



FOCAL Points~~



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FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY

SCIENCE DAY 2015

“Sounds like Fun”

by Carol Raby

Can you hold a bubble in the palm of your hand? This was one of the many questions asked by young observers and explorers at FOCAL's annual Science Day held at LAPL Central on Saturday, April 11th from 1-3pm. The Scientific Method was fully employed all over the Maguire Children's Patio by 322 children and their parents!

Did you know that the most efficient shape in nature is the sphere? That's why bubbles made in a square bubble launcher become round as soon as they fly from the square. Is there any age that is too old to enjoy bubbles? Really, no! Bubble-Ology 101 with Richard Rumble, from Full Spectrum, provided this delightful program.



At the color mixing station, questions were followed up by hands-on research with pipettes and food coloring. Just to the left future botanists were planting a garden-in-a-bag! Soil, seeds, water, seal it up and watch it grow! Farther down, happy children constructed a house for the Three Little Pigs! And then they could apply seismic forces to see how the house would withstand an earthquake. Where would we be without rebar? Colorful handmade pinwheels constructed and designed by the children captured the wind on the slightly breezy Saturday afternoon.

For the youngest children there were blocks to build with and color mixing in clear bags, along with outstanding STAR Volunteer Debra Rowe reading stories aloud and sharing coloring activities to add to the fun.



In the Mark Taper Auditorium we were entertained by a Mad Scientist named Weird Cam from *Mad Science of Los Angeles*. The show was called "Sounds Like Science," and it was sound-sational! There were singing pipes and roaring ropes amplified by cans of all sizes. The thunder makers were an audience favorite. Our mad scientist told the children who volunteered, "It is important to follow directions in science and magic!" The audience was filled with great listeners and each child who came to the stage to be an assistant scientist proudly followed all the directions.



Thanks to the amazing Science Day super organizers, Lauren Okayama, Debby Pourroy, Lara Clardy and Mara Alpert, the event seemed effortless. Plus nine volunteers from Los Angeles Valley College Family Resource Center and four high school teenagers joined the fun along with the Central Library Staff and our board members to make this Science Day run smoothly.

This annual event is generously sponsored by the Miller Family. In the Taper, Nancy Reich, one of the Millers' daughters and a retired school librarian, spoke about her parents to the crowd: Merv, a science teacher for over 40 years, and Peggy, a founding member of FOCAL. Surely they would have been delighted with Science Day this year! Additional funds were provided by the Children's Literature Department's KLOS Fund.



CAROLINE ARNOLD CELEBRATION by Renny Day

Caroline Arnold was the perfect choice to star in FOCAL's new series of author presentations on Saturday, April 4. The talented staff in Children's Literature Department kicked off SUPER SCIENCE MONTH with stories and more about our favorite planet, plus a special presentation from Caroline, award-winning author of more than 150 books. Caroline is also a talented artist, and has written and illustrated some eye-catching books for young readers about engaging animals.

Caroline's first book, *FIVE NESTS*, published by Dutton in 1980, offered a description of five species of birds, and the differences in their parenting habits. Your reporter went to a publisher's event to introduce the book with Priscilla Moxom White, who was then Coordinator of Children's Services. As we left, Priscilla remarked that the future of children's books looked bright, indeed, with such talents as Caroline coming along. Caroline went on to write books on just about every animal in the zoo, as well as riveting accounts about our planet and its people and wildlife, from dinosaurs to earthworms.

Besides stocking library shelves in the 500 Dewey range, Caroline shares her time and talent with schools and libraries. In between school visits and her writing schedule, she found time to serve on the FOCAL Award committee, and even served as chair for the year of 2013, when *ONE CRAZY SUMMER* was selected. A talented photographer, she captured this year's award program for *THE TREE LADY*, and posted them on her blog. You can click on "Caroline Arnold's blog" to read about her activities, including her memorable visit to the Children's Literature Department.



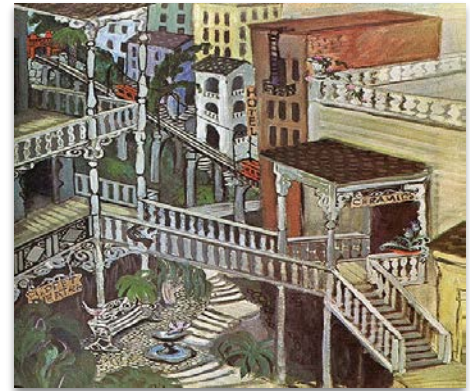
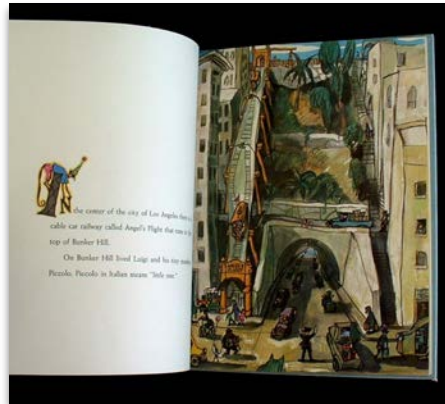
EDITORS' NOTES

LAPL has won a National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the most prestigious award for libraries and museums, given yearly to 10 cultural institutions. We were the only California library this year to win the medal, given by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Photos in this issue courtesy Nina Kidd and Children's Literature Staff

LEO POLITI ART EXHIBIT by Renny Day

When the beach beckons, who wants to go downtown in July? You will, because there is going to be a comprehensive exhibit of Leo Politi's artwork in the Pico House for the whole month. Famous for the sensitive stories and colorful artwork that categorize his many books for children, Leo also was an accomplished sculptor. The carvings of animals and children glow with the warmth of polished wood. You will see scenes of California life depicted in vigorous woodcuts, and hundred of sketches. Long-time friend and collector, Alice Daigle, hosted a gathering of family and friends of Leo at her gracious home to plan for this exhibit. Retired children's librarian Marjorie Hopper told of working in the Children's Room, and meeting Leo when he came to sketch children. He also gave impromptu classes in drawing for children at the library. Eva Mitnick, coordinator of Children's Services, remembered Leo at a garden party held at Edythe McGovern's home. Also present was her mom, Virginia Walter, who once was also Children's Coordinator. Sandy Schuckett recounted many meetings with Leo at his "office", which was Phillippe's restaurant. A favorite booth was reserved for Leo and his friends. Sandy was president of FOCAL when Leo received the first FOCAL Award for excellence in a book about California for children. A photographer captured the whole scene, and Mitch carefully interviewed guests for insights and anecdotes.



Pico House is an underrated treasure right in our own backyard. Built by Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of California, it was palatial for its time, with 88 rooms, a curved staircase, and elaborate public meeting rooms. Located across the historic plaza from Olvera Street, it is a fitting location for Leo's paintings. When Leo was a struggling young artist, he would set up near the outdoor tables of a restaurant on Olvera Street and sketch the guests. He sold his drawings for very little, often for only 10 cents! If there were no customers, he would draw the many children in the area. Now he is a famous artist, with a Caldecott Medal and many other awards. But he is still "our Leo." See you there!

JOAN BRANSFIELD GRAHAM

Here's another reason to brave downtown in July..... July 11, at 2pm to be exact. Joan Bransfield Graham will be the featured author on the Saturday program in Children's Literature.

If she had never written another book, her first book, SPLISH SPLASH !! would have made her famous. It has been the "go-to book" for teachers in classrooms that have reluctant poetry readers. It was followed by FLICKER FLASH, an engaging collection of poems about everything that glows, from lightning to lightning-bugs. With these two books in her arsenal, a teacher or librarian has the poetry-hater begging for more. Joan's latest, THE POEM THAT WILL NOT END: FUN WITH POETIC FORMS AND VOICES, has just been selected for the 2015 list of Notable Poetry Books by the National Council of Teachers of English. It is a liting romp through the world of creating, reading and enjoying poetry.

CODER TIME

By Joanna Fabicon

As a Fellow in the 2014 Eureka! Leadership Institute, Children's Librarian Joanna Fabicon applied for a grant administered through the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the California State Library. Seeing the grant as an opportunity to respond to the need for children to develop 21st century literacy skills, Joanna created the 'Coder Time' program.

But what is code anyway? Programming instructions and the language of computer science pop up in standard definitions, but the idea of code (and driving force behind the project) is that it's a tool that will allow you to do the things that you've always wanted to do. With present and future generations of children being born into a tech-immersed world, code is the key for both navigating that world and having a voice in it. Code also empowers individuals to use computers, tablets, watches, and all the other devices around them as a means of creation and sharing ideas, rather than passively consuming content.

And so, 'Coder Time' was born, with the aim to bring coding to libraries and schools by providing high quality resources to facilitators, ultimately encouraging kids to create meaningful projects. Key partners in the project were volunteer-turned-intern Sylvia Aguiñaga and LA's BEST, one of the major after-school programming providers in the city. Together with Sylvia, Joanna developed a curriculum that connected the coding lessons available on free, on-line platforms like Scratch and Code.org with books and other library resources. They then trained librarians and LA's BEST facilitators to run the 15-week program.

Central Coder Time served as the culmination event. On Saturday, April 25, children from eight different LA's BEST sites, along with those who attended the weekly Coder Time program at the Children's Literature Department, came to Central Library to share their projects. They also got to learn from other organizations putting code and other STEAM activities into practice.

LA Makerspace, DIY Girls, and Cybercode Twins hosted some of those activities in the courtyard and Mark Taper corridor. Because the area was open to the public during the Department's regularly scheduled family program time, children of all ages (plus their parents) got to construct robots, challenge themselves with unusual building materials, play a computer game with bananas, peppers, or controllers of their own making, and spend some time in a virtual world.

Librarians also joined in on the fun, showing how you could learn coding concepts without needing a computer. Brooke Sheets had kids coding cup towers, Diane Olivo-Posner taught her table about binary code and how it can be made into wearable art, and Kelly Tyler, Senior at Volunteer Services, used paper dolls to demonstrate Boolean logic. Finally, YA Librarian Jennifer Noble gave everyone a chance to remember the day with a photo corner called the 'Shelfie Booth'.

Most impressive though were the children's projects and their presentations. Student representatives from each LA's BEST site and Children's Lit came up on stage in front of a full Mark Taper Auditorium to talk about the music, art, games, and stories they created. Future coders could quite possibly have been created because of Central Coder Time, but what definitely happened that day was people truly feeling how the library is a source of both information and inspiration.



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

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Membership is for calendar year, January through December. Dues are tax deductible.

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

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

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