

THE MAGIC MIRROR

Number 7
(March 2005)

"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



Arne J. Nixon taught children's literature and storytelling for many years at California State University, Fresno. In 1995, he gave 22,000 children's books to the Henry Madden Library and when he died, in 1997, he left the Library a generous bequest to endow the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature.

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Secret Garden Party planned — in Wonderland!

Save the date—Sunday, April 10, 3 to 5 p.m.—for the third annual Secret Garden Party to benefit the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature. Celebrate your un-birthday at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party and the Queen of Hearts' Croquet Tournament!

Join us for tea in a beautiful Fresno garden that is truly Wonderland. The location is not a secret this year: we are returning to the 10-acre Willow Bluff garden of Bill and Lise Van Beurden. Stroll through their fragrant lavender field, see spring reflected in the ponds, stop to smell the roses, admire 32,000 daffodils on the woodland walk, and sip champagne in the underground wine cellar. This spectacular garden is beautiful every day of the year!

This *Alice in Wonderland* themed event celebrates the recent purchase of a world class Lewis Carroll collection for the Nixon Center, made possible in part by proceeds from the two previous garden parties.

Early sign-up is strongly recommended to ensure your place at this event. Underwriters, either businesses or individuals, are needed. Underwriters receive complimentary tickets to the party, and their gifts will be acknowledged at the party and in the *Magic Mirror* newsletter. Individual tickets may be purchased for \$50.

To request an invitation, to be a sponsor of this event, or to receive additional information, please call the Library Development Office at (559) 278-5790 or send an E-mail message to kelliew@csufresno.edu.



Tales & Tidbits from ANCA

(Arne Nixon Center Advocates)

by Denise Sciandra, ANCA President



I travel all over the country and beyond in the name of children's literature. Call me crazy, but I love it.

When my children were young, we searched Los Angeles for early editions of "Oz" books for my daughter Lisa. We visited places and events named in Leo Politi's books such as the monarch refuge in Pacific Grove from *The Butterflies Come*, The Blessing of the Animals from *Juanita*, and Las Posadas from *Pedro, the Angel of Olvera Street*.

As a Beatrix Potter fan, I attended a meeting of the Beatrix Potter Society in 1999 at the Philadelphia Free Library where the largest Beatrix Potter collection outside of England is housed. While there, I visited my sister who lives in Etters near Harrisburg. My brother-in-law asked why I had come to Pennsylvania. When I told him, he rolled his eyes, looked incredulous and said, "I guess you really like Peter Rabbit." As an adult who loves children's literature, I'm used to that kind of abuse.

On the other hand, my children's library committee takes me seriously. They took me to Beatrix Potter's Hilltop home ("Denise's mecca" according to Gerry Hughes) in the Lake District of England in 2000.

We imitated Beatrix Potter who was known for sitting on the floor to create her drawings in order to get the same perspective as the animals she drew. At Hilltop, the setting for *The Tale of Samuel Whiskers* (also known as *Roly-Poly Pudding*), three of us mature women got down on our hands and knees in order to get the same rat's-eye view that Samuel Whiskers had at the top of the stairs as he boldly entered the main house to get ingredients to make Tom Kitten into a "kitten dumpling roly-poly pudding." A Kodak moment and no cameras were allowed!

My association with professed Oz-nut Angelica Carpenter has expanded my consciousness of L. Frank Baum's 14 Oz stories. I attended "Oz 2000," the centennial celebration of The Wizard of Oz, in Bloomington, Indiana. This extravaganza had everything from a real hot air balloon to the actors who played Munchkins in the 1939 movie to a man trying to set a world record for most consecutive hours reading aloud the Oz stories.

Dee Michel's talk at Oz 2000, "The Appeal of Oz for Gay Men," left me with a new appreciation of how everyone in Oz is accepted as they are.

I've already met Winkies and Oogaboos in Pacific Grove, California. Next summer, I hope to meet Munchkins in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I wonder what my brother-in-law will say about that?

The opportunities are there. If only I had more time to travel for children's literature.

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Henry Madden Library
California State University, Fresno
5200 North Barton Ave. M/S ML34
Fresno CA 93740-8014

Phone: (559) 278-8116

Web site: www.arnenixoncenter.org
Open weekdays 1 – 4:30 p.m.
and by appointment.

Staff

Angelica Carpenter, Curator
E-mail: angelica@csufresno.edu

Jennifer Crow, Library Assistant
Matt Borrego, Student Assistant
Maria Carrizales, Student Assistant

ANCA Board of Directors

Denise Sciandra, President

Phone (559) 229-5085

E-mail: deceebbee@psnw.com

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Greetings from England where I am on sabbatical, studying children's literature collections on this side of the pond. My husband, Richard, and I have rented a small house in Kingston upon Thames, a London suburb, as a base for our travels.

Setting up housekeeping in a new place, with stores and systems we do not understand, proved frustrating. We have given up trying to open a bank account. It took two weeks to get dial-up Internet service.

The easiest place to deal with, I'm happy to report, was the Kingston Public Library, where we are now card holders. It was there that I saw a flyer about a talk by children's author Jacqueline Wilson, speaking for the Tiffin Girls' School Fire Appeal.

Jacqueline Wilson, who lives in Kingston, is a huge name in British publishing. Her 70 books have won every major award. One book, *The Story of Tracy Beaker*, inspired a popular television series and Jacqueline herself has won an OBE (Order of the British Empire) for services to literacy in schools.

Before the talk, I read *The Suitcase Kid*, about a girl named Andy, an only child devastated by her parents' divorce. Both parents have remarried and Andy alternates, spending one week with Mum, Bill the Baboon, and his three kids, and the next with Dad, his hippie wife, and her twins, Zen and Crystal. This is a perfect novel, told in first person. Andy's one consolation is a tiny toy rabbit named Radish. When Radish falls down a hole in a hollow tree, a crisis ensues.

On a cold, rainy night, Richard and I took the bus to Tiffin Girls' School where 364 girls, ages 8 to 18, and their parents, mostly mothers, were filling tables in the school hall. Many girls clutched books to be autographed and the younger children were very excited. All the girls had changed from school uniforms into casual clothes; the mums were dressed for work or leisure. Mothers and daughters wore long scarves, looped or knotted creatively and left on, even after coats had been taken off. There was a licensed bar for parents and a children's bar with soft drinks. The event was sold out, but the kind assistant headmistress had extra chairs brought for us.

Then the headmaster walked Jacqueline Wilson in from the back of the room, to breaking applause. She is a tiny person, with short, straight gray hair. Apparently she always wears black, in this case, a black dress, and laced up boots, with small spike heels. The headmaster told us what I had also read: for the second year in a row, Jacqueline Wilson is the author most checked out of British libraries.

"I'll stand up, so you can see me," she said, "and so I can flash my rings at you," and she did. Big silver rings are her trademark; she wears at least one on every finger. Her talk was about how she became a writer.

*British children's
author Jacqueline Wilson*

As a child, she wrote constantly, filling Woolworth's notebooks with stories. Bad at math, she dropped out of school (she recommended against this) and began a secretarial course, where she proved equally bad at shorthand and typing. Upon learning the duties of a junior secretary (bringing coffee to the boss at all times and making reservations for his holidays), she knew that she did not want to become one.

At this same time she saw an ad seeking teenaged authors to write short, romantic stories for a new magazine. Unable to think of anything romantic, she wrote an account of her disastrous first high school dance, where she was a wallflower. The magazine bought this for £3—not a lot of money, even in the 1960s, she pointed out, but gratifying just the same. After a few more articles, she was offered a job as a junior staff writer and at age 17 moved from Kingston to Glasgow, where the magazine was based. The publisher named the magazine *Jackie*, after her, and her career was launched.

Jacqueline Wilson has a lovely voice and a perfect sense of comic timing. The audience hung onto her every word and waved their hands wildly when the time came for questions. I was thrilled to learn that the character of Radish is based on a real toy rabbit that belonged to Jackie's daughter.

Sitting in that warm cafeteria, with waves of laughter from the girls and their mothers washing over us, Richard and I felt right at home.

Happy reading!



Just say Fresno!

(This article was written by Mark Burstein, Vice President of the Lewis Carroll Society of North America, for the society's newsletter. It appears here with his permission in an edited version.)

The 2004 fall meeting of our Society took place in California's lush Central Valley, in the fast-growing metropolis of Fresno over the weekend of October 23rd.

The subtext of this meeting might be "The Wonderful Wizard of Wonderland," as the meeting was hosted by Angelica Carpenter, the current president of the International Wizard of Oz Club, and included as speakers the Club's past president (Peter Hanff) and two authors whose previous and quite successful books were about Oz (Linda Sunshine and Robert Sabuda).

The convention began Friday with a Maxine Schaeffer Memorial Reading at the Bullard TALENT School, whose students were very well prepared, having done a production earlier this year. The entire audience, including several teachers and the principal, were fully costumed as *Alice* characters. The class of fourth graders came prepared with a list of questions, some of which almost stumped the presenters ("How did Alice die?"). Each student received the Books of Wonder edition of *Looking-Glass*.

In proper Carrollian style, Saturday's meeting was held in the dining hall, and our dining was to be in a meeting room. The campus Kennel Bookstore (named in honor of the Fresno State Bulldogs) had stocked Carrollian titles, as well as the works of our two featured speakers, both of whom were happy to sign copies.

Angelica Carpenter, author of the delightful *Lewis Carroll: Through the Looking Glass*, a biography for children ages 9 to 14, welcomed us to the Madden Library and to the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature, of which she is the founding curator. Her talk, "Accelerated Reader in Wonderland," was frightening: California school libraries are ranked 50th of 50 states; our standards have been dumbed down and children subjected to scripted lessons with

one goal in mind—to raise standardized scores. The bugbear is named Accelerated Reader (AR), a commercial product now entrenched in 50% of all public schools, teaching children not how to read, but how to pass computerized tests. Reading books that don't have associated tests is discouraged. Children no longer know how to browse, or how to use other library skills. There are fewer and fewer librarians—now budgets call for AR "councilors." Multiple-choice tests do not encourage reading for pleasure, nor test the grasp of the material in any depth. One even gets equal points for reading abridgements.

Next, Peter E. Hanff, Deputy Director of the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley, gave a fine talk accompanied by slides: "Full Leisurely We Glide: Origins of *Alice*." His focus was the earliest editions of *Wonderland*. He spoke of his 35-year voyage in the bibliographic world, wherein he has had the good fortune to examine 15 of the 23 copies of the 1865 *Wonderland* listed in the Goodacre census. He discussed the printing practices of that period—typesetting by hand, and stereo- and electro-typing—and the special folding and gathering techniques and case-binding.

Following Hanff was a tribute to Hilda Bohem (properly pronounced as the first two syllables of "Bohemian"). On this "occasion to celebrate the arrival of her collection in the Arne Nixon Center, to grieve, to remember, and to celebrate our friend Hilda Bohem, rare book librarian, bookseller, longtime Carrollian," several of her friends and family took the podium. Hanff talked about their long friendship, having met her nearly 40 years ago at the UCLA library school where she was studying book conservation and preservation. He

read from some of her "inimitable" E-mail messages in which she shared her thoughts on food, bibliography, her grandson, politics, dogs, restaurants, collecting, and movies (her husband wrote for silents, a somewhat oxymoronic calling). Carpenter contributed some warm anecdotal reminiscences, and Bohem's niece, Gillian Garro, read a moving poem written for the occasion. A slide show of pictures of Bohem concluded a sweet tribute to our friend.

After lunch in the Alumni meeting hall, Linda Sunshine (yes, her real name) enchanted us with the story of her newest book, *All Things Alice*. (This was the official launch party for the book—the publishers had moved up the date to accommodate this meeting.) Sunshine is the author of fifty-some books, among them *All Things Oz*.



Robert Sabuda, creator of the pop-up book *Wonderland*, a most extraordinary feat of paper engineering, spoke on his process and on the way his books are produced. Over two million copies of his *Oz* and *Wonderland* have been sold and have won numerous awards. He works in 3-D, with only scissors, ruler, a pencil, glue, and a stack of white cards. The primary focus is that it pops up—and, more problematically, folds back up—correctly. A single image can take him a few weeks to finalize in paper. He then adds a drawing, other artistic touches, and colors in 2-D. Popup books are made by hand—no machine can fold and glue with the precision required. Specialized factories exist in South America, Southeast Asia, and Mexico. Each factory assembles 10,000-15,000 books per week. After playing part of a video documentary on the process, Sabuda ended the session with questions from the audience. The reception at the Henry Madden Library that evening featured a lovely buffet. Afterwards we had a chance to examine the Arne Nixon Center and the Bohem collection at our leisure, particularly the rare volumes on display in glass cases in the library entry and solarium.

Robert Sabuda next to one of “The Art of Alice” Library exhibits.



The Alice characters shown on these two pages are cleverly disguised Bullard TALENT School students.



The art of illustration

by Rosie Arenas

Do you remember looking at Max's world in Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, or Shel Silverstein's peculiar line drawings giving life to the very words in his poems from *Where the Sidewalk Ends*? These are well-known names in the field of children's literature—for they not only wrote the stories that we commit to memory now, but they also illustrated their own books. We recognize books by the pictures and yet, if we tried to look for a book by the illustrator, we would have a difficult time since children's book titles have traditionally been catalogued first under the author's name and then under the illustrator's name. With the advance of technology, it is much easier to look for books by the names of illustrators, but they still have not been given the recognition they deserve.

Illustrations are the source of visual stimulation in picture books for children and open up the imagination in a way that words cannot for many children. Sometimes illustrations enhance the story in the text with details that were not written, and in other cases they visually describe what is not expressed in the text. Writers paint pictures with words, but illustrators tell stories through pictures. Occasionally, illustrations may even tell their own stories. If you look through the illustrations of *Chato's Kitchen*, illustrated by Susan Guevara, you will find illustrations that enhance the text written by Gary Soto about a cat and his friends. Yet, Guevara once shared with a conference audience that if you look carefully at the illustrations, she wrote her own story about a family of tiny birds getting married within her bold and colorful illustrations.

Illustrators of children's books have always had a "voice"—a visual voice in the books they have illustrated. Nonetheless, this voice has been obscured by the powerful text it might accompany, or the illustrations were given little or no recognition in the reviews that were published in various children's book journals, so they went unnoticed. But in the eyes of the children who see them, illustrations are the windows to other parts of the world and to other experiences that allow children's minds and spirits to open up to a myriad of possibilities. We need to give illustrators an opportunity to communicate their stories and thoughts about their life and work by allowing them to voice their thoughts about art in children's literature. We may be enlightened.

Rosie Arenas is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Literacy and Early Education in Fresno State's Kremen School of Education and Human Development.

The Gift of Loss

Congratulations to Grace Pengilly on her recently published book entitled *The Gift of Loss: How to Raise Emotionally Resilient Children*. Pengilly, who writes under the pen name Grace E. Davis, wrote this book to help parents teach children how to deal with many types of loss. From the separation of weaning, to the devastating death of a loved one, Pengilly believes that helping children cope with their feelings will strengthen them for the inevitable changes that will occur throughout their lives. Her first book, published in 1986, *Helping Your Young Child Face the Reality of Death*, is also a guide for parents during traumatic

times. Pengilly, a registered nurse and local author, made extensive use of the Arne Nixon Center to compile her bibliography of children's books relating to loss and thanked both Angelica and Jennifer for their help on the acknowledgement page.



Grace Pengilly

And the winner is . . .

The Fresno Area Reading Council, the local chapter of the California Reading Association, has awarded the Arne Nixon Center its prestigious John Martin Literacy Award for 2005. An association dedicated to improving literacy and literacy instruction, FARC held its annual conference on February 5. The annual award, named in honor of past CRA president (1972-73) and Fresno State professor (1959-86) John Martin, recognizes outstanding effort in the support and promotion of literacy. It is given alternately to an individual in the field of education and a community organization or member. Arne Nixon Center Advocates President Denise Sciandra was honored to accept the first award ever given to the Arne Nixon Center. She was presented with an engraved plaque by FARC president Nydia Mendoza. After thanking the council members, Sciandra shared with the audience some of the many accomplishments of the Center and its Advocates. Her statements served to affirm the decision that the Arne Nixon Center was truly deserving of the John Martin Literacy Award.

SIGN ME UP!



*Angelica Carpenter and Ruth Sanderson,
who donated the original oil painting used as the
cover for A Treasury of Princesses: Princess
Tales from Around the World.*

Donations of books and materials

September 2004 through January 2005

Beverly Hills Public Library: 34 periodicals

Michael Cart: 750 picture books

Roslyn Deinstein: 1 book

Pamela Harer: 53 books and 13 posters

Houghton Mifflin: 66 books

Susan James: 1 book

Rosellen Kershaw: 3 books

Dorothy Kupcha Leland: 1 book

Lerner Publications: 14 books

Blossom Norman: 1 book

Random House: 75 books

Scholastic: 60 books

Denise Sciandra and Lisa Sciandra:

4 posters and other Oz-related materials

Vince Smith: 14 books

John Taylor: 62 books

Clara Touya: dolls and display items

Tricycle Press: 13 books

Barbara Troisi: 58 books

Vivian Yee and the Oakland Public Library:
38 boxes of books

Thanks to all our donors!

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

\$ 250 Patron membership

\$ 100 Sponsor membership

\$ 50 Advocate membership

\$ 25 Sustaining membership

\$ 10 Student membership

\$ Other amount

Make check payable to CSUF Foundation.

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Mail to: Angelica Carpenter
California State University, Fresno
Henry Madden Library
The Arne Nixon Center
5200 North Barton Ave. M/S ML34
Fresno CA 93740-8014
Phone: (559) 278-8116
FAX: (559) 278-6952
E-mail: angelica@csufresno.edu

A Answers to quiz:

1 *Peter Pan*, by J.M. Barrie

2 *101 Dalmations*, by Dodie Smith

3 *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*,
by Beatrix Potter

4 *The Lion, the Witch and
the Wardrobe*, by C. S. Lewis



Can you identify book titles from these famous lines?

(Answers on page 7)

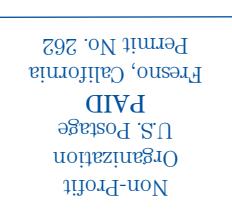
Q1 “Wendy, Wendy, when you are sleeping in your silly bed you might be flying about with me saying funny things to the stars.”

Q2 Not long ago, there lived in London a young married couple of Dalmatian dogs named Pongo and Missis Pongo.

Q3 Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were—Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, and Peter.

Q4 “And may I ask, O Lucy, Daughter of Eve,” said Mr. Tumnus, “how you have come into Narnia?” “Narnia? What’s that?” said Lucy.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



California State University, Fresno
The Anne Nixon Center
Henry Madden Library
5200 North Barton Avenue M/S ML3A
Fresno CA 93740-8014