



Number 27
February 2015

"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

Sherman Alexie to kick off censorship conference



Please join the Arne Nixon Center and Fresno State Offices of the President and Provost, along with many Fresno State co-sponsors, for an evening with acclaimed author, poet, and filmmaker Sherman Alexie, who will talk about his life and

experiences with censorship. The event, which is free and open to the public, will be held on Thursday, April 9, in Fresno State's Satellite Student Union, at 7:30 p.m.

Alexie's presentation is the kick-off event for the Arne Nixon Center's conference "Outlawed: The Naked Truth about Censored Literature for Young People" (see article on page 6). His National Book Award-winning book, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, continues to be one of the most challenged and banned books for young adults in the nation. Semi-autobiographical, the book tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the "rez" to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

Alexie, a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian, is the author of numerous books, including *What I've Stolen*, *What I've Earned* (poetry); *Blasphemy: New and Selected Stories*; and the 20th anniversary edition of *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. He is the winner of the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, the PEN/Malamud Award for Short Fiction, and a PEN/Hemingway Citation for Best First Fiction, along with many other awards.

Sponsors for the event are: Fresno State Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Henry Madden Library, Printise J. Womack Lecture Series, College of Social Sciences, College of Arts and Humanities, Kremen School of Education and Human Development, Master of Fine

(See *Sherman Alexie*, page 2)

At-Risk Summer film showing with e. E. Charlton-Trujillo

What if a young adult author traveled across America to not only promote her Stonewall award-winning book, but also to hold workshops for kids for whom the book is written? And what if that author made a documentary film chronicling this transforming experience?

That is exactly what author e. E. Charlton-Trujillo did last summer on an unconventional book tour for her celebrated novel *Fat Angie*.

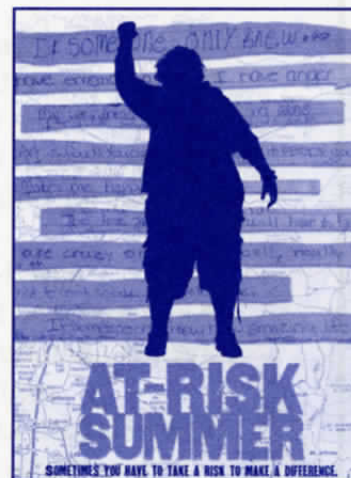
The Nixon Center invites everyone to view the film, *At-Risk Summer*, on February 5 in North Gym Room 118 at 7:00 p.m. Books will be available for sale and signing.

Inspired by a small-town Texas teen without access to creative mentors, young adult author e. E. Charlton-Trujillo packed her belongings into storage, rented a Ford Focus, and embarked on a unique book tour to empower youth on the fringe. She did this at no cost to school programs. As Charlton-Trujillo traveled America, she held writing workshops and discussions in libraries, alternative high schools, homeless shelters, juvenile detention centers, and after-school programs in an effort to empower the youth through writing. Often unable to afford a professional film crew, the kids became camera operators and sound recordists, all in an effort to capture how showing up has currency.

From the road to the workshops to meeting many acclaimed writers for young adults, *At-Risk Summer* is a film that allows young people to be seen, heard, and never to be counted out!

Parking permits will be required: purchase a daily permit (\$3) at dispensers located near campus entrances.

For more information, email jsanford@csufresno.edu or call the Center at 559.278.8116.



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by Jennifer Crow



Monkey Day was the name of the book. It made my five-year-old self happy to see the throng of smiling, curly-tailed monkeys multiplying with each turn of the page. I wished I was that little girl in the book with the monkeys and that I could bring all those monkeys home with me. My mother, on the other hand, was not quite as pleased with the monkeys. She understood something a bit more salacious in their off-page monkeying behavior. She decided her children would not be reading Ruth Krauss' tribute to the simian world. No, there would be no more monkeys jumping on the bed! Upon reflection, however, my mother came to the conclusion that refusing to check the book out from the library was simply not measure enough. She decided that no child, anywhere on earth, should read such garbage. She marched down to the Fresno County Free Library and filed a complaint, a complaint that she hoped would put a stop to the reading of *Monkey Day*. Forever. I was dismayed. I was disheartened. Would *Monkey Day* be exterminated?

This is how many challenges to books begin. A well-meaning parent decides to become the arbitrator of good taste and moral value for all children. They completely disregard differing experiences or opinions. It is, however, at the next level where real censorship can occur. The complaint is now in the hands of those in power who can choose to ban a book or to let it remain accessible for all.

While the example of *Monkey Day* may seem a bit ludicrous, the reality of it is not. Think of the book bans that occur to this day. Matt de la Peña's book, *Mexican WhiteBoy*, the reading of which has been said to lead to reverse racism, was banned in Tucson in 2012 when Mexican American Studies programs were terminated. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT+) themed books have been silenced for years. Lesléa Newman's *Heather Has Two Mommies* stirred fanatical discord in the '90s, while just last December, e. E. Charlton-Trujillo and her Stonewall Award-winning book, *Fat Angie*, was banned from a Texas school. These are just a few examples. Based in bias, lack of understanding, and fear, censorship for the young occurs in schools and libraries the world over. Political, religious, and ideological stances often motivate its continuance.

I hope you will join us for an in-depth look at censorship at our upcoming conference, "Outlawed: The Naked Truth about Censored Literature for Young People." Various aspects of censorship will be explored: its biases, its processes, and its targets.

So what happened to *Monkey Day*? Did it survive my mother's wrath? Yes and no. Owing to sound judgment, it was not pulled from the Fresno County Free Library's shelves, although it never returned to our house. The book eventually fell out of print, forever overshadowed by Krauss' sluggish carrot seed. But I am happy to report that a copy of *Monkey Day* lives on in the Arne Nixon Center and everyone is most welcome to come and read it!



Ever wear, never tear

The Nixon Center is pleased to announce its new digital collection of cloth books. Printed on cloth, these books traditionally have been used like board books are used today. They were designed to hold up under heavy use by young children. The new collection contains 25 full books; every page has been scanned so the book can be viewed in its entirety. Cloth books date from the oldest, *Routledges' Everlasting Spelling and Reading Book*, published in 1861 to the newest, *Mistress Mary and Other Rhymes*, published in 1940. Many of these books have a single word per page or consist only of illustrations, although the older editions in our collection seem to contain more text.



Saafeld Publishing Company, once one of the largest publishers of children's materials in the world but now defunct, printed this rhyme on their "indestructible" cloth books:

All my other books are worn,
And the leaves are badly torn.
But my muslin books I found,
Were as good as newly bound.

We thank Kristin Baer for creating this new collection. Baer, who is enrolled in San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science, interned for the Center during the 2014 fall semester. She earned Bachelor and Master of Art degrees in English from Fresno State and is working to complete a second master's degree in fall 2015. She currently teaches in the First-Year Writing Program at Fresno State. Baer, along with our student Cindy Vang, spent hours carefully scanning the aged cloth books. She then devised naming conventions, created controlled vocabulary terms, and downloaded the scans into our digital collection management software. To present an informative and attractive front page, she researched the cloth book format, then constructed a website at www.anclothbooks.org (also accessible from the Madden Library's digital collections website, <http://ecollections.lib.csufresno.edu>).

We invite you to take a look at the interesting format of cloth books for children.

Fresno State classes visit

The Center was delighted to host a number of classes last semester. Curator Jennifer Crow begins each visit in the Reading Room informing students about the Center and its services. Students are then taken back to the normally closed stacks where they are astonished to see the many books the Center owns. They're shown the various sub-collections and materials, including the numerous books on cats and foreign language books. Back in the Reading Room, Crow delivers a lecture pertinent to the students' current assignments.

The first day of the fall semester, author/lecturer Dorina Lazo Gilmore from the Kremen School of Education and Human Development brought her children's literature class to visit. Studying picture book authors, the class looked at books by authors who are also illustrators, such as Leo Politi, Alike, Elisa Kleven, and Peter Brown.

Thanks to Alma Flor Ada and F. Isabel Campoy, the Center owns hundreds of books in Spanish. Crow invited Spanish in Content professor Stanley Lucero to bring his class to look at the Center's collection. The Spanish in Content class is required for students who are studying to become bilingual teachers. Most of the students had traveled great distances from various Valley towns to attend the weekly class. During the tour, each student pulled a book from the Spanish section, then completed worksheets Professor Lucero had brought for in-depth analysis of the books. The class was also shown library databases where they could access professional reviews of books in Spanish.

The Victorian Children's Literature class, taught by Dr. Ruth Jenkins in the Department of English, visited the Center in November. Each student was able to peruse a bound edition of the children's journal, *St. Nicholas*, Arne Nixon's pride and joy. These magazines for children date from 1874 to 1940, when publication ceased. The class was amazed by the amount of text and the level of writing used for children of the time and also by the small amount of black and white images.

Writing about Children's Literature is a required English class for pre-service students. Dr. Kathee Godfrey brought her class to prepare for a specific assignment: students were to choose a banned or challenged book to defend, should the issue ever arise in their own future classrooms. They were shown many censored titles along with pertinent websites to help them complete their assignment.

The Center enjoys helping students and welcomes visits from Fresno State classes!



Farewell, faithful friend

Robert D. San Souci

1946–2014

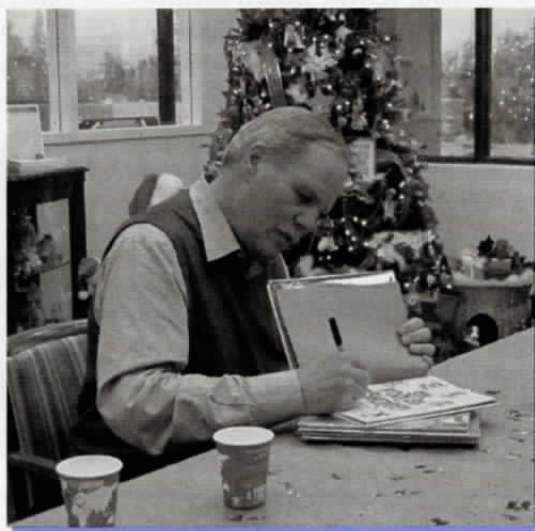
The world of children's literature and the Nixon Center lost a dear and faithful friend on December 19, 2014, when author Robert San Souci passed away unexpectedly from head trauma received after suffering a fall. He was 68 years old.

San Souci was the much-admired author of over 100 books for children. Many of these were retellings of folk stories from around the world. His book *Fa Mulan* was the story on which the Disney film *Mulan* was based. San Souci was also a friend of Professor Arne Nixon. He reported that Arne had given him and his brother, illustrator Daniel San Souci, their first big break by inviting them to speak at one of Arne's hugely popular children's literature festivals. He also remarked how Arne's warm welcome marked the beginning of a lasting friendship. Robert's book entitled *The Faithful Friend*, illustrated by Brian Pinkney, was dedicated to Arne Nixon. He donated his papers to the Center in 2007.

The Center was honored to host the San Souci brothers, along with Sid Fleischman and Thacher Hurd, at its 2002 children's literature festival. Robert was later invited to speak at the Fresno County Public Library's "Big Read" program in 2010. That year the works of Edgar Allan Poe were featured and Robert shared his scary stories with attendees. He made a return visit in December 2012 to bring materials for his archives that were too large to mail. He graciously agreed to come to the Nixon Center's Holiday Volunteer Party that afternoon as a surprise guest. His presence did, indeed, astonish partygoers, and he shared many humorous stories and worthy insights. (The photo below shows San Souci signing books at the party.)

Robert San Souci was a warm, unpretentious man with the ability to captivate readers. He pulled us into his magical tales and left us pondering new realities. He will be missed.

Robert San Souci



Oh, là là! It's a Secret Garden Party!



Who could resist the temptation to stroll through an intimate garden setting lush with French lavender and bright red poppies while sipping champagne and catching a refrain of "La Vie en Rose" on a gentle breeze? This carefree experience could be yours, right here in Fresno at the Arne Nixon Center Advocates' annual Secret Garden Party.

We hope you'll join us on Sunday, April 19, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. for an afternoon full of friends and good cheer. The location will be revealed upon your RSVP. To receive an invitation, please contact the Center: email arnenixoncenter@gmail.com or call 559.278.8116.

Become an underwriter: you'll receive tickets to the party and your gift will be acknowledged at the party, on next year's Secret Garden Party stationery, and on the Center's website. \$1,000 *Eiffel Tower* level (up to 8 tickets); \$500 *Arc de Triomphe* (up to 6 tickets); \$250 *Louvre* (up to 4 tickets).

Revenues raised from the party will support our upcoming conference, "Outlawed: The Naked Truth about Censored Literature for Young People." ANCA will fund scholarships for Fresno State students to attend the conference, and will host an author reception. For more information about the conference, visit www.outlawed2015.org.

ANCA Life Member Tea

Arne Nixon Center Advocate Life Members are invited to join us for a cup of tea and refreshments at our annual celebration for these very dedi-

cated members. This year's tea will be held on Friday, February 13, at 4:00 p.m. in the home of an ANCA Board Member. An old-fashioned Victorian Valentine's Day will be the theme, complete with a specially catered menu of traditional tea fare. A brief presentation from the host will surely delight any children's literature enthusiast.

Life Members are those who have given gifts of \$1,000 within the period of a year. If you'd like to add your name to the list of 73 ANCA Life Members, please see our membership form on page 7 or contact us directly: email jsanford@csufresno.edu or call 559.278.8116.





THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT CENSORED LITERATURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature will sponsor "Outlawed: The Naked Truth about Censored Literature for Young People," a conference to be held April 10–12 at Fresno State. The conference will examine the various means of censorship in literature for the young and ways in which it affects their reading choices. Both domestic and international perspectives will be explored. Submissions from over forty teachers, librarians, and academics have been accepted. Attracting international attention, proposals for talks have been received from academics in six countries, in addition to those from the United States.

Censorship can manifest itself in a multitude of ways, from blatant challenges and bans to the more subtle forms of pre-and self-censorship occurring at the selection level. The conference's seven featured speakers, who will present during plenary sessions, are all very familiar with censorship:

- **Jacqueline Woodson**, winner of the 2014 National Book Award, will talk about the many challenges her books have received
- **Lesléa Newman**, author of *Heather Has Two Mommies*, set off a firestorm of controversy in the 1990s
- **Matt de la Peña's** book, *Mexican WhiteBoy*, was banned in Tucson, Arizona, when Mexican American Studies programs were suddenly prohibited in 2012
- **Margarita Engle** will discuss her experiences with censorship as a Cuban-American author
- **Michael Cart**, a young adult author and a reviewer for *Booklist*, will speak about the suppression of LGBTQ literature

• **Leonard Marcus**, a children's literature historian and exhibition curator, will bring a larger perspective to the issue of intellectual freedom in children's literature

• **Joan Bertin**, Executive Director of the National Coalition Against Censorship, fights daily in support of intellectual freedom

Sherman Alexie, renowned author, poet, and filmmaker will kick-off the conference with a presentation the day before the conference. "An Evening with Sherman Alexie" is a free event open to the public on April 9. Held in Fresno State's Satellite Student Union, it will begin at 7:30 p.m. Visit www.shermanalexiefresnostate.com.

Conference attendees will also be treated to an exclusive performance of the play *And Then Came Tango*. Written by Emily Freeman and directed by Fresno State Professor J. Daniel Herring, the play is based on the banned picture book *And Tango Makes Three*. The book was inspired by the true story of Roy and Silo, two male penguins at the New York Public Zoo. After building a nest and trying desperately to hatch a rock they had found, a sympathetic zookeeper exchanged it for a fertilized egg. The pair successfully hatched a baby penguin to become a contented family.

One unit of University credit will be offered through Fresno State's Continuing and Global Education division for attending the three-day conference. In addition, the Arne Nixon Center Advocates will award a number of scholarships to Fresno State students.

For more information or to register for the conference, please send email to jsanford@csufresno.edu, call 559.278.8116, or visit www.outlawed2015.com.

—ANCA Board changes—

We would like to bestow a huge round of thanks to our retiring ANCA Board Member, Jo Ellen Misakian. An original member of the Board, Misakian has served since its inception in 2001. A strong advocate for children's literature, she has chaired Secret Garden Parties, contributed countless volunteer hours, and served as an ANCA liaison to the school community. We wish her well in her many new adventures!

Joining us is new ANCA Board member Kari Johnson. As the Youth Programming Librarian for Fresno County Public Library, she coordinates all countywide library programming for youth, manages grant funded projects, implements Early Learning Centers, and coordinates the Summer Reading and Lunch programs. Johnson has a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and a Master's in Library and Information Science. She also serves on the Nixon Center's planning committee for its upcoming conference on censorship, "Outlawed: The Naked Truth about Censored Literature for Young People." Johnson loves working with youth and has a passion for early literacy development, family engagement, and providing community outreach and support. We are delighted to have Kari onboard!



Newly acquired gifts

Twenty-seven boxes of books were delivered to the Center on October 27. There were a total of 731 books in pristine condition for our shelves, thanks to our wonderful benefactor, Michael Cart, author of *My Father's Scar*. A leading expert in young adult literature, Cart regularly reviews for *Booklist*. One of his many commitments is serving on the Nixon Center's Governing Board. Over the past 14 years, he has donated thousands of books to the Center, for which we are ever grateful. Cart will be a featured speaker for the "Outlawed" conference on censorship in April.

We received older edition books (also in pristine condition) from Susan McConnell. Driving to Fresno from Berkeley to visit the Center, Susan brought nearly 550 books from her personal collection. Many of these were signed by the authors and illustrators. *Tar Beach*, by Faith Ringgold; *What Can You Do with a Shoe*, by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers (signed by Maurice Sendak); *The View from Saturday*, by E. L. Konigsburg; and *The Amber Spyglass*, by Philip Pullman, were just a few of the signed copies. McConnell is the Director of Children's Sales & Marketing at Publishers Group West, a book sales and distribution company that represents over 100 independent client publishers. At the "Outlawed" conference, she will give a panel presentation on censorship in the publishing industry based on economic and cultural factors.

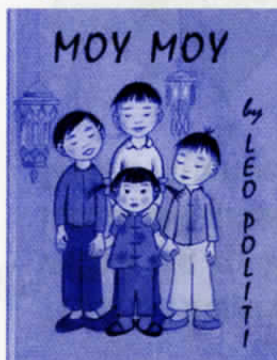
Thanks to both of these generous donors!

Moy Moy in Fresno

The Fresno Art Museum will display artwork from Leo Politi's *Moy Moy* from January 23 through August 30. View the paintings and study prints master storyteller Leo Politi created for *Moy Moy*, a depiction of a traditional Chinese New Year celebration.

Join the Fresno Art Museum's "Chinese New Year with Moy Moy" on Sunday, February 22, from 1:00-4:00 pm. This free

family event includes Lion dancers, dragon dancers, activities for children, and a chance to meet Politi's family, as well as the real Moy Moy (Mary Yan Joe) and her family, the inspiration for Politi's book. Email politifriends@yahoo.com for more information.



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
☐ \$ 50 Advocate membership
☐ \$ 25 Sustaining membership
☐ \$ 10 Student membership
☐ \$ Other amount

Make check payable to Fresno State Foundation.

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Answers to quiz

1 Mexican WhiteBoy, by Matt de la Peña

2 Heather has Two Mommies, by Lesléa Newman

3 The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian,
by Sherman Alexie

4 The Poet Slave of Cuba, by Margarita Engle

5 Fat Angie, by e. E. Charlton-Trujillo



Can you identify the books that begin with these lines?

Q1 "Dressed in a well-worn Billabong tee, camo cargo shorts and a pair of old-school slip-on Vans, Danny Lopez follows his favorite cousin, Sofia, as she rolls up on the cul-de-sac crowd with OG swagger."

Q2 "This is Heather. She lives in a little house with a big apple tree in the front yard and lots of tall grass in the back yard. Heather's favorite number is two."

Q3 "I was born with water on the brain. Okay, so that's not exactly true. I was actually born with too much cerebral spinal fluid inside my skull."



Q4 "My mind is a brush made of feathers painting pictures of words I remember all that I see every syllable each word a twin of itself telling two stories at the same time one of sorrow the other of hope."

Q5 "This was the beginning. Angie bit the end of her thumbnail awaiting the result. She had – unwittingly – found a rival."

(Answers on page 7)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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