



FOCAL Points~~



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FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY

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SCIENCE DAY 2009

SCIENCE TREASURES

Saturday, May 16, 2-4 p.m.

Mad Science of Los Angeles

Spectacular science-themed show to amaze and entertain young audiences. Children can conjure foggy dry ice storms, create super bouncy balls, watch a foam factory at work, make magic mud, and much more. Shows at 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. in the Mark Taper Auditorium.

Wild Things and Animals of Prey

From the jungles of South America, the deserts of the Southwest, and the Australian Outback, see a python, an iguana, and snakes, lizards, spiders, scorpions, frogs and turtles. Children can ask questions and interact with the animals.

California Science Center

Hands-on science crafts and activities will be presented by staff at the Center. Children will create objects to take home.

Science Experiments and Crafts

Students from Valley College will demonstrate science experiments and help children make science treasures under the guidance of teachers **Lauren Okayama** and **Debby Pourroy**. Learn about pirates from science teacher **Lara Clardy**.

SCIENCE DAY is an annual tribute to educators Peggy and Merv Miller, who were active supporters of FOCAL. Financial support is contributed by the Miller family.

LOOK FOR REPORTS ON SCIENCE DAY IN OUR NEXT ISSUE !!!

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

They do say that, as one gets older, one learns more slowly. Maybe it's because as one learns one thing, one forgets another. I'm trying to learn Apple's wonderful iPages format, and I have a great example in front of me...columns, photo and all... but so far, I am typing this column in Microsoft Word, and will work with my trainer to transform this wordy column into something beautiful for you.

I was lucky enough to be the FOCAL host at another *Sundays at Central* on March 15th, and took many pictures this time round. Our author was Deborah Nourse Lattimore, F O C A L award-winning author of *Frida Maria, a story of the old Southwest*. As always, the staff of Children's Literature had readied everything for the event. Deborah's books were on display, the Frida puppet had been removed from its case and was there for everyone to admire, and the event was a great success.

Deborah's vivaciousness, storytelling skills, and enthusiasm for life, bubble over into every word that she says, illustrates, and writes. Not only did she read to the children and captivate them, but she also showed them graphically, how she draws, illustrates and creates from her memories and impressions. She had us all transfixed.

Speaking of award-winning authors, LAPL's own Susan Patron, whose sequel to her Newbery award winning *The higher power of Lucky* was just published, has been on a book tour up and down the West Coast, as well as a few inland cities. The new book, *Lucky Breaks*, is second in the projected trilogy about Lucky and her friends in Hard Pan.

There's nothing like a book sale to attract the bargain hunter in us all, or the treasure seeker look-

ing for that book he or she read as a child and has never forgotten (except for the title and author, of course). I love being able to help get ready for the book sale, learning from Renny which books should go into the sale despite their condition, which we should toss, which we can put out now or save for Teachers' Day (watch this space for whichever sale that will be), delving into the gifts and withdrawn books that accumulate quickly on the shelves, and will sell quickly on book sale day. Best of all is seeing the parents with their piles of

books and magazines, and their eager children reading while their parents are shopping.

Who says people in Los Angeles don't read???? Our book sales, at Central and in branches, tell a different tale than the naysayers out there. Don't forget, at Central they happen on the third Saturday of every month, and check the LAPL web

pages for book sales in branches.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SCHOOL LIBRARIAN

By Carol Raby

Life in the Paseo Del Rey Library

Making the library inviting, inspiring and relevant to each patron on our elementary school campus is my goal. I am so fortunate to work at Paseo Del Rey Magnet School in Playa Del Rey. I have primary responsibility for designing school wide literacy programs, developing, managing and maintaining the collection, grant writing and implementation, coordinating parent, community and student volunteers, scheduling, creating library displays, and planning library visits for every classroom. In my spare time I teach students to knit Mondays at lunch!

Each of our classrooms visits the library at a scheduled weekly time for 30-45 minutes. During these visits I present a library skill or read a book aloud. I introduce a variety of fiction genres as well as all types of nonfiction. My presentations reflect collaboration with teachers at each grade level. The books, magazine or newspaper articles and historical speeches and documents I present all coordinate and support curricular areas, school events, introduce cultural traditions or highlight current events. After the presentation, the students check out books. Typically, I assist students with their choices while a volunteer is behind the circulation desk.

My Principal tells everyone that our library is the hub of our school! Many programs and activities originate from the school library. We begin the school year with an evening story hour and a book adoption to increase the collection and connect families with the library. I organize book fairs twice a year. Our Reading Buddy Program helps 30 struggling students fall in love with reading. The Book Crates for Classrooms Program gets additional books circulating through classrooms. Our visiting author program is one that everyone enjoys.

Each school year I organize a visit from one or two authors. This year, Caroline Arnold, author of more than 100 nonfiction books about animals, met with all our students in the auditorium. Then she met with two groups of students who voluntarily completed research reports on a wild animal. These 53 students learned about her collage process used in her books in the series *Caroline Arnold's Animals*. Everyone found the experiences enriching and memorable. The workshops resulted in a self published full color book of all 53 student collages. This was a collaborative effort including parent volunteers. Each participant treasures their own copy of the book and the campus hopes to repeat the workshops with Caroline Arnold next year.

Several times a year I organize school wide literacy focused activities. In March I had a week of activities relating to a different Dr. Seuss story for each grade level and day of the week. Currently students are checking out books from the Treasure Box Grant and the Books With Lives Grant. Students draw an index card out of my treasure box and follow the clue on the card to find the book on the shelves. Then they make a bookmark about

the book. I duplicate the bookmarks and other students who ask me for a bookmark receive one made by a student about a book in our collection.

For the past four years our library was honored to serve as the Model Library for our Local District, and for the last two years we served as the Los Angeles Unified School District's Model Elementary School Library. This distinction brought many visitors from surrounding libraries and I enjoyed modeling reading aloud to all grade levels, presenting exciting book talks, creating an inviting environment, and discussing grant writing with my colleagues.

EDITORS' NOTES

The Paseo del Rey Magnet School is a Natural Sciences Magnet, and has 510 student in grades 1 through 5.

It is also a Wonder of Reading School, with one of nearly 200 new libraries that this non-profit organization has brought about since 1994 in the Greater Los Angeles area.

Wonder of Reading's purpose is to inspire in children the love of reading, and its mission is to have a significant impact on reading in elementary schools. Their 3R Program accomplishes this: renovate, restock, and read. First, the library is renovated to make it more inviting to young readers. Then, space is expanded to provide comfortable areas for students for quiet reading or tutoring. Finally, the collection is restocked with \$10,000 worth of new books. It is common knowledge that elementary school libraries in this state are appallingly behind the times, and near the bottom of the country's rankings.

In order to further accomplish its goals, volunteers are recruited and trained to read one-on-one with struggling student readers. Since the program's inception, over 5000 volunteers and family members have been trained to become literacy mentors.

Wonder of Reading's aim to provide a lifelong love of reading to all students has reached over 130,000 elementary school readers in these schools, and they hope that they can reach another 6000 in the near future. Their program demonstrates that with the proper care, even the most struggling student can become a devoted reader for life.

The Children's Literature Department Presents
NON-FICTION (MAY, 2009)

The world is a wild and wacky place... and so is the universe! Here are some great reads to help make sense of it all!

Bishop, Nic. *Frogs.* (x 597 B622) 2008

(Grade 3 and up) Feeling squeamish about the idea of dissecting a frog for science class? Check out the glass frog with his see-through skin! You'll see heart, stomach, and intestines, all doing their jobs. This photo-rich book is packed with amazing facts. Did you know that frogs are found on every continent except Antarctica and that there are over 5,000 types of frogs and that each of them has their own special call? Besides being a biologist and an expert photographer, Nic Bishop (he provided the pictures for Joy Cowley's *Red-Eyed Tree Frog*) spent days wading along the edges of ponds and wetlands looking for frogs and he traveled to the rain forest to photograph colorful dart poison frogs and red-eyed tree frogs. Bishop covers general facts their habitat, mating, eggs; how they turn from tadpoles to frog; and much more! Did you know a frog can breathe more than half of the oxygen it needs through its skin, but only if the skin is damp? A frog must never dry out or it will suffocate! And the skin of some dart frogs contains enough poison to kill ten people! Another totally cool frog is the gliding frog of Southeast Asian. A gliding frog can leap from the top of a rain forest tree and glide for fifty feet using large webbed feet. The double page up-close photos are amazing. Take a hop over to Bishop's other books: *Spiders* (x 595 B622 – Sibert Honor Book 2008), and *Butterflies* (x 595 B622-1); you won't want to put them down. – Ms. Diane

Hilliard, Richard. *Ham the Astrochimp.* (x 629.4 H654-1 folio) 2007

(Grade 2 and up) Before human beings traveled in space, animals were sent to pave the way and ensure that it would be safe. Because chimpanzees are similar in many ways to humans, they were considered the best candidates. They also were good choices because their mental capacities could be monitored, as well as their physical reaction. Ham was one of many chimps who were trained by the United States space program to follow specific commands. Scientists wanted to find out if he would be able to think clearly and make choices while under the physical constraints caused by space travel. He succeeded, thus opening the door of opportunity for humans to travel in space. This book follows Ham on his adventurous journey and beyond. Bold, lifelike illustrations accompany his story, and sidebars with additional scientific information enrich the narrative. This appealing true story is a must-read for kids interested in animals or space travel. – Miss Linda

Hillman, Ben. *How Weird Is It? A Freaky Book All About Strangeness.* (x 500 H654) 2009

(Grade 4 and up) Did you know that when you swim in the ocean, you are swimming in Strange Liquid From Outer Space (well, the remains of comets made of ice that slammed into the planet Earth for millions of years)? Did you know that mushrooms are more closely related to animals (like us humans) than they are to plants? Do you think chameleons are cool?

Consider the octopus, who can not only match the color and pattern of whatever is nearby, but can also match the texture? And it can do it in a split second! These and other interesting, amazing, disgusting, and sometimes just plain unbelievable science oddities are presented, along with fabulously weird illustrations. This book will boggle your mind and entice you to the library to do further research to see if any of it is true! (*I'm not saying we librarians made a deal with the author or anything... but you WILL want to know more about the charming water bear [tardigrade], a microscopic critter that can survive being baked, frozen, AND dried out. You'll come into the library, and then we'll have you in our clutches... Bwah ha ha!*). – Miss Mara

Stevens, Chris. *Thirty Days Has September: Cool Ways to Remember Stuff.* (x 154 T447) 2008

(Grade 4 and up) Do you ever find yourself forgetting important facts or how to spell a word? Clearly you need an effective method of remembering information. Or rather, **Mom Needs Effective Methods Or Nothing Is Certain.** Notice that the first letter of each word spells out “mnemonic”, which is a fancy name for a memory device, and memory devices are what this book is all about. Here are tricks that will help you keep track of the simplest thing, like telling your right hand from your left, to harder math problems like long division or multiplying by 11. Is it true that **Kind People Can Occasionally Feel Grumpy Suddenly?** It is if you are trying to memorize the biological classification of the animal and plant world (Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species). Not only that, you'll gain a better understanding of punctuation, parts of speech, grammar, music, and much more. Get ready to astound everyone around you with the stuff that you'll know after reading this book. – Miss Joanna

Yaccarino, Dan. *Go, Go America.* (x 973 Y12) 2008

(Grades 2-5) With a sparkly cover and a colorful Retro 1950's look, this book harkens back to free-wheeling family vacations in the station wagon. A good book to bring along in the car, readers follow the Farley family and their friendly pooch Fido, as they travel the states from Maine to Hawaii learning wacky facts and weird laws along the way. In Little Rock, Arkansas it is against the law for a dog to bark after 6pm. Every year Santa Claus, Indiana receives thousands of letters for Santa. Boulder, Colorado is the only city in the U.S. with a glacier. The longest Main Street in America (35 miles) is in Island Park, Idaho. And for *more* fun, kids can track down Bigfoot, who lurks among the pages. A more traditional chart with essential facts (bird, flower, motto) about all 50 states is included in the back, along with the Farley family photo album. Fasten your seat belts and enjoy the ride! I mean, *READ!* – Miss Madeline

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Membership is for calendar year, January through December.

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