



FOCAL Points~~



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Summer/Fall 2017

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY

For more news, go to www.FOCALcentral.org

FOCAL AWARD FOR 2017: *CHASING SECRETS* by Gennifer Choldenko

by Brooke Sheets, Senior Librarian, Children's Literature

On behalf of this year's FOCAL Award Committee, it is my pleasure to announce that *Chasing Secrets* by Gennifer Choldenko is the winner of the 2017 FOCAL Award. Every year, the committee meets to discuss the nominated titles and choose what we believe represents the best "work which enriches a child's appreciation for and understanding of California." We consider things like a book's artistic merit, its readability, and universality, and we passionately debate how a book contributes not just to our understanding of California as a place, but also as our home.

Our committee found that *Chasing Secrets* compellingly addresses issues of racism, classism, gender, and even vaccines in a way that speaks both of California's past and its present. Set in San Francisco in 1900, rumors of bubonic plague sweep the city, even while being dismissed by those in power. Meanwhile, 13 year-old Lizzie chafes under the pressures of finishing school and an overbearing aunt that insists she grows up to be a lady when all she wants is to follow in her father's footsteps and become a physician.

When Chinatown becomes quarantined, Lizzie discovers that her beloved housekeeper Jing has been trapped in the quarantine zone. Her desperate attempts to rescue him lead to the discovery of many secrets in her home and the City of San Francisco itself.

Based upon true events, *Chasing Secrets* combines one girl's story of growing up and finding friendship with a fascinating medical mystery. It is a fabulous and engaging read that we think exemplifies the promise of the award.

Gennifer Choldenko previously won the 2006 FOCAL Award for *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. Only 4 other authors who have won the Award twice! We are so pleased that she will be able to join us as we honor her beautiful work, and look forward to celebrating with all of you.

FOCAL POINTS GOES GREEN

In the interests of saving paper, saving the planet, saving time, and saving money, FOCAL Points is going green. Now you can read our quarterly newsletter right on your computer, simply by clicking on focalcentral.org.

Of course we will continue to publish paper copies for those members who prefer to receive a print copy via good old U.S. Postal Service.

Please fill out the form at the bottom of Page 5 (the FOCAL Award Luncheon reservation page). If you do not plan to attend the luncheon, please e-mail Renny, or cut along the dotted line, and send us your preference.

Hope to see you at the luncheon. Gennifer is a zesty and articulate speaker. We are all looking forward to the event.

MAKER FAIRE DEC. 2, 2017

Get ready for fun. Get ready to learn. Get ready for a family-friendly showcase of invention, creativity and resourcefulness. It's a place where people show what they are making, and share what they are learning. It's fun for the whole family.

Makers range from tech enthusiasts to garage tinkerers. They are of all ages and backgrounds. The aim of Maker Faire is to entertain, inform, connect and encourage participation. Come see what your computer can do.

To get your free ticket, go to dtla.makerfaire.com.

EDITORS' NOTES

Please note our new membership levels, on the back page of this issue. The Board voted to change the current levels to reflect our changing times. Those at the Sustaining and Lifetime levels will continue to receive an autographed copy of the Award winner. Those at the Contributing level will receive an appreciation gift.

Those of you who haven't been downtown for awhile should be aware that extra time needs to be allowed to accommodate all kinds of construction, street closings, the Regional Connector work, etc. The Library's home page provides links to these.

FOCAL PUPPET BOOK

It's holiday time. Well... it will be in just a few weeks. Are you or the children in your home or your classroom prepared ??? Gary needs a gift for his fourth grade teacher. Susie's mom needs something for her daughter's Girl Scout leader. Mary needs to take a gift, suitable for a boy or a girl, to a party.

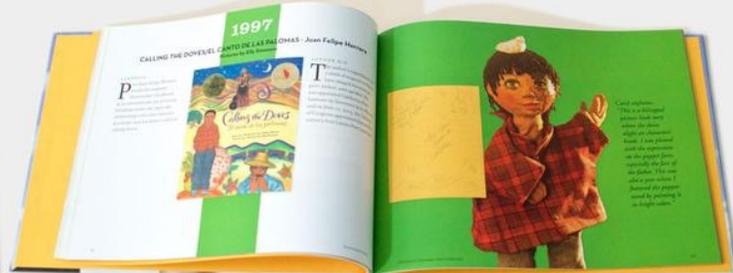
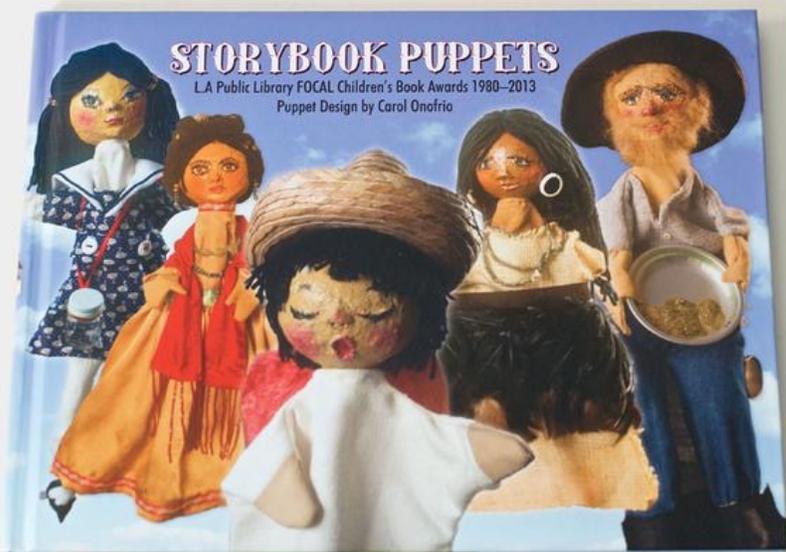
FOCAL has the answer for all of them: a book. But, not just any book. This is a book full of California history, with a picture on each page, and reading suggestions packed with facts about the author and the lead character.

There's Casey, in *Child of the Owl*, growing up in Chinatown. Panchito, who wants to go to school, but must join his family in *The Circuit* in search of work. There are tales of adventure in places from the Redwoods to the California desert.

STORYBOOK PUPPETS is available at the special price of just \$ 20 for FOCAL members. Just order through Renny Day (see page 5 for address information).

HOLIDAY SPECIAL

Included will be a sock puppet depicting one of the characters in the book. Now that's a collector's item !!!!



HISTORIC BILTMORE HOTEL POST CARD

FOCAL will celebrate this year's annual award luncheon at the Biltmore Hotel. Located between Central Library and scenic Pershing Square, the Biltmore opened in 1923, and has been noted for its opulence and gracious accommodations. For many years, hotel guests could look across to iconic Pershing Square, with its lush green trees, and shady paths. The downtown population enjoyed picnic lunches, and the weekly book truck, staffed by Los Angeles Central Library personnel.

Guests at this year's luncheon will receive a post card of Pershing Square and the Biltmore Hotel taken during the early years of the century. It is a gift from the Werner von Boltensstern post card collection, housed in the William H. Hannon Library at Loyola Marymount University. Many thanks to Carol Raby, who is a librarian there. Carol is also an active member of the FOCAL Board.

The award winning book is set in San Francisco in the early 1900's, when it was ravaged by bubonic plague. We can imagine that downtown San Francisco looked much like downtown Los Angeles during that period, with tree-lined streets, and majestic public buildings.



**THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL FOCAL AWARD LUNCHEON
and ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

HONORING THE 2017 FOCAL AWARD WINNER

CHASING SECRETS BY GENNIFER CHOLDENKO

**SATURDAY DECEMBER 9, 2017 AT THE MILLENIUM BILTMORE
HOTEL, SMERALDI'S RESTAURANT, 506 SOUTH GRAND, LOS
ANGELES, 90071. (213) 624-1011.**

Parking at Westlawn Garage, 524 S. Flower \$1.00 with library validation

Biltmore Hotel Parking, Valet Parking, \$ 8.00 with restaurant validation

12:00 Noon Luncheon, Mediterranean Buffet

Reservation Form

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Email _____

| Reservation Options | Number | x | Price | Amount |
|---|---------------|----------|--------------|---------------|
| Luncheon FOCAL Members @\$55 each | | x | \$55.00 | |
| Luncheon Non-Members @ \$60 ea. | | x | \$60.00 | |
| Lunch + \$25 Basic Membership @ \$80 ea. | | x | \$80.00 | |
| Lunch + \$60 Contributing Membership @ \$115 each | | x | \$115.00 | |
| Lunch + \$100 Sustaining Membership @ \$155 ea. | | x | \$155.00 | |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED | | | | \$ |

Please send this completed form and checks, made payable to FOCAL, by Monday, Dec. 4th, to Renny Day, 15221 Via de las Olas, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Tickets will be held at the door.

 I prefer to receive FOCAL Points by e-mail. My e-mail address is:

I prefer to receive FOCAL Points via U.S. Postal Service

***** 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. Dues are tax deductible.

New _____ Renewal _____ Basic \$25 _____ Contributing \$60 _____

Sustaining \$100 _____ Lifetime \$1000 _____

Selena Terrazas, Department Manager
Brooke Sheets, 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

