



Number 26

August 2014

"It is the function of some people to be a lamp and some to be a mirror. I have been very pleased to function as a mirror of others' work." — Arne Nixon

ANCA Annual Meeting with acclaimed author Joanne Rocklin



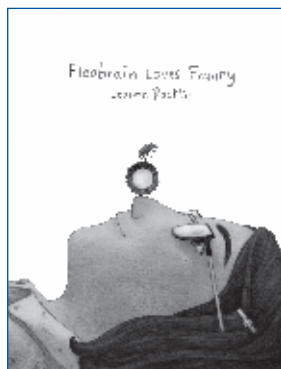
photo by Gerry Nelson

The Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature and ANCA (the Arne Nixon Center Advocates) invite everyone to attend a presentation by award-winning author Joanne Rocklin, the guest speaker for ANCA's 2014 Annual Meeting on Friday, October 24. The meeting will be held at Fresno State in the Henry Madden Library, Auditorium Room

2206 (2nd floor, South wing). A catered reception will begin at 6:00 p.m., with Rocklin's talk to begin at 7:00 p.m.

Joanne Rocklin, Ph. D., has written over 20 books for children, encompassing several genres. She has a doctorate in psychology and is a former elementary school teacher, presently writing children's books full-time. Her books include *The Five Lives of Our Cat Zook*, *One Day and One Amazing Morning on Orange Street*, and *For Your Eyes Only!* Her books have received numerous awards and honors.

Rocklin's newest book, *Fleabrain Loves Franny*, tells the story of Franny Katzenback. Set in Pittsburgh in 1952, polio-stricken Franny finds herself trapped and lonely and in need of a friend. After becoming enthralled with the newly-published *Charlotte's Web*, Franny begins escapades with a bug of her own, a well-read, eloquent flea who has taken up residence on her dog's tail. Fleabrain possesses extraordinary powers. He whisks Franny away to far-off sites and accomplishes good deeds throughout their nightly adventures. *Fleabrain Loves Franny* is a heart-warming historical fiction/fantasy that middle grade readers



(See **Annual Meeting**, page 2)

Secret Garden Party and Politi Garden Rededication

The Arne Nixon Center thanks everyone who made the combined Secret Garden Party and Leo Politi Garden Rededication in April such a remarkable event. Our gratitude extends especially to past ANCA President Denise Sciandra, whose idea it was to create the garden honoring the friendship between author Leo Politi and Professor Nixon; landscape architect Bob Boro, who designed the garden; artist John Cook, who produced beautiful replicas of Politi's mosaic sidewalk tiles; and sculptor Lester Harries, who cast bronze reproductions of Politi's only known statues. Most of all, we thank the many donors who helped to make the Leo Politi Garden a reality.



The celebration was graced with warmth and cloudless skies and the garden bloomed with snap dragons, day lilies, and pansies. Randy Morris, a long-time friend of Nixon, played jazz tunes on his saxophone accompanied by guitarist David Spencer. Attendees were honored to see President Castro and First Lady Mary Castro and enjoyed the President's welcoming address. Special guests were the extended family of Leo Politi, including his children, Paul Politi and Suzanne Bischof. Paul talked of his father, his books, his legacy, and how the family would remember this day of commemoration.

Earlier, Paul and Suzanne had visited Fresno State's Gibson Farm Market, where they made a surprising find. They returned to the Garden with two pots of long-limbed shrubs hung with red and yellow-tipped blooms. Paul said these Flowering Maples were their mother's favorite plants and he asked that they be placed in the Garden in her memory. Finding the plants solidified the message that there always will be a home for the Politi family in a garden at Fresno State.

Annual Meeting, from page 1

are sure to treasure. Learn more about Rocklin and her books at www.joannerocklin.com.

Rocklin's talk is free of charge and open to the public. A brief administrative meeting will be held during the first few minutes of the program. Rocklin's books will be available for sale and autographing after the presentation. Parking in Lots P30 and P31 (closest to the Library) will be unrestricted. Please make reservations by sending email to Jami Sanford at jsanford@csufresno.edu or by calling the Center at 559.278.8116. Reservations can also be made by replying to <http://pawsforms.csufresno.edu/rsvp> and using the passcode rocklin2014.

Please plan to join us!

October 24, 2014

ANCA Annual Meeting featuring
Guest Speaker Joanne Rocklin
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Madden Library Room 2206

November 26

Deadline to submit proposals for censorship
conference "Outlawed: The Naked Truth about
Censored Literature for Young People"
www.outlawed2015.com

December 12

Holiday Party for Volunteers
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Arne Nixon Center in the Madden Library

April 9, 2015

"An Evening with Sherman Alexie"
7:30 p.m.
Satellite Student Union, Fresno State

April 10–12

Conference:
"Outlawed: The Naked Truth
about Censored Literature
for Young People"



Smile, Ernest and Celestine



ANCA Anecdotes

(Arne Nixon Center Advocates)

by Kristene Petrucci Scholefield,
ANCA President

Imagine the thrill of picking up a telephone and hearing the voice of E.B. White reading a chapter of *Charlotte's Web* to you. That's what I experienced earlier this year on my third visit to the New York Public Library's exhibit of "The ABC of It, Why Children's Books Matter." An added bonus was seeing curator extraordinaire Leonard Marcus, who was leading his university students on a tour! I once heard Arne Nixon say that if he could save only one book from a burning building, it would be *Charlotte's Web*. "It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer." (page 184) My life is constantly enriched with friends, authors, and books through my affiliation with ANCA.

My next stop was at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts. My husband thought he was just going to take photos of the beautiful building and grounds but was fascinated with the exhibit of Simms Taback. While in the gift shop we saw Margarita Engle's books displayed!

The last stop was a family vacation on California's Central Coast where once again children's literature was featured when my six-year-old grandson begged his mom to please read one more chapter of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (which could have been influenced by the s'mores we cooked on the beach that night). His aunt, visiting from Washington, D.C., read her battered copy of *Go Dog Go* to him.

ANCA honored Denise Sciandra at the Life Member's Tea with valentines of thanks for her many years of dedication to the Arne Nixon Center. The Leo Politi Garden rededication and Secret Garden Party combined events were lovely. With your continued support we will contribute to exhibitions, events, symposia, and conferences the Arne Nixon Center sponsors ... but for now I am off to my first Winkie Convention in San Diego. As Dr. Seuss said, "Oh the places you'll go!"

All the illustrations featured in this issue of *The Magic Mirror* are the work of **Gabrielle Vincent**. Book titles accompany the illustrations, except the one used with the "First Lines" quiz on the back page—that one is from *Feel Better, Ernest!*



Bravo, Ernest and Celestine!

MAGIC MIRROR

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CURATOR'S

CORNER



by Jennifer Crow

Sitting here among Arne Nixon's collection, it's sad to hear the dismal findings on the number of books published last year featuring diverse characters. Arne Nixon specifically collected a wide range of books with themes and characters that embrace the great diversity of our many cultures and histories. He knew how important it is for children to see people like themselves reflected in society's literature. Shared recognition provides validation of young lives. Nixon also knew it was equally important to see those unlike ourselves portrayed in our literature. Learning about the lives and experiences of others fosters acceptance and a celebration of differences. The hope of early exposure to diversity is to instill in children a sense of self-realization and of compassion, both greatly needed in our world today.

Yet once again, statistics indicate a denial of our changing demographic needs. The Cooperative Children's Book Center in the School of Education at University of Wisconsin–Madison compiles and reports yearly statistics on books written by and about people of color published in the United States.

Of books published in 2013, a disheartening number were by and about minority peoples. Out of approximately 3,200 books • 93 books had significant African or African American content • 67 books were by black authors and/or illustrators • 34 books had American Indian themes, topics, or characters • 18 books were by American Indian authors and/or illustrators • 61 books had significant Asian/Pacific or Asian/Pacific American content • 88 books were by authors and/or illustrators of Asian/Pacific heritage • 57 books had significant Latino content • 48 books were by Latino authors and/or illustrators.

The children's literature world was shaken by these statistics. Now we are ready to fight to make significant and lasting changes. The late Walter Dean Myers addressed growing up without cultural representation in the March 15 issue of *The New York Times Sunday Review* (just a few months before his death). In his article, "Where Are the People of Color in Children's Books?" Myers said he realized that when he wrote about poor inner-city children he wanted "to make them human in the eyes of readers and, especially, in their own eyes. I want to make them feel as if they are part of America's dream, that all the rhetoric is meant for them, and that they are wanted in this country."

So, what can we do? In a market-driven world, we can direct the market. Buy books that celebrate diversity, books for our libraries, classrooms, our children, friends, and ourselves; books by authors who understand the spectrum of experiences. Talk about diversity in books; recommend to others those with diverse characters. Place diversity-themed books on library shelves within their genres and include their use every month of the year. From the many resources available, educate yourself and others about books of diversity and use social media to promote them. Write to the authors and publishers of books that feature diversity to praise them for the books they create and to encourage them to produce more.

Lack of diversity in children's literature is a problem. It is a complex problem that involves the consumers, the publishers, the market and economy, the authors, and the myths and misconceptions about "Others" that continue to exist—but it is a problem we can all do something about. Arne Nixon rejoiced in diversity. Join us in our commitment to promote books of diversity and spread the celebration!

“Turning Pages” exhibition: a success story

The Arne Nixon Center paired with the Library’s Special Collections Research Center in the spring to present an exhibition entitled “Turning Pages: Intersections of Books and Technology.” The wide-reaching displays took viewers through time to explore the ways in which technologies, old and new, have continually transformed books. From a cuneiform clay tablet to a 1474 copy of the *Vita Christi*, from the first children’s hornbooks to the iPad app *Pop Out! A Tale of Peter Rabbit*, examples from the Library’s collections filled the Leon S. Peter’s Ellipse Gallery.

The hands-on displays included a bank of typewriters where those too young to remember them delighted in finding new machines with which to create words on paper. (Older guests, conversely, often associated typewriters with office work.) Around the corner was a discovery



wall where guests could open cupboards and pull out drawers. Inside were books on View Masters, flipbooks, rubber stamps, and ink pads to play with. A Teddy Ruxpin talking bear sat behind a glass wall reading and singing to those who walked by.

Exhibition visitors could contribute to collaborative digital books using the “Exquisite Storybook” website created specifically for the show by Fresno State digital media professor Rusty Robison. Preloaded illustrations designed by students in Professor Doug Hansen’s illustration class provided prompts for the imagination. Professional illustrators Richard Wanjema and Tommy Kovac contributed artwork, as well. The Center hopes to promote the “Exquisite Storybook” digital site’s use to schools as a curriculum tool for writing.

In addition to Library-owned artifacts, on display was artwork from five internationally-known artists who use discarded books as their medium. One artist was Mike Stilkey. His “Day of Celebration” consisted of 908 books stacked eleven feet high and nine feet wide to create a canvas on which he painted a whimsical-looking elephant wearing a top hat and bow tie. Stilkey spoke at the opening reception, revealing that libraries love donating discarded books to him. The books most often used in Stilkey’s creations are those by Danielle Steele. Other acclaimed artists in the exhibition were Su Blackwell, Brian Dettmer, Pamela Paulsrud, and Thomas Allen.



The nine-week exhibition was attended by nearly 4,500 visitors. Special docent-led tours were conducted for over 830 Valley school children. The tours included participation in a related art project designed by art education professor Paulette Fleming, a visit from the famous transformer, Bumblebee, and a take-home book to start each student’s own home library.

In a positive review for *The Fresno Bee*, reviewer Donald Munro said the “clever and good-hearted exhibition” ... “nudges the viewer toward the staying power of books, no matter the format or the technology that made them possible.”



President Joseph I. Castro chats with Valley school children who attended the “Turning Pages” exhibition in the Library.

Summer in the Arne Nixon Center archives

Center personnel have been hard at work this summer archiving the backlog of authors' and illustrators' papers. While we aren't finished yet, we have made excellent progress. Recently completed are the papers donated by Ruth Bornstein, Barbara Bottner, Joanne Rocklin, and Tracy Barrett. Finding guides for these papers and others are available on our website (www.arnenixoncenter.org) under the Research tab: click on "Finding Aids" on the right side of the page. Future plans include working with the Library's catalog department to make the papers accessible through the Library's online catalog. A brochure detailing the Center's archival holdings will be published and distributed.

Archival Arrivals

The Center would like to thank non-fiction writer **Ginger Wadsworth** for her donation of papers. Her gift of nine boxes included highly-organized typewritten, edited manuscripts; correspondence with her editors; primary source research; extensive photographic inquiry; and copies of covers of her books. Within Wadsworth's donation were 17 copies of her books, including a Korean language version of her picture book, *River Discoveries*. Her papers are being processed by April Wheaton, a San Jose State University, School of Library and Information Science archive intern.

Wadsworth, who received a degree from University of California at Davis in English Literature and American History and Literature, has penned many award-winning non-fiction books. Her special interests are biographies, natural history, and American history, as witnessed by the titles of her latest books: *Yosemite Songster: One Coyote's Story*, winner of the 2014 Storyteller Spur Award, and *The First Girl Scout: The Life of Juliette Gordon Low*, named to the American Library Association's 2013 Amelia Bloomer List.

Another much appreciated arrival is the donation of papers from **Tracy Barrett**, who sent the Center one box filled with manuscripts, galleys, and personal correspondence. Barrett is the author of numerous books for children and young adults. Her bachelor's degree in Classics-Archaeology from Brown University, along with her M.A. and Ph.D. in Medieval Italian Literature, laid the groundwork for many of her non-fiction and fictional works. Included in her well-received books are *The King of Ithaka*, a retelling of the *Odyssey*; *Dark of the Moon*, an adaptation of the Theseus and the Minotaur myth; *Anna of Byzantium*, based on the life of the historical Princess Anna Comnena; and *The Stepsister's Tale*, her most recent

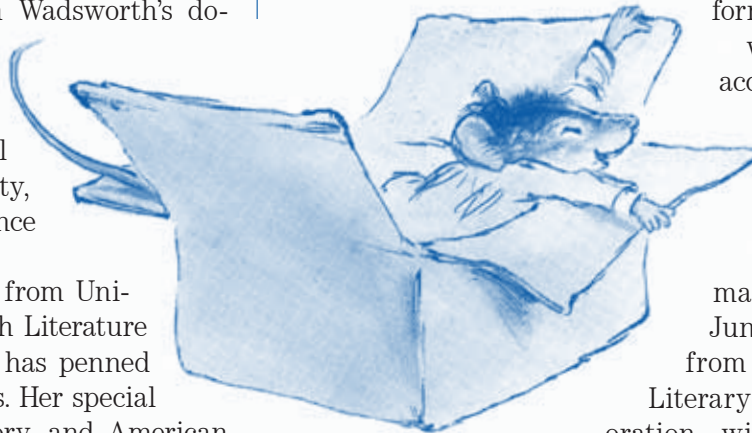
book, with a surprising look at the Cinderella story through the eyes of one of the stepsisters.

Barrett has been a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) for more than 20 years. After leaving her post as the Regional Advisor for the Midsouth (Tennessee and Kentucky), she became SCBWI's Regional Advisor Coordinator for the entire U.S.

In February, author **Joanne Rocklin** drove from the Bay Area to personally deliver five boxes and plastic tubs filled with her typescripts, correspondence, notes, research material, reviews, awards, receipts, and personal postcards. She also donated 27 autographed books. Rocklin has written nearly 30 books, encompassing several genres, for children. She has a doctorate in psychology and is a former elementary school teacher, presently writing children's books full-time. Her books include *The Five Lives of Our Cat Zook*, *One Day and One Amazing Morning on Orange Street*, and *For Your Eyes Only!* She has received the California Library Association's Beatty Award, the FOCAL Award, and the California Book Award, as well as many other accolades. She will be the guest speaker for ANCA's Annual Meeting on October 24.

A later donation made by Rocklin in June included a letter from the Erin Murphy Literary Agency in collaboration with The Weinstein Company. In addition to the letter, a permission request and a materials release form were archived. These forms requested the use of Rocklin's book *One Day and One Amazing Morning on Orange Street* as a prop in the soon-to-be-filmed motion picture, *Southpaw*. The film will be directed by Antoine Fuqua (*Training Day*) and will star Jake Gyllenhaal, Lupita Nyong'o, Forest Whitaker, and Rachel McAdams. A portion of the script and description of the use of the book were also included in the archive.

Feel Better, Ernest!



The Center thanks all of these wonderful authors for their donations. We are honored to house your papers!



THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT CENSORED LITERATURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Arne Nixon Center Conference April 10-12, 2015

Call for Proposals: While most people are familiar with attempts to censor children's and young adult literature, the problem of censorship continues to provoke many who believe that children and adolescents benefit from considering diverse viewpoints and cultural experiences. In recent years, many examples of children's and young adult literature—including *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, *And Tango Makes Three*, and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*—have been challenged in schools and libraries. This conference seeks to explore the ways in which censorship affects young readers whose parents, teachers, and civic leaders attempt to navigate thorny terrains of identity in a world in which information circulates more freely than ever before.

The Arne Nixon Center is seeking scholarly presentations for the conference. Presentations may highlight creative work, community engagement, pedagogy, or scholarship. Sessions will last 75 minutes (15-20 minutes per presenter). Proposals for individual presentations should be 250-300 words, while proposals for entire sessions should be no more than 500 words. Please include two- to three-sentence biographies for each participant and indicate any audio-visual/media needs.

Deadline for proposals for both individual and panel submissions is **November 26, 2014**. Submit electronically to Dr. Kathleen Godfrey, English Department, Fresno State, kgodfrey@csufresno.edu.

Topics could include • Suppressed or silenced histories • International contexts for censorship • Technology, digital literacies • Fan fiction as a response to banned texts • Twitter and the use of social media • History of censorship and banned book lists • LGBTQ+ literature • Recent attempts to ban books based on cultural empowerment movements • Sex and Censorship • Self-censorship • Recommended age ratings for books • Creating curriculum that supports the use of banned books • "Artivism" and subtext in illustrations • Graphic novels, novels in verse, and experimentation with form • Libraries (school/community/archives) and closed reference cases • Publishing or Pre-Censorship • Schools (K-12, public/private) • Religion, spirituality, and mysticism in banned books • Authorial politics and the reception of Young Adult literature.

Confirmed Speakers: Joan Bertin • Michael Cart • Leslèa Newman • Matt de la Peña • Leonard Marcus.

Registration & Information: www.outlawed2015.com

Ernest and Celestine

On June 13, the Center had the pleasure of cosponsoring Fresno Film Works' presentation of *Ernest and Celestine*. The animated film, shown in the Tower Theatre, was based on a series of picture books by Gabrielle Vincent. The stories feature a bear, Ernest, and his young charge, a mouse named Celestine. After the first showing of the film, Center Curator Jennifer Crow answered questions about the books and film.

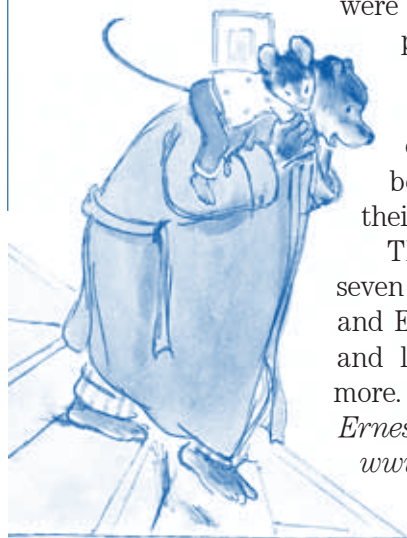
The Belgian-French film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2012 and was nominated for an academy award for Best Animated Feature Film in 2013. An all-star cast, English-dubbed version was released in the United States in 2014. The film's meticulous design, hand animation, and musical refrains captured the essence of the charming books. The filmmakers, whose intent was to pay homage to the series and its creator, crafted a new story depicting how the unlikely pair came to meet and to rely on each other's care. The diminutive but plucky Celestine helps to transform the solitary Ernest into a loving father figure. The film is a story of acceptance, trust, and love, and in keeping with the gentle nature of the books, it will delight any audience.

Containing little or no text, the books depict the tender parent/child relationship between Ernest and Celestine primarily through expressive watercolor illustrations. With a minimalist approach, the stories recount the day-to-day adventures of the two endearing characters as they entertain in the public square, cut and sew patchwork quilts, prepare for a picnic, and become an unscheduled act at the circus.

Gabrielle Vincent was a Belgian author, illustrator, and fine artist whose given name was Monique Martin. She took her pen name from her grandparents' first names to avoid the stigma fine artists may face in writing and illustrating children's books. The Ernest and Celestine books were written from the early 1980s until 2000, when Vincent passed away. Three of the titles were published posthumously. Of the total 26 books, only a small number

were translated into English and published in the U.S. by William Morrow & Co. The English versions are now out of print, but recently the books were republished in their original French language.

The Center owns copies of seven of the books (both French and English versions of one title) and looks forward to acquiring more. Information about the film *Ernest and Celestine* is found at www.ernestandcelestine.com.



Lesléa Newman donates books

When acclaimed author Lesléa Newman was asked to participate in the Center's upcoming conference on censorship, she asked how many of her books the Center owns. Hearing it housed fewer than she had written, she offered to mail additional books for the collection, sending nine books in all.

One of these titles, *Too Far Away to Touch*, has been added to the Center's LGBTQ bibliography. It's the story of Zoe and her favorite relative, Uncle Leonard, who makes Zoe laugh, tells her jokes, and takes her on enjoyable adventures. When Uncle Leonard explains to Zoe that he is sick with AIDS, Zoe becomes worried, but soon realizes that he is still her loving uncle. Using the stars as a metaphor, Uncle Leonard helps to calm Zoe's fears of death. Illustrated by Catherine Stock, *Too Far Away to Touch* provides hope in the face of loss. The growing LGBTQ bibliography can be found on the Center's website under the Research tab: click on "Bibliographies" on the right side of the page, then "LGBTQ Bibliography."

Newman has written over 60 books for both children and adults. Her books include the once controversial and banned *Heather Has Two Mommies*; a Stonewall Honor book, *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard*; an award-winning middle-grade novel, *Hachiko Waits*; Children's Book Council & International Reading Association-listed *Best Cat in the World*; and a Sydney Taylor Notable Book, *A Sweet Passover*. A past poet laureate of Northampton, Massachusetts, Lesléa Newman currently teaches at Spalding University's brief-residency MFA in Writing program.



SIGN ME UP!



I/We would like to join the Arne Nixon Center Advocates and enclose a donation. (Donations are tax deductible as allowable by law.)

☐ New membership ☐ Renewal
☐ \$ 1,000 Life membership
☐ \$ 500 Benefactor membership
☐ \$ 250 Patron membership
☐ \$ 100 Sponsor membership
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☐ \$ 10 Student membership
☐ \$ Other amount



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*Feel Better,
Ernest!*

Answers to quiz

- 1 *Yosemite Songster: One Coyote's Story* by Ginger Wadsworth
- 2 *King of Ithaka*, by Tracy Barrett
- 3 *Fleabrain Loves Franny*, by Joanne Rocklin
- 4 *The Giver* by Lois Lowry

Can you identify the books that begin with these lines?

Q¹ ON A SUNNY SPRING MORNING in Yosemite National Park,
Coyote and her mate stalk a squirrel on a hillside.

Q² HEAR THIS: I did not hate my father for leaving
us. I was, of course, only a baby when he left, but
even as I grew up fatherless yet with a living
father, I still did not hate him.

Q³ One thing Franny knew. Angels did not exist in
real life. But there they were, floating all around her.

Q⁴ It was almost December, and Jonas
was beginning to be frightened.



(Answers on page 7)

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