HELD AT THE DOOR
For more information, telephone Renny at (310) 454-3667
Seating is limited

Fun for Kids

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

November-December 2010

November

20 Sat Family Program

"Performing Books Presents BELINDA AND THE GLASS SLIPPER & BELINDA IN PARIS by Amy Young." Belinda, the lovable big-footed ballerina, encounters a rival as she tries out for the role of Cinderella; Lola Mudge boasts that her perfect "tiny feet" make her ideal for the lead. In the second book, Belinda has an adventure in Paris. Performed by Keith Berger (Mime Artist), David Prather (Storyteller) and Alan Steinberger (Synthesizer). (*Mark Taper Auditorium, 2 p.m.*)

27 Sat Family Program

"Craig Newton's Musical Fest" Sing and clap along with Craig as he plays a wide variety of musical instruments and shares songs from all over America! (*Children's Literature Department, 2 p.m.*)

December

11 Sat Family Program

"Performing Books Presents KNOCKIN' ON WOOD by Lynne Barasch." Learn the true story of the famous tap dancer Peg Leg Bates. A tragic accident left him with only one leg, but that didn't stop him from fulfilling his dream to dance. Performed by Channing Cook Holmes (Dancer), Steven Bartkoski (Pianist), and David Prather (Storyteller). (*Mark Taper Auditorium, 2 p.m.*)

18 Sat Family Program

"Winter Wonderland with Storyteller Rebecca Martin" Rebecca Martin shares stories from a variety of cultures and traditions all about the magic and mystery of winter and the holiday season. (*Mark Taper Auditorium, 2 p.m.*)

HOLIDAY AUTHOR SHOWCASE

Did you ever think you might like to write a book? FOCAL (Friends of Children and Literature) presents these fabulous authors to warm up your holidays and answer your questions! Each program takes place in the Children's Literature Department at 4 pm.

28 Tue – June Sobel. Avast, mateys! Meet the author of picture books like SHIVER ME LETTERS: A PIRATE ABC, B IS FOR BULLDOZER: A CONSTRUCTION ABC, and THE GOODNIGHT TRAIN.

29 Wed – Barb Odanaka. Meet the author of picture books like SKATEBOARD MOM, A CRAZY DAY AT THE CRITTER CAFE, and SMASH! MASH! CRASH! THERE GOES THE TRASH! You may even see a skateboarding cow!

30 Thu – Amy Goldman Koss. Meet the author of middle grade fiction and poetry, like STRANGER IN DADLAND, THE ASHWATER EXPERIMENT, and more. And find out the answers to WHERE FISH GO IN WINTER AND OTHER STRANGE MYSTERIES!

Programs are subject to change without notice. All programs are free.

***** MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION *****

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Membership is for calendar year, January through December.

New _____ Renewal _____ Basic \$10 _____ Associate \$25 _____

Contributing \$50 _____ Sustaining \$100 _____ Lifetime \$1,000 _____

(Free autographed book) (Seat at Head Table) (Book and Head Table)

Eva Mitnick, Youth Services

Madeline Bryant, Senior Librarian, Children's Literature

Helene Mochedlover, FOCAL Points Editor

Send renewals to: Renny Day

15221 Via de las Olas

Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

2011 DUES COMING UP!

Please renew soon !!!

FOCAL

Children's Literature Department

Los Angeles Public Library

630 West Fifth Street

Los Angeles, CA 90071