



FOCAL Points ~ ~



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FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AND LITERATURE -- CENTRAL LIBRARY

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SCIENCE DAY 2009

SCIENCE TREASURES

I was perhaps a little more tense about this year's Science Day than I'd been in years past, because I had gone out on a limb and recommended that we have Mad Science of Los Angeles do a chemistry program in the Mark Taper Auditorium, and I had done this having never actually seen one of their programs. But they sounded so COOL, with things bubbling and oozing and bursting into flames... Fortunately, they were definitely able to deliver! Things DID bubble and ooze and burst into flames, AND there was a singing hard-boiled egg, which isn't something you get to experience every day of the week.

We did have a little excitement getting ready for the show (there just aren't that many sinks near the Taper where you can get great quantities of hot water – thank you Russell Pyle for finding us one that did the job!), but when all was said and done and the entire theater was filled with fog (the aforementioned hot water meeting dry ice – who knew?), well, I think the audience was very impressed, enlightened, and entertained!

And of course, thanks to Full Spectrum's Wild Things and Animals of Prey! I got to pet a snake. It's a good day when I get to pet a snake.

Mara Alpert, Librarian III
Children's Literature Department

A WILD AND SUCCESSFUL SCIENCE DAY 2009 [Courtesy LAPL Public Relations Department]

Children's Literature Dept. held another successful Science Day with more than 300 families participating in the May 16th event at Central Library. Mad scientists, wild things and animals of prey and hands-on science from The California Science Center ensured a wild time for all. The 4th annual event was coordinated by FOCAL (Friends of Children and Literature); Madeline Bryant, Senior Librarian; and Mara Alpert, Librarian III, Children's Literature Department.

Photos courtesy of LAPL Public Relations Department and Alex Muller, with our thanks!



Mara pets a snake!



Full Spectrum's Wild Things and Animals of Prey



Magic!



"Mad Bob" at work



PIRATES OF THE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

Ahoy, maties! Ah, Shiver me timbers, we had a great turnout this year at the annual Children's Literature Science Day. Hundreds of pirates, landlubbers and scallywags of all ages joined the fun and adventure in the Children's Department.

The turnout was nothing short of amazing! Volunteers and leaders set the stage for science fun. Stations were set up on the patio with pirate-related activities. We made pirate ships that could float, eye patches and pirate hats. We searched for buried treasure and took a little bit of ocean home in a bottle.

Arrrgh, even baby pirates played on the pretend beaches of the pirate's Caribbean. In the end, as the sun set in the west, we all set sail for home looking forward to next year's Annual Science Day.

by Debra Pourroy
FOCAL



CRAFTS IN THE COURTYARD

SCIENCE DAY ROUNDUP

Happy kids and pleased adults. When you see such as these at the end of a program designed for children, you know that the event has been a hit. This was the main impression carried away from Science Day at the Los Angeles Central Library on Saturday, May 16. The efforts of all organizers, facilitators, mentors, and performers were important in making this happen.

Among these were Debby Pourroy and Lara Clardy from FOCAL, with their assistants; Anna Gaiter, director of professional development, California Science Center; Richard Rumble, Full Spectrum Educational Services; and Mike Pascoe, Mad Science of Los Angeles. Renny Day and Mara Alpert composed and published a helpful, attractive program.

Special thanks are due to the Children's Literature Department for providing a delicious lunch that sustained all the participants. Heartfelt appreciation is extended to Nancy Reich and Jane Dean. As principal financial contributors to the Peggy and Merv Miller Fund, their continued interest and support have been invaluable to the perpetuation of Science Day since its inception in 2006.



by Helen and Alex Muller
FOCAL



SAVE THE DATE !!!!!

The FOCAL Award Luncheon will be held at noon on Saturday, November 14th, at the Empress Pavilion in Chinatown located at 988 North Hill Street, Los Angeles, 90012. It is one of Chinatown's most popular restaurants. Look for full details in our next issue.

The hard-working Award Committee has selected *Landed*, by Milly Lee, illustrated by Yangsook Choi. The book is based on a true story from the life of the author's father-in-law, and vividly recounts an amazing chapter in Chinese-American history.

A Day in the Life of a Children's Librarian in the Children's Services Department

By Eva Mitnick, Children's Services

Hoo, boy! This is a tough assignment, mainly because there is absolutely no such thing as a typical day in our department. Because we are the coordinating office for children's services throughout the Los Angeles Public Library, we don't work with the public and thus have no regular shifts on the information desk or storytimes to present or schools to visit. (Luckily, we get to do these things once in a while when we are helping out branches that have vacancies). We do have plenty of duties and responsibilities, both ongoing and short-term, that keep us busy – so here is a small taste of what we might be doing on a “typical” day.

There are currently two Senior Librarians (myself and Maureen Wade) in the department. Our boss Ilene Abramson is the Director of Children's Services, and our Library Assistant Eva Cox (yes, we have two Evas here) and Clerk-Typist Diane Estrella keep us organized and efficient and do huge amounts of work.

Maureen and I work together on many projects. On a typical day, Maureen and I might be conducting a Grandparents and Books (GAB) workshop to train future volunteers on how and why to read books to children at the library – or we might be training new Children's Librarians on everything from book selection to programming to service to schools – or we might be assisting our ten Early Learning with Families (ELF) branches in choosing cozy furniture for families with young children to enjoy in their children's areas. We also regularly staff booths and tables at city-wide children's festivals (LA Universal Preschool; Head Start; and so on) in order to spread the word about the Los Angeles Public Library to families, teachers, and caregivers, meet with our regional Children's Librarians regularly, help run Camp LAPL, create performer and author lists, plan staff information meetings, and much more.

As the head administrator of the GAB program, Maureen fields calls from volunteers, assists children's librarians, wrangles with the CA Dept. of Justice about fingerprints, plans the upcoming GAB workshops, and much more – all on a daily basis! In addition, she is planning the 20th Anniversary GAB Luncheon, which will be held July 20, 2009 – this big celebration, featuring a catered luncheon and guest speaker Stephen Krashen, author of *The Power of Reading*, will provide an opportunity for all our GAB volunteers and Children's Librarians to get together and share stories and ideas about the program.

Ilene, as our Coordinator, idea person, and fearless leader, creates and plans many of the wonderful programs for kids at LAPL – the Summer Reading Club; Read to Me LA; Camp LAPL; Performing Books; DiverCity, and many more. Maureen and I assist her and our branch Children's Librarians in implementing these programs system-wide. Ilene, in addition to meeting regularly with LAPL administration, attends the meetings of many organizations, including the Children's Literature Council, in order to develop and continue close contact with people and agencies that serve children and their families. She also forms partnerships with organizations in order to enhance service to children; for example, LAPL will soon be prominently featured on USC's kid-friendly “Camp Pete” website, and we will promote the website in our libraries.

As administrator, with Maureen, of the Early Learning with Families (ELF) program, I write grant applications and reports, coordinate the ordering of supplies, distribute surveys, communicate with branches, and in general keep the ELF program running as smoothly as possible at our current 10 ELF branches.

All three of us attend what professional meetings we can, including the American Library Association (ALA), the California Library Association (CLA), The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), the Children's Literature Council of Southern California (CLCSC), Friends of Children and Literature (FOCAL), and more. Maureen and I attend meetings of the Metropolitan Cooperative Library System (MCLS) Children's Services committee.

All three of us also have a hand in creating the monthly order sheets from which Children's Librarians place orders for books, DVDs, and audiobooks. We try to stay on top of current trends in education, children's librarianship, and children's literature, and to alert Children's Librarians to these trends, both by email and at our information meetings – for example, our next information meeting will feature both a speaker from the LA Unified School District and a presentation on graphic novels for kids. I read every professional journal and review source I can get my hands on, as well as numerous blogs, listservs, and websites, to be as well-informed as possible – and of course I'm always reading (or listening to) a children's book. Right now, I'm just finishing up *Lady Friday* by Garth Nix. *Highway Robbery* by Kate Thompson and *When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead are two recent favorites of mine.

I love my job here at Children's Services because each day brings new projects to work on, new books to read, and new people to train. We all work together, collaborating on projects, making plans, and trying to make the jobs of our LAPL Children's Librarians as smooth, exciting, and enjoyable as possible – and we manage to have a lot of fun, too!

EDITORS' NOTES

As Eva mentioned, the broad concept of the Summer Reading program each year is created by Children's Services, with branches and Central putting their own spin on its implementation.

Children's Literature Department is offering "Treasured Islands" theme-related programs and craft projects throughout the summer. As an incentive to young readers, children can earn points that lead to a selection of free gift books, as well as stickers and other small incentives to keep them reading. Be sure to look at the notebook at the Reference Desk which has book reviews (some beautifully illustrated) of favorite books.

Avast, Mateys, come in and look at the lively display of pirate and treasure books available for check-out, as well as a bookmark with this month's booklist and coloring sheets for the youngest readers.

For more information on what's happening for children at LAPL, please check out "Kids' Path" on the LAPL website.

Pirate Books (yarr!)
By Eva Mitnick for LAPL Summer Reading Booklist

Books for Younger Readers:

Courtauld, Sarah. *On a Pirate Ship*. (xz)

Sometimes a pirate must face storms and battles to get to his treasure.

Crimi, Carolyn. *Henry and the Buccaneer Bunnies*. (xz)

Henry's dad is the scariest pirate bunny around – but Henry just wants to read.

Fox, Mem. *Tough Boris*. (xz)

Even fearsome pirates get sad sometimes.

Jarman, Julia. *Class Three at Sea*. (xz)

Field trips don't usually include getting attacked by silly pirates or finding buried treasure.

Long, Melinda. *How I Became a Pirate*. (xz)

You don't have to eat your spinach or say "please" or "thank you" on a pirate ship.

Long, Melinda. *Pirates Don't Change Diapers*. (xz)

And they're not too great at singing lullabies, either.

McPhail, David. *Edward and the Pirates*. (xz)

If Edward doesn't tell the pirates where the treasure is buried, he'll have to walk the plank.

Thomson, Sarah L. *Pirates, Ho*. (xz)

These scurvy sea-dogs talk tough – until the sun goes down and the ghost stories get scary.

Books for Older Readers:

Aguiar, Nadia. *The Lost Island of Tamarind*. (x)

Maya, her brother, and her baby sister are marooned on a mysterious island.

Barry, Dave. *Peter and the Starcatchers*. (xy)

Peter and Molly must prevent an evil pirate from stealing their magical stardust.

Colfer, Eoin. *Eoin Colfer's Legend of ... Captain Crow's Teeth*. (x)

The ghost of a pirate captain is looking for a new cabin boy – Will and Marty better watch out!

Cowell, Cressida. *How to Be a Pirate*. (x)

Does young Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III have what it takes to be a terror of the seas?

Fleischman, Sid. *The Giant Rat of Sumatra: Or Pirates Galore*. (x)

In 1846, young Edmund accompanies pirate Captain Gallows on his California adventures.

McCaughrean, Geraldine. *Peter Pan in Scarlet*. (xy)

Find out what happens to Peter, Wendy and the lost Boys in this sequel to Peter Pan.

Niehaus, Alisha. *Piratepedia*. (x 910.4 N666)

Arrr! Learn to talk like a pirate and much more.

Platt, Richard. *Pirate*. (x 910.4 P719)

Full of facts and illustrations about pirates.

Compiled by Eva Mitnick
Senior Librarian, Children's Services

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

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