



FOCAL Points~~



VOL. XXXVI No. 3

Summer 2014

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY

For more news, go to www.focalonline.org

FOCAL Award Author honored at Coretta Scott King Award Breakfast, ALA 2014

By Caroline Gill, FOCAL President

Our 2013 FOCAL Award author, Rita Williams-Garcia, has been honored again!

Last year *One Crazy Summer* won the FOCAL Award and several other awards.

And now, this year, the sequel, *P.S. Be Eleven*, won the Coretta Scott King 2014 Fiction Award! Rita was officially honored at the Coretta Scott King Award Breakfast on June 29, 2014, during the American Library Association's annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Her delightful, moving and insightful speech is in *The Horn Book Inc.*, July/August 2014 issue and online: <http://www.hbook.com/2014/07/authors-illustrators/rita-williams-garcias-2014-csk-author-award-acceptance/>

After reading this speech, you'll want to read the sequel if you haven't already.



Thanks to Rita's recommendation to her publisher, I represented FOCAL at the celebratory and exciting CSK breakfast and sat at one of the tables reserved for the Harper guests, and the author and illustrator's friends and family. When the email came saying, "The CSK Breakfast is one of the brightest, most celebratory awards ceremonies there is..." it seemed the right thing to do...just go.

Following tradition, the celebration started with all of us joining in the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" with the Las Vegas Performing & Visual Arts students. A prayer followed this from the Pastor of Casa de Luz who proudly spoke of his work with former gang members, and then breakfast in the opulent Caesar's Palace. All of the awardees delivered speeches, many of which brought us to our feet with standing ovations, as our eyes welled up with tears of admiration. Rita's was one of those.

After Congressman John Lewis's booming voice told of his childhood experiences, and his co-author, Andrew Aydin, followed with equal enthusiasm, Bryan Collier wondered how he could follow that. But his speech was amazingly moving. Nikki Grimes and Kadir Nelson carried on in fine fashion. The John Steptoe Awardee for New Talent winner, Theodore Taylor III, almost apologized for being among so many illustrious authors and illustrators, before delivering very insightful remarks. The Coretta Scott King – Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement was awarded to Patricia and Fred McKissack. Patricia spoke, and so did their three sons who continue to admire their parent's work and accomplishments.

Prior to the CSK invitation, Rita had related to me, and probably to her publisher, how much she and Fred so enjoyed the whole FOCAL Award event...the students, their families, the artists, the presentation and the food! And, they loved having a "tour of the puppets" and their books in the "magnificent" library. Then she added that Delphine, her puppet, created by our own Carol Onofrio, is with her when she skypes her author visits!

This all happened because the brilliant and hardworking FOCAL Award committee had the wisdom to give the award for a book with significant California content appropriate for grades 4-8 to One Crazy Summer written by Rita Williams-Garcia!



FOCAL WINNER ANNOUNCED: THE TREE LADY, by Joseph Hopkins

By Lisa Schloss, Chair FOCAL Award Committee

The FOCAL award committee congratulates this year's winner - The Tree Lady by Joseph Hopkins. Although we had several excellent books on our list, from novels to nonfiction, Tree Lady emerged as the clear winner. This picture book biography recounts the life's work of horticulturalist Kate Sessions (1857-1940), a trailblazing woman with a scientific mind and a passion for nature. A Northern California native and the first woman to graduate from the University of California with a science degree, Kate relocated to San Diego to become a teacher. However, upon seeing the arid (and ironically named City "Park"), Kate's passion for nature and horticulture re-emerged, and she began a project to bring a beautiful and diverse array of trees to San Diego, creating the lush park we know today as Balboa Park.

The committee was impressed with so many facets of this book. The simple, rhythmic writing style has an appeal to a younger audience while still conveying a great deal of information. The book makes an ideal read-aloud with its inspiring refrain, "But Kate did" in response to naysayers. The stylized artwork by Jill McElmurry illustrates the transformation of the barren park to the green oasis we know today, and of young Kate among the redwoods to the older Kate surrounded by her much loved trees.

This book meets and exceeds the FOCAL award criteria of literary and/or artistic merit, interest and readability, universality, and California enrichment content. It speaks to such current issues as conservation, urban gardening, and drought-resistant planting, as well as timeless themes like being true to oneself and persevering to achieve a goal. We look forward to meeting Joseph Hopkins and hearing him speak about this exceptional book.

SAVE THE DATE: DECEMBER 6, 2014

This year's luncheon will again be at the Border Grill, on Saturday December 6th. Reservation forms will be in the next issue and on our FOCAL Website.

Meanwhile, the Essay Contest forms for students, and their teachers, are on the following two pages, as well as on our Website.

Thanks to the Award Committee, our Web Master, Barbara Metzenbaum, and all who work so hard to make this event the success that it traditionally is.

FOCAL (Friends of Children and Literature)

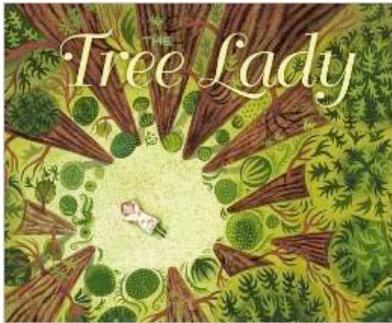
Essay Contest

for Students in Grades 3-8



The 2014 FOCAL Award is presented annually to an author or illustrator for a creative work that enriches a child's appreciation for and understanding of California. The 2014 award goes to—

The Tree Lady by H. Joseph Hopkins



To enter the contest, **read the book** and **write an essay** of no more than 300 words to tell the judges—

- Your reactions to the book.
- About a character or scene that stuck with you.
- What it would mean for you to meet the author.

Essay winners will have lunch with the author and receive a signed copy of the award-winning book. Three essay winners will be chosen.

CONTEST RULES

- Entries are due November 1, 2014, and must be postmarked by then. Late entries will not be accepted. Use entry form below.
- Submit typed entries on clean, white 8.5"x11" paper only.
- Put the child's name **ON THE BACK** of the essay and on the entry form.
- Check spelling, punctuation and grammar **CAREFULLY**. Mistakes will disqualify the entry.
- No more than 3 entries per classroom.
- Winners will be notified by November 22, 2014, and will be asked to read their essays at the FOCAL Award luncheon on Saturday, December 6, 2014.

FOCAL is the Friends support group
for the Children's Literature Department of Los Angeles Public Library's Central Library
Find us at www.focalonline.org.

FOCAL (Friends of Children and Literature)

Essay Contest

for Students in Grades 3-8



Entry Form

Student's First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____

Student's Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Grade: _____ Teacher's Name: _____

School Name: _____

Email: _____

Turn in your entry by November 1, 2014, to:

Caroline Gill, 4335 Marina City Drive #534, Marina del Rey, CA 90292

Entry forms can also be found at

www.focalonline.org

or

www.lapl.org/kidspath/focal_entry

FOCAL is the Friends support group
for the Children's Literature Department of Los Angeles Public Library's Central Library
Find us at www.focalonline.org.

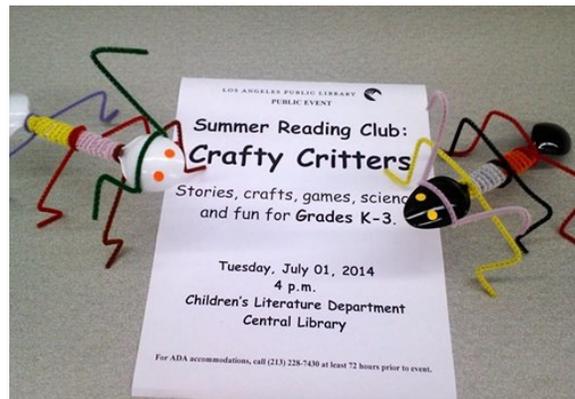
Crafty Critters Create Cool Crafts in the Children's Literature Department!

By Mara Alpert, Librarian III, Children's Literature Department

As part of LAPL's Summer Reading Club 2014: Paws to Read, the Children's Literature Department offered a crafty and entertaining program every Tuesday afternoon at 4 pm for critters Kindergarten – Grade 3. Miss Linda and Miss Mara presented Crafty Critters, which included stories, songs, a little bit of science, and cool crafts.

All kinds of animals were celebrated: lions, dinosaurs, bugs in general and butterflies in particular, sheep, and jellyfish. We also had some really fabulous special guests, including Park Ranger Coral O'Riley from the Santa Monica Mountains, who shared two folktales and a bead craft, plus she brought in reproductions of various animal skulls, which was pretty awesome.

And as part of our Crafty Critters Carnival Finale, the Central Library's own Officer Stan entertained the critters with a juggling demonstration, followed by a quick lesson in juggling. It was a very successful program – the young critters had a great time, books were checked out, songs were sung, and imaginations were unleashed. We look forward to providing a similar program next summer!



Creatures In The Library **By Brooke Sheets & Joanna Fabicon** **Children's Literature Department**

In response to a statewide initiative to reach family members in our communities who are underserved, the Department created Creature Features- a series of programs targeted to children in grades 4-6. Using a movie monster spin on the Summer Reading Club's animal theme, Creature Features supported the idea that the library is a place for children to create, express themselves, and feel like they are a part of a community of library users.

In celebration of a successful summer, our creatures attended a Party Animals Masquerade. Kids snacked on "puppy chow" while they customized popcorn, decorated gift bags, applied temporary tattoos, and explored online resources. The finale of our party was a recognition of the activities and attendance in front of families and friends.

Our goal was to reach 50 children, which we surpassed with a total of 66 active participants. Just as baby storytimes took off two years ago, Creature Features generated so much interest that the Department will be doing more regular programming for tweens, so look out for more as our creatures return this October!



EDITORS' NOTES

Staff commends the spectacular teen volunteers, shown above with Joanna and Brooke, who helped during all these programs, for a total of 160 hours for the summer.

The editors commend all the staff in Children's Literature for signing up over 1000 kids for Summer Reading, and for all the wonderful activities all summer long. Boundless energy and enthusiasm !

Photos by Caroline Gill and Children's Literature Staff.

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Membership is for calendar year, January through December.

New _____ Renewal _____ Basic \$20 _____ Associate \$30 _____

Contributing \$60 _____ Sustaining \$100 _____ Lifetime \$1,000 _____
(Free autographed book) (Seat at Head Table) (Book and Head Table)

**Selena Terrazas, Department Manager
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**