



# FOCAL Points ~ ~



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**Fall 2009**

**FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY**

**For more news, go to [www.focalonline.org](http://www.focalonline.org)**

**FOCAL AWARD WINNER: *LANDED* by Milly Lee**

**By Carol Raby**



Congratulations to Milly Lee, this year's FOCAL Award recipient for excellence in a work which enriches children's appreciation for and understanding of California.

Can you tell me how many windows there are in your house? Which rooms have windows that face north? Questions like these were asked of Chinese immigrants detained on Angel Island off the coast of San Francisco during the time of the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed by Congress in 1882. Repeatedly, detainees were interrogated to uncover "paper sons" and deny their entry into the United States. Milly Lee's FOCAL award winning book, Landed, introduced me to this expression.

Shortly after Landed was published in 2006, Milly visited our school, Paseo Del Rey Elementary, to talk with students about her life as a school librarian and an author. Her presentation was compelling and informative. Both students and adults learned things about our history that only a few of us had known.

This year's winning book is a fictional account of (Milly's father-in-law) Lee Sun Chor's journey to America from China as a young boy. Lee Sun Chor was a true son of a Chinese merchant who was established in San Francisco. This entitled him to come and live with his father. However, Sun was detained and interrogated on Angel Island like all Chinese at that time.

In the story, Sun meets a "paper son" on his voyage. This expression means the person is posing as the son of a merchant or citizen, and has memorized hundreds of facts about people who are not truly family in order to gain entry to the United States. Sometimes boys as young as 10 years old were sent on a ship by themselves in search of a better life.

One of these "paper sons", like those in the story, is the grandfather of students at our school. He came and spoke to our students with Milly and shared his interrogation records. This experience made the book very per-

sonal for our school community. In fact, families came to me after this visit to share that they had learned of persons in their family only after discussing this book at the dinner table.

Immigrants have experienced discrimination throughout our history. Recently, Time Magazine published an article about the California Legislature issuing a formal apology to Chinese immigrants for their treatment on Angel Island. Landed presents a difficult time in our country's history in an accessible, personal way. The book has sparked curiosity among those of us who want to learn more about something we never read in our history books, and it has opened avenues of conversation about a subject that has been taboo in some families for generations.

When I wrote to Milly to congratulate her on being our honoree for Landed, she commented, "My editor said it's even better when a book has been out for a while when it is noticed, read, and honored. I have enjoyed taking the book around to speak to students and teachers about a chapter of Chinese American history that is not well known."

This is the 30<sup>th</sup> annual FOCAL Award presentation; a significant milestone for our organization and an opportunity to honor an important book and a talented author who shares valuable first hand knowledge of the Chinese American experience.

## **MORE READING ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND**

x Currier, Katrina Saltonstall

*Kai's journey to Gold Mountain: an Angel Island story*

In 1934, 12-year-old Kai leaves China to join his father in America. This gripping account is based on the travels of Kai (now called Albert) Wong of San Francisco, as he found a friend during his sea voyage, and awaited his interrogation.

x Yep, Laurence

*The dragon's child: a story of Angel Island*

In 1922 Gim Lew leaves his village in China to accompany his father to America, but before they go he must prepare for a grueling test which he must pass in order not to be deported back to China. Includes experiences of the author's family.

x325 McCunn, Ruthanne Lum

M133 *An illustrated history of the Chinese in America*

Traces the struggles of the Chinese immigrants for acceptance, and their contributions to their new country. Many illustrations of documents and photos of the era.

x979 Brimmer Larry Dane

B857 *Angel Island*

Describes the history of San Francisco Bay's Angel Island as an army base, detention center and immigration center before its preservation as a state park.

For more about Angel Island, go to [www.angelisland.org](http://www.angelisland.org).

## **ALL ABOUT THE FOCAL AWARD**

**by Kerry Lum**

Dear FOCAL Members,

I am happy to announce that the 2009 FOCAL Award goes to Milly Lee for Landed! Many may know that the FOCAL Award is presented to an author and/or illustrator for a creative work that enriches a child's appreciation for and knowledge of California; but only a few know how the winner is chosen or even how certain titles are added to the list. When I first came on board in 2007, I knew nothing about the process of an awards committee. After three years of being on this committee, I can offer some insight into the details of this awards process.

I'd like to give a little background on the composition of the FOCAL Award committee. It is made up of nine dedicated members: seven voting members, including the chairperson, and two ex-officio members who do not vote yet offer valuable and noteworthy opinions when making tie-breaking decisions. Members of the committee serve for two years and are selected by the Chair, with suggestions from the President, the Board, and the Senior Librarian in the Children's Literature Department. On the committee this year were: Caroline Gill, ex-officio, Palms Middle School; Ian Rosen, ex-officio, West L.A. Regional Branch; Vivienne Khan, El Sereno Branch; Teri Markson, Fairfax Branch; Jennifer Murphy, Palms-Rancho Park Branch; Carol Raby, Paseo del Rey National Science Magnet Elementary School; Nancy Reich, LAUSD Library Services; and Teresa Robertson, Baldwin Hills Branch. They have all given a large part of their personal time and energy to make this very successful! Bravo to the committee for all their hard work and commitment!!

We know who's on the committee; now, how do we choose the books? As of 2009, titles under consideration must be in the Children's Literature Department as part of the permanent collection. The chairperson is responsible for compiling the current award list based on recommendations from the committee, FOCAL members, the Board, and the Children's Literature Department, and top contenders from the previous year's list (generally excluding titles published 5 years or more previously). Titles selected for the list must meet the highest standards of excellence in literature for children and may be fiction or nonfiction, but they must expand a child's understanding of California.

Once the list is compiled, the committee members read the books on their own time and meet two to three times to have lively discussions about each title, winnowing down the list to the final contender. Books are judged on literary and/or artistic merit, interest and readability, universality, and California enrichment content. And that is how we have selected Landed! as this year's winner!

I'd like to thank Ian Rosen and Caroline Gill for selecting me to preside over this year's award, and especially Renny Day for her guidance and support during the meetings. I am honored to have been on this committee, but more humbled by being the Chair. Thank you for all your support!

Kerry Lum  
FOCAL Award Chair, 2009



# Writing Contest

**Sponsored by FOCAL, Friends Of Children And Literature  
Los Angeles Public Library**

The contest is open to students in grades 3 through 8. Each winner will receive two free tickets to the luncheon honoring this year's winner of the FOCAL award, a signed copy of the winning book and a chance to meet the author at the awards luncheon on Saturday, November 14, 2009

TO ENTER THIS CONTEST,  
write an essay of no more than 300 words about this year's FOCAL  
Award winning book,

## Landed BY Milly Lee

discussing your personal reaction to the book, describing a character or scene that you found memorable and explaining why you would like to meet the author. Mail entries to Caroline Gill, 4335 Marina City Drive, #534, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292 POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 23, 2009.

**NAME**

\_\_\_\_\_ **First**      **Middle Initial**      **Last**

**ADDRESS**

**CITY**

**STATE**

**ZIP**

**SCHOOL**

**TEACHER**

**GRADE**

PLEASE READ CONTEST RULES (see over)  
WINNERS WILL BE NOTIFIED.

Entry forms also available at [http://www.lapl.org/kidspath/focal\\_entry](http://www.lapl.org/kidspath/focal_entry)

## CONTEST RULES

Entries should include the following: 1) Discuss your personal reaction to this book; 2) describe a character or scene that you found memorable and tell why; and 3) explain why you would like to meet the author.

### WRITING GUIDELINES

Entries should be no longer than 300 words. Shorter entries are acceptable. Please include the word count at the bottom of the page. Essays that exceed 300 words will be disqualified.

Entries should be submitted on plain white paper, preferably typed. Handwritten entries should be written in black pen on lined paper. Whether handwritten or typed, all entries should be final edited copies with all errors corrected. Entries sent on 'cute' paper or with illustrations will be disqualified.

All words should be spelled correctly. Entries with misspellings will be disqualified.

No more than 3 entries should be submitted from a single classroom. These, if part of a class project, should be the best of the group.

Winners should be prepared to read their winning essays at the FOCAL Award Luncheon.

The originals of the winning entries will be presented to the FOCAL Award winning author at the luncheon.

**FOCAL  
Friends of  
Children and  
Literature**

## Summer Reading Treasures- 2009

By Madeline J. Bryant  
Senior Librarian, Children's Literature

Early this summer, a certificate landed on my desk, accompanied by a letter. It arrived via a circuitous route from now-retired photo collection librarian, Carolyn Cole. The letter was from Carolyn Garner-Reagan, a librarian at Arcadia Public Library, written the previous September. The certificate was a photocopy of her late mother's Summer Reading Club participation at Los Angeles Public Library, awarded 81 years ago. The art-deco seal on the quaint parchment colored paper even came embossed with a ribbon. The year was 1928- a mere two years after the opening of Central Library. Emma Rose Scroggs, the young reader, was almost 12. Mrs. Garner-Reagan explained that it must have meant a great deal to her, to have kept it through numerous moves and so many years.

As librarians, we *hope* that we are making a lasting impression but rarely if ever get confirmation of this fact. The certificate and the letter are a heartening reminder that Summer Reading Club truly makes a difference in the lives of young people, and likewise encourages lifelong library usage. We work hard all year in the Children's Literature Department, but especially so during the summer- a magical time for children- to provide three or more storytimes a week, complete with craft activities and a puppet show. This year's theme was Los Angeles Public Library's Treasured Islands: a reference to R.L. Stevenson's classic novel and to the gem-like libraries found throughout the city. We downplayed the pirate portion of the theme (given a recent resurgence in real-life modern day pirate exploits) and chose to highlight adventure, sailing, islands, and exploration.

Summer Reading Club was more important this year than ever before. With the state and citywide budget crises, LAUSD canceled summer school. We didn't know what to expect. We hoped (yet slightly feared) that we would be inundated with children. Our own club was downscaled for similar reasons. Less funding meant limited supplies and fewer incentives (prizes). Luckily, we still had attractive red folders with stickers and a treasure map inside. Summer arrived instantly. I think I'm not alone in saying that we all enjoy the almost overnight switch to pleasure reading and readers' advisory type questions. This is our golden chance to share, guide, and even persuade young readers to take the books we know and love in the hopes that *our* favorites will become theirs too.

One of my favorite books, one that I re-read passages from each year for sheer delight, describes the adventures of 12-year-old Douglas Spaulding one Midwestern summer. Dandelion Wine by Ray Bradbury begins, "Summer gathered in the weather, the wind had the proper touch, the breathing of the world was long and warm and slow. You had only to rise, lean from your window, and know that this indeed was the first real time of freedom and living, this was the first morning of summer." The year, 1928. And so it was a magical and life-changing summer indeed, for one fictional boy and a very real little girl in Los Angeles, Emma Rose Scroggs. With armloads of books, storytimes, and Summer Reading Club, we children's librarians will wholeheartedly continue trying to make it so for years to come.



1928 photo courtesy LAPL Photo Collection - Circulation Statistics 1918-1927 show LA growth in 20's



## EDITORS' NOTES

Eighty-one years have passed since the Summer Reading Program described in the previous article by Madeline Bryant. In 1928, you could not have a library card until you could sign your name...in cursive writing, not printing. Students had to have a note from their school or teacher to qualify, and would be required to read ten books before receiving a reading card in the form of a Passport Book. Since the theme of the club that year was countries around the world, books listed in the reading Passport Book were histories, biographies, stories or folklore from different lands. And all this was coordinated with the Los Angeles Public Schools.

But the goals have not changed. Now, as then, children's librarians want young readers to keep up or expand their reading or listening skills during the summer.

The Children's Literature Department achieved these goals with an ambitious series of summer activities, which included special programs in addition to the "walk-in" traffic of families and children.

- \* 9 Thursdays Ahoy! story/craft programs with 284 attending.
- \* 9 Saturday Family Storytimes with puppet show, 591 attending.
- \* 2 Taper Programs were held (Musical Coopers and One World Rhythm Drums) with 294 attending.
- \* 9 Preschool Storytimes with 271 attending. (1,440 in attendance TOTAL).

Nearly 800 readers participated in the "*Treasured Islands*" reading program, and over 260 of them earned a free book as a result of their reading minutes or participation in the Book Review Plan. Some of the most creative reviews are displayed in the department, and illustrated below.

### CELEBRATE NATIONAL FRIENDS OF LIBRARIES WEEK, October 18-24, 2009

Children's Literature Department will host a "**Teachers' Day**" on Saturday, October 17th from 10-12 noon. If you are a teacher, come and learn how the library can help you during the school year. If you are not a teacher, come shop at our Big Book Sale, also from 10-12, featuring loads of new and used books. To volunteer, e-mail: [lara@clardy.com](mailto:lara@clardy.com).



# Fun for Kids

Children's Literature Department  
Central Library

## September – October, 2009

*Programs are subject to change without notice.*

*All programs are free.*



### September

#### Preschool Storytimes

Tuesdays, September 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29

Stories and more for ages 3 - 5. Reservations required for groups of five or more. Call (213) 228-7250.

*(Children's Literature Department, 11 a.m.)*

#### 5 Sat Family Storytime – “Back to School Stories”

Get ready for the new school year with funny stories, poems, songs, and a puppet show. *(KLOS Theater, 2 p.m.)*

#### 12 Sat Family Storytime – “Happy Grandparent’s Day!”

Bring your favorite grandparents to the library for stories, poems, songs, and a puppet show celebrating Grandparents Day (September 13). *(KLOS Theater, 2 p.m.)*

#### 19 Sat Used Book Sale

Find bargain children's books for sale. Sponsored by FOCAL, Friends of Children and Literature.

*(Rotunda, 10 a.m. to 12 noon)*

#### 19 Sat Family Storytime – “Super-Size Storytime”

Stories and more about really, REALLY big things, like dinosaurs, elephants, whales, and giants!

*(KLOS Theater, 2 p.m.)*

#### 20 Sun Sundays at Central Author Series for Children

FOCAL (*Friends of Children and Literature*) presents **Debbie Bertram**, an author who really knows the Best Place, Time, and Book to Read!

*(Children's Literature Department, 2 p.m.)*

#### 26 Sat Family Storytime - “Cars, Cars, and More Cars”

Race on in to the Children's Literature Department for stories, songs, and a puppet show all about automobiles. *(KLOS Theater, 2 p.m.)*

### October

#### Preschool Storytimes

Tuesdays, October 6, 13, 20, and 27

Stories and more for ages 3 - 5. Reservations required for groups of five or more. Call (213) 228-7250.

*(Children's Literature Department, 11 a.m.)*

#### Read to Me LA Preschool Storytimes

Tuesdays, October 6, 13, 20, and 27

Special Preschool Storytimes for parents/caregivers and their children, to help preschoolers gain the skills they'll need to learn how to read. Reservations required for groups of five or more. Call (213) 228-7250 for more information.

*(Children's Literature Department, 7 p.m.)*

#### 3 Sat Family Storytime – “Hats Off to Reading!”

We'll be wearing our favorite hats and sharing our favorite hat stories, songs, and of course a puppet show.

*(KLOS Theater, 2 p.m.)*

#### 10 Sat Family Storytime – “Sing a Song of Autumn”

Cooler days make us want to sing! Join us for stories, poems, a puppet show, and plenty of songs.

*(KLOS Theater, 2 p.m.)*

#### 17 Sat Used Book Sale

Find bargain children's books for sale. Sponsored by FOCAL, Friends of Children and Literature.

*(Rotunda, 10 a.m. to 12 noon)*

#### 17 Sat Family Program

“Performing Books Presents **TUBBY THE TUBA** by Paul Tripp.”

With some help from a frog, Tubby the Tuba shows the orchestra that tubas can play melodies as well as other instruments. *(Mark Taper Auditorium, 2 and 3 p.m.)*

#### 18 Sun Sundays at Central Author Series for Children

FOCAL (*Friends of Children and Literature*) presents **Denise Doyen**, author of *Once Upon a Twice*, the story of a brave mouse who breaks the rules so he can have a moonlit adventure. *(Children's Literature Department, 2 p.m.)*

#### 24 Sat Family Program – “Tony Daniels Magic Show”

“Tony Daniels Magic Show” Get ready to be amazed by one of our very favorite magicians, who shows kids that when you pick up a book and use your imagination, you can do anything!

*(Mark Taper Auditorium, 2 p.m.)*

#### 31 Sat Family Storytime – “Slightly Spooky Halloween Storytime”

Bring your ghosts and goblins, princesses and pirates to the Children's Literature Department for stories, songs, poems, a costume parade, and a puppet show.

*(KLOS Theater, 2 p.m.)*



CHILDREN'S LITERATURE DEPARTMENT  
CENTRAL LIBRARY

Los Angeles Public Library  
630 W. Fifth St. Los Angeles, 90071  
(213) 228-7250  
[www.lapl.org](http://www.lapl.org)

#### HOURS

Monday – Thursday 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.  
Friday, Saturday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Sunday 1 – 5 p.m.

# THIRTIETH ANNUAL FOCAL AWARD LUNCHEON

and  
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

HONORING  
The 2009 FOCAL Award Winner  
**LANDED**  
by  
**Milly Lee**

Saturday, November 14, 2009

at

Empress Pavilion

988 North Hill Street

Los Angeles CA 90012

Second Floor in the Bamboo Plaza

Parking Structure is Located between N. Hill St. and N. Broadway

Enter from Bernard Street

11:00 a.m. Social Hour

12:00 noon Luncheon

Dim Sum Appetizers, Traditional Chinese Dishes, Dessert, Tea

Other Beverages, such as Soda or Wine, Are Available for Individual Purchase

### Reservation Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Reservations	Number	x	Price	Amount
Luncheon FOCAL Members @ \$25.00 ea.		x	\$25.00	
Luncheon Non-Members @ \$30.00 ea.		x	\$30.00	
Lunch + 2010 Basic Membership @ \$35.00 ea.		x	\$35.00	
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED</b>				

Please send this completed form and checks, made payable to FOCAL and postmarked no later than Monday, November 9, to:

Helen Muller

17210 Goya St.

Granada Hills CA 91344

TICKETS WILL BE HELD AT THE DOOR

For more information, telephone Helen at 818.363.6578

Seating is limited

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Membership is for calendar year, January through December.

New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ Basic \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Associate \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Contributing \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Lifetime \$1,000 \_\_\_\_\_

(Free autographed book)

(Seat at Head Table)

(Book and Head Table)

Judy Sanchez Moorhead, Central Library Management  
Madeline Bryant, Senior Librarian, Children's Literature  
Helene Mochedlover, FOCAL Points Editor

Send renewals to: Renny Day  
15221 Via de las Olas  
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

**FOCAL**  
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**Los Angeles Public Library**  
**630 West Fifth Street**  
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