



# FOCAL Points~~



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## FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY

### SCIENCE DAY *by Renny Day*



*Science has never been* so much fun! More than 400 kids, moms, dads, and a few tourists lured by the hum of creativity and activity emanating from the Thornton and Children's Courtyards, participated in the 9th annual Science Day, April 19th, 2014.



The auditorium was nearly full for each performance of "Silly Science Show" by Professor Weisenheimer (aka Ric Morton). A tall, bearded man in a white science coat, he led the audience and some lucky volunteers in a rapid fire pursuit of learning basic science principles in a jolly interactive way. The audience was actively involved in each segment of the presentation, and applauded wildly at the conclusion.



Then they streamed out of the auditorium into the Children's Courtyard for a visit with *Wild Things and Animals of Prey with Full Spectrum*. Children touched the patient tortoise basking in his sea of lettuce, held a bright red snake coiled in their hands, and petted the giant python draped around Richard's broad shoulders.



Lara Clardy's booth featured an experiment of surface tension. Stephanie Moore helped children create miniature earthworm terrariums. Fizzing, bubbling volcanoes were the attraction at a booth with Mara Alpert and Brooke Shields from Children's Literature Department. STAR reader Ms. Susan shared books and science themed bookmarks. Debby Pourroy and Lauren Okayama, program co-chairs, led crowds of eager participants in building on-ramps, off-ramps, slanted and spinning ramps, and even provided miniature cars for budding road builders.



We couldn't have pulled it off without the student volunteers from West Valley College.



Our thanks to Joan Kramer, Maribel Michel, Sandra Toledo, Gabriela Magana, Evelyn Magana, Andy Howe, and Mitra Hamdi.

The love, creativity, and energy of staff and volunteers made it a brilliant event.

## TONY MAKES NEWS

by Renny Day

“....So, after I left Disney and did the rounds of the other studios, I went down to the library. And lo and behold, it was where I belonged. It was the right thing to do! For thirty years.” That is the way Tony Schedl described the beginnings of his career as display artist at Los Angeles Public Library. He was being interviewed by Dennis McCarthy of the Daily News on the occasion of Tony’s 100th birthday.

When Priscilla White told me about his 100th birthday party, I sent a greeting card. He responded immediately with a lovely handwritten note, and we arranged a meeting. After going through old scrapbooks to find examples of some of his art for the Children’s Literature Department, I dug into a dust-covered box in the back of my closet, labeled “Old files...scrapbook?” It yielded some snapshots taken at the time of Tony’s retirement party. The names of some of the people eluded me, but I tucked them in my purse, anyway.

Driving along Sunset (they’re repaving again) and over the 405 (they’re still digging), I reminisced about all the times I dashed into Tony’s workrooms with last-minute requests for flyers, or help with a display, when I was working in Children’s Literature. He always responded with a chuckle and a joke, and solved the crisis. Driving along his “Leave it to Beaver” street with big trees shading large front lawns, I passed neat homes in shades of white, gray, and beige. When I pulled up in front of a bright red house with white trim, Tony opened the door and welcomed me.



He showed his wood carvings, stone statues, and innumerable paintings, some only finished this spring. The water colors were fresh and bright, with elaborate detail in the drawings. We reviewed the flyers and photos I had brought, and he recognized almost everyone, even remembering their names and departments. We talked about his work at the library. He says he started in one room on the mezzanine level between the second and third floors, with windows overlooking Fifth Street on the north side of the building. When the branch building program took off, he needed help, so eventually he was joined by two other artists in the next room.

This was before the computer age, when flyers were carefully assembled with pre-printed letters carefully removed from a sticky page with tweezers, and placed on a paper that had a drawing or painting done by Tony. Then the completed flyer was sent off to a printer, who delivered the completed work several days later. Tony and his staff created hundreds of such flyers for all of the branches and Central.

The posters he produced for the Children's Dinner Theatre were individual works of art. They were admired by everyone who streamed through the library. There were large display cases in each corner of the first floor rotunda. Tony created rotating displays that drew even non-library users. There were scenes from Dickens at Christmas, elaborate three-dimensional paper sculptures of stories from mythology, and artwork that changed with the seasons.

Tony made a huge impact on adults and children alike in his many productive years at the library. And he is still delighting family and friends with his clever and talented brushes. He shared a sneak preview of some one-of-a kind birthday cards that he will present to lucky recipients in the near future.

Happy 100th Birthday, Tony.

For more about Tony, go to : "[Daily News Tony Sched!](#)". or [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1S\\_HK-OuyB4&feature=em-share\\_video\\_user](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1S_HK-OuyB4&feature=em-share_video_user)



## CHILDREN'S DINNER THEATRE by Renny Day

"A Joyful Noise at Public Library" was the title of Sylvie Drake's review in the Los Angeles Times on September 11, 1975. Over 450 people showed up for the first performance of Children's Dinner Theatre, a program for children where you bring your own parents and food, and the library provides the punch and entertainment. After the last fried chicken and Twinkie had been consumed, the overflow crowd filled every aisle, and perched on every shelf and window ledge to watch the presentation of "The Tale of a Not so Bright Knight" by the Strolling Players. The overcrowding must have been a fire marshal's nightmare, so a reservation system was in place for later shows.

While the rich collection of contemporary and historical children's materials were heavily used by teachers, authors, and the film and television industry, the Children's Room was under-used by children and families, due to its location in traffic-heavy downtown.

Peggy Phillips of the Library's Public Information office thought that a touch of show business was needed. Peggy's own career included years as a theatre publicist and writer. She proposed the Children's Dinner Theatre, and Wyman Jones, City Librarian, gave immediate approval, and solicited funding from the Los Angeles Library Association for supplies and fees for performers. Peggy contacted colleagues Dan Sullivan and Sylvie Drake of the Los Angeles Times for suggestions for performers. Priscilla Moxom White and Joan Gardner of Children's Services, and Ruth Robinson, Senior Librarian in the Children's Room, transformed the room into a mini supper-club, replete with checkered table cloths and decorations.

There were twelve shows that season of September 1975 - July 1976. Then the theatre went dark, due to lack of funding, Ruth Robinson's retirement, and the uncertain future of the Children's Room.



## EDITORS' NOTES

Children's Literature Awards are springing up all across Los Angeles. Mark your calendars to congratulate the winners of the following awards.

The Judy Lopez Memorial Award for Children's Literature is granted to works of literary excellence for nine to twelve year olds, and is administered by the Women's National Book Association, Los Angeles Chapter. This year's winner is ***The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp*** by Kathi Appelt. Honor Books are: ***One Came Home*** by Amy Timberlake, ***Rump: the True Story of Rumpelstiltskin*** by Liesl Shurtliff, ***The Thing About Luck*** by Cynthia Kadohata. The event will be held on June 8 at UCLA Faculty Center. For more information, contact Gail Kim, Children's Librarian, Palisades Library, at 310-459-2754. email: gailkw@hotmail.com.

Horace Mann Upstanders Book Awards for K-6 Fiction honors children's books that best exemplify the ideals of social action and encourage young readers to become agents of change, and is administered by Antioch University of Los Angeles. This year's winner is Anne Ursu for ***The Real Boy***. Paul Fleischman will receive a Lifetime Outstanders Award at the event on June 14 at Wildwood School elementary campus. [www.upstandersaward.org](http://www.upstandersaward.org)

The Golden Kite Awards, presented by the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, has revealed their list of 2014 winners. Fiction: ***Better Nate Than Ever*** by Tim Federle. Non-fiction: ***Call of the Klondike*** by David Meissner. Picture Book Illustration: ***Mr. Tiger Goes Wild*** by Peter Brown. Picture Book Text: ***Sophie's Squash*** by Pat Zietlow Miller. The Sid Fleischman Award for Humor: ***Openly Straight*** by Bill Konigsberg. The awards will be held at the annual SCBWI Conference, August 1-4, at the Hyatt Century Plaza. [www.scbwi.org](http://www.scbwi.org)

## STARS SHINE AT NOON

STAR volunteers were guests of honor at a lively luncheon, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the program, at the Friendship Auditorium on Riverside Drive on Tuesday, May 6. Sponsored by the Library Foundation, the event was a tribute to the hard work and dedication of everyone who reads to children at their local branches and at Central Library.

Diane Olivo-Posner was mistress of ceremonies, and called on luminaries Ginnie Walter, who wrote the original grant, and Maureen Wade, who initiated and guided the program for many successful years. Eva Mitnick provided background information, and introduced Judy Woodworth and her daughter of Artfelt Puppets, who demonstrated some easy finger puppet plays, songs and concepts.

Madeline Bryant and volunteer coordinator Linda Israelson attended with Debra and Susan. FOCAL extends thanks to the STAR volunteers who enrich the lives of children in the Children's Literature Department: Debby Rowe, Susan Davis, and Priscilla Chang.

Photographs in this issue courtesy of Carol Raby, Caroline Gill, Renny Day, and Children's Literature staff.

**\*\*\*\*\* MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION \*\*\*\*\***

Please send renewals to: Renny Day / 15221 Via de las Olas / Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Madeline Bryant, Senior Librarian, Children's Literature  
Helene Mochedlover, FOCAL Points Editor**

**FOCAL  
Children's Literature Department  
Los Angeles Public Library  
630 West Fifth Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90071**