



FOCAL Points ~ ~



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FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY

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FOCAL AWARD LUNCHEON by Helene Mochedlover

One of the more uplifting things in life - especially in the angst-ridden times we live in - is to be in a room surrounded by people who love books and reading: children, teachers, librarians, proud parents, authors, and budding authors. The FOCAL Luncheon held at the Border Grill Downtown on January 15th, 2011, was a success from start to finish.

As people signed in during the Social Hour, one could sense the excitement in the air. There were old friends to greet, new ones to meet, books for sale and for signing. The wonderful slide show of all the FOCAL Award winners, prepared by Mara Alpert of Children's Literature, provided a great background for the gathering crowd and their animated conversations. Waiters efficiently took drink and luncheon orders, and placed appetizers at each table. The amazing centerpieces created by Ray Moszkowicz' Palms Middle School class were the talk of the room, amid admiration for the imagination and hard work involved in their creation.

President Caroline Gill opened the program and gave a warm welcome to the group. Barbara Metzenbaum presented the slate of officers for the coming year. Giovanna Mannino, Interim Central Library Director, informed the audience of the importance of Measure L, the Public Library Funding Charter Amendment, which will be on the March 8th ballot. Ken Brecher, President of the Library Foundation, spoke of his admiration for the library and the staff, and reiterated the importance of Measure L. There is a Fact Sheet on Page 7 of this issue.

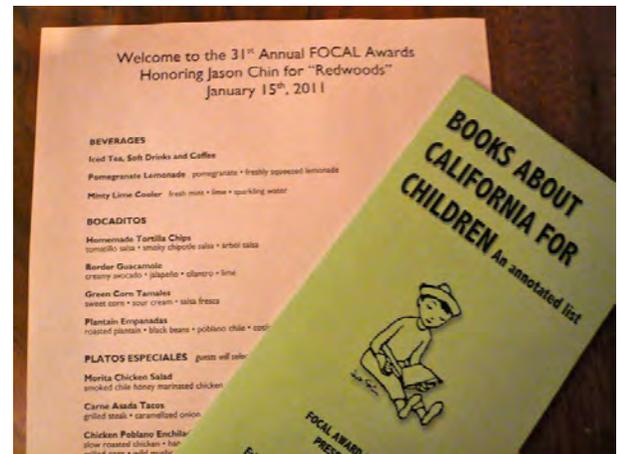
Ray Moszkowicz described the two-month effort of his class in creating the centerpieces. Teri Markson thanked her hard-working Award Committee. Carol Onofrio was introduced and thanked for another of her great puppets. Sandy Schuckett told us how much she and her committee love being judges of the essays, and thanked them for their hard work.

The three winners, whose essays follow this article, were introduced and they read their winning essays. Two of the winners, Isabelle Chiharu De Rego and Brandon Soo Hoo, had won last year's contest. Natalie Hodges was the third winner. Listening to each of the children read was certainly a highlight of the occasion. Reading their essays gives one hope for the future of this world.

The author, Jason Chin, his wife Deirdre Gill, and their 3-month-old son Liam had made the trip from Burlington, Vermont during a week that was filled with snow storms and halted flights. Fortunately, they made it in

time for Jason to visit several classes at Palms Middle School, Dana Middle School, and Paseo del Rey Magnet School. You will read some quotes from the students after they heard his presentation. Jason had the audience enraptured with his slide presentation of how the book developed, the various stages of the drawings and illustrations, and how he delivered the final product. He also showed us sketches from his upcoming book on coral reefs.

Photos courtesy
Children's Literature
Staff and Renny
Day



FOCAL ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS FOR REDWOODS, 2010

I like this story and thought it was interesting. It is very descriptive and has great illustrations. I learned a lot about redwoods. I was impressed and surprised at the way the author described the width and height of the tree. I would like to go visit the redwoods and climb one of the trees. I thought it was unusual how the main character got on the subway in New York and ended up in California. The book makes me want to learn more about redwoods.

One thing that stood out to me was the main character, the boy. I thought he looked realistic. I also liked the squirrel. The drawing of the squirrel looks funny, and he stays with the boy throughout the story. Another thing that was interesting was the girl. It was exciting how she picked up the book and she could see herself in the redwood forest. I like how the book and the information gets passed on to the next person.

I want to meet, sit down and talk to Jason Chin because I think he is smart and has a lot more knowledge about redwood trees. I would ask him if there was anything about redwoods that he didn't put into the book and what was his favorite part of writing the book. I would tell him that I enjoyed the book and that my favorite part was finding out that the tree survives through a fire. He should start writing more books.

Natalie Hodges
Grade 4
Paseo Del Rey Natural Science Magnet, LAUSD



The book Redwoods, by Jason Chin, explores the California redwood forest by following a young boy on an imaginary subway journey. When I read the book, I felt like I was actually there. I was drawn in by the author's descriptions and the detailed illustrations. I could feel the brush of the grass against me, I could smell the damp air and feel lost in the dense maze of the redwood canopy. The author was clever in showing the passage of time by placing dinosaurs outside the window of the subway and Roman soldiers inside the subway. I could see the redwood trees growing and branching out. The pages were alive with color and texture, the shades of green, and the rainbow of bugs and animals. If I was a redwood tree, I would feel safe with my thick bark protecting me from forest fires. If I fell down, a new redwood could sprout from my trunk.

The scene in the book I found most memorable was when I found out that redwoods could make their own rain. Imagine trees making their own water! Now, that is impressive, for a tree. Not only does it help the tree to survive, but it helps the other plants around it to survive, too.

I would like to meet the author because I would like to talk to him about the fascinating things he discovered. In the author's note inside the book, he talked about his journey to the redwoods.

When I was in third grade, we had an author come to our school and she told us many exciting facts she learned when she wrote her books. I would like to talk to Jason Chin about his trip and what he saw and felt in the magnificent redwood forest.

Isabelle De Rego
Grade 6
Orville Wright Middle School, LAUSD



The book REDWOODS by Jason Chin is fascinating. I felt like I was in the spectacular Redwood Forest, climbing colossal trees, and looking at a forest atop a taller single tree. I stepped into a world of a tree, watching the redwoods make “artificial rain” to water themselves and the surrounding plants. The beautifully colored pictures added to the text, giving me an incredible visual effect that not only can I imagine, but I can see as well. When I began reading, I was immediately hooked. I could picture walking in the Redwood Forest, seeing everything that he sees. This special book presents fascinating facts in every scene.

There are many scenes that are truly amazing, but one stood out to me. I was fascinated by how the redwood trees adapt to dryer times. It is an amazing process of using fog in the atmosphere to its own advantage. The tree leaves condense the unabsorbed moisture until they are tiny water droplets, falling to the ground, only to be collected by the redwood’s long, shallow roots or the plants on and around the tree. The process not only keeps the redwood tree alive, but it supports many other plants near the tree when the conditions are too dry. This is the best scene because the author describes how the redwood trees survive independently by creating a process of making “artificial rain” when there isn’t enough natural rain.

There are a few reasons why I want to meet Jason Chin. First, REDWOODS is an amazing book. I learned many new facts that I never knew before. Second, I wonder if Jason Chin wrote this book to convince people to help save the redwood trees. Third, living in Brooklyn, how did he become fascinated with the Redwood Forest in California.

Brandon Soo Hoo
Grade 7
Lawrence Middle School, LAUSD



QUOTES FROM MR. WESTON'S 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

After hearing author/illustrator Jason Chin's presentation at Palms Middle School Library,
January 13, 2011

Edgar: "What I learned from him (Jason Chin) is you can be anything you set your mind to."

Samantha: "I learned being an author and illustrator is hard because you need all the right information and drawing skills."

Heidy: I learned that writing a book is way more complicated than what it looks like ... Jason Chin is a fabulous author and he taught me many things."

Tanya: "In my opinion Jason Chin is a man who fought for his dreams and accomplished everything he set out to do."

Joseph: "What I learned today about Jason Chin is to try and reach my goal of what I want to do in life."

Nola: "My impressions on Jason Chin were that he was very determined to get his information by doing what it takes to get it and discovering things for himself."

THANK-YOU NOTES FROM MR. RUBIN'S SIXTH GRADERS AT PALMS

Lauren C.: "I really enjoyed when you visited our school. It meant a lot to me because I love to write and draw... I hope that some day I can publish a book like you..."

Jonathan: ... "You've inspired me to not give up on writing or illustrating. I myself wrote one book that I wrote and illustrated, so thank you, Mr. Chin."

Alex: ... "I also want to thank you for coming all the way out of Vermont just to talk to us. It is great that you can make a living out of doing something that you love doing. I hope that when I'm older, I can do something that I love to do, also. Last, I hope that your next books are very successful."

Kyle: "Thank you for coming to our school and presenting your book. My favorite part is how the kid gets out of the subway and it goes into prehistoric times. I also imagined the kid as being you when you were young. I loved your illustrations of the redwoods. That must have taken a lot of effort and encouragement to draw those pictures of the trees. I can't wait to read your book about coral reefs..."

Lauren B.: "Thank you for coming down to our school just to talk to us about your really cool book. It really made an impression on how I look at the beautiful trees. ... I also wanted you to know that I am an artist myself and I hope that I could be almost just like you ! See if you can find my book in 20 years!"

Allison: ... "when I draw something I have to actually see it to have the image of it in my head...maybe when I grow up I'll be a great artist like you ... I also like writing stories on my free time ... we loved your book ..."

Maritza: "Thank you for coming to our school to show us how you made your book. It looks easy but when you showed us it looked hard... I never knew that the trees are so big and that they are in danger..."

EDITORS' NOTES



by Renny Day

PENNY SALE: Abe Lincoln would approve of this! Start the new school semester right by visiting the FOCAL Book Sale on Saturday, February 19, where all non-fiction books will cost just one cent!! There will also be the usual fiction, picture books, international language titles, and a selection of New Videos. Come explore a box of FREE videos that have been withdrawn from the library.

GOOD NEWS: Central Library's cabling is being replaced and updated to the latest standards.
BAD NEWS: Each department will be closed for one week on a rotating basis until the work is completed. Children's Literature will be closed to the public (and even to the staff) during the week of March 21-25. Public service will be provided in a nearby location. There will be signs throughout the building. Think of it as a giant game of Hide and Seek. If you have extensive research needs, try to come before March 21 or after March 25.

SCIENCE DAY: The popular annual program will be held on April 9. **SAVE THE DATE**, and look for details in the next issue of FOCAL Points.

AUTHOR SHOWCASE: There will be another session of the successful Showcase which was held in December. Popular authors of children's books will be featured in a series of programs during Spring Vacation. Look for announcements in FOCAL Points.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE DEPARTMENT INSPIRES LIBRARIANS: Due to drastic budget cuts last year, many librarians were obliged to move from branch to branch, and change jobs. Some Adult Reference librarians now find themselves doing Young Adult or Children's work for the first time. Eva Mitnick, Director of Youth Services, has set up ambitious training programs to help them. The staff in Children's Literature offered the first workshop, which was all about Story Times for different ages of children. Madeline, Diane, Joanna, and Linda demonstrated examples of techniques, and encouraged the librarians to take a try at fingerplays and flannel board storytelling. The session was extremely successful, and future workshops are planned.

Be sure to vote for Measure L on the ballot of March 8, 2011. Copy the fact sheet or pick up one at your local library....and encourage all library lovers to go to the polls.



LEARN THE FACTS about MEASURE L
...
Public Library Funding Charter Amendment

Measure L, the Public Library Funding Charter Amendment, on the **MARCH 8, 2011** ballot ***will increase the Los Angeles Public Library's share of existing city funds.***

Measure L also ***will increase the Library's responsibility for its direct and indirect costs***, which include utilities, building maintenance, pensions, and other costs for operation.

Measure L will provide additional funds to:

- **help restore 6-day service at all libraries and eventually 7-day service at nine neighborhood libraries**
- **purchase library books and materials**
- **support library programs**

Measure L will not require residents or property owners to pay more taxes or fees, but will progressively increase the Library's share of existing funds

FACT: ***Los Angeles currently ranks last in per capita spending on library materials*** among the eight largest U.S. public library systems, according to the Public Library Association's "Public Library Data Service Statistical Report 2010."

FACT: ***Library hours have been cut 3 times in the past 12 months***, reducing library service from 7 days/week to 5 days/week for the first time in the Library's 140-year history.

FACT: ***Library staff has been cut by 28%.***

***Measure L IS NOT A NEW TAX and
its funds are subject to audits.***

Measure L requires a simple majority (50%+ 1) of votes to pass.

If approved, new funding could be available as early as July 2011. Within 4 years, Measure L will increase the Library's Charter-required funding from the current .0175% to a maximum of 0.0300% of each \$100 of assessed tax value on property within the city and provide funds needed to restore 6-day and 7-day a week library service citywide.

www.yesonlibraries.com

***** 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

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