



Number 13  
(March 2008)

*"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*

## Secret Garden Party: April 20



ANCA, the Arne Nixon Center Advocates, invites everyone to its sixth annual Secret Garden Party on Sunday, April 20th, from 3 to 5 p.m. The party will be held in a beautiful north Fresno garden, full of shady paths and secret hideaways. The exact location will be revealed to underwriters and ticket holders upon registration. This year's party honors author, librarian, and *Booklist* columnist Michael Cart, who is a major donor to the Arne Nixon Center and a founding member of its Governing Committee. The party theme, "Passions and

Pleasures," is taken from Cart's latest book, *Passions and Pleasures: Essays and Speeches about Literature and Libraries*.

Michael Cart is the country's foremost expert on young adult literature, so it is fitting that this year's entertainment features a group of talented young people—members of the Junior Company of Roger Rocka's Dinner Theatre. The Garden Party will raise funds to buy special rare materials, including five original illustrations by the Caldecott-winning artist, Leonard Weisgard, for his 1949 edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*.

Underwriters are needed; they will receive tickets to the party and acknowledgements in promotional materials. The \$1,000 Sponsor fee includes eight tickets; Patrons, for a \$500 fee, get six tickets; Contributors, for \$250, receive four tickets. Individual tickets are also available for \$50. The garden party is ANCA's major annual fundraising event; all profits benefit the Arne Nixon Center.

For information call (559) 278-5790 or send e-mail to [kelliew@csufresno.edu](mailto:kelliew@csufresno.edu).

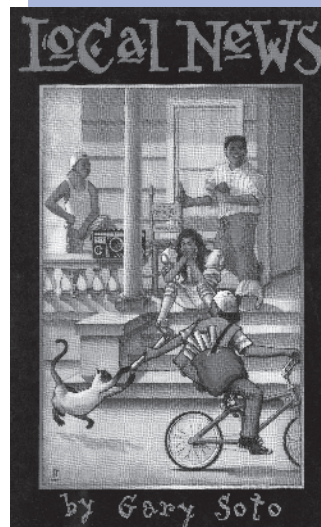
## Gary Soto to speak: May 9

Everyone is invited to hear Fresno native author and poet Gary Soto speak for the Friends of the Madden Library on Friday, May 9th, at the Alice Peters Auditorium on the Fresno State campus. A reception at 6 p.m. will be followed by his talk, "Local News" (the title is based on his book of short stories about growing up in Fresno), at 6:30 p.m.

Soto, the Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UC Riverside, is the author of ten poetry collections for adults, most notably *New and Selected Poems*, a finalist for both the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award and the National Book Award. His poems have appeared in many magazines, including *Ploughshares*, *The Iowa Review*, *Ontario Review*, and *Poetry*. He has won awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the American Education Association, and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation.

The poet is well known, too, as a writer for children and young adults, for titles like *Too Many Tamales*, *Snapshots from the Wedding*, *Baseball in April*, *Novio Boy*, *Cesar Chavez*, *Jesse De La Cruz*, *Mercy on these Teenage Chimps*, *The Afterlife*, and *Chato's Kitchen*, a picture book about a sneaky, "low-riding" barrio cat, which has the dubious distinction of having been banned in Clovis (and later reinstated in the schools there).

Admission is free for members of ANCA or the Friends of the Madden Library; for all others it is \$2. Please reserve a seat by calling Kellie Willis at (559) 278-5790 or via e-mail to [kelliew@csufresno.edu](mailto:kelliew@csufresno.edu).



## Welcome, Mila Rianto!

The Arne Nixon Center welcomes a new Library Assistant, Mila Rianto, who began work in January. Mila joins Angelica Carpenter and Jennifer Crow as the Center's third full-time employee.

Mila was born in Jakarta, Indonesia. She grew up there reading folk and fairy tales in books borrowed from school libraries. At age 19 she moved to Fresno, where she had family. She attended Fresno City College and later UC San Diego, where she earned a bachelor's degree with a double major in cognitive science and international studies.

As a student Mila worked in the Doris Gates Room of the Fresno County Public Library and later at the UC San Diego Library. Prior to joining the Arne Nixon Center, she worked as an administrative assistant at Professional Exchange Services Corporation in Fresno.

Like author Yuyi Morales, Mila credits her fluent English, learned mostly in this country, to "Sesame Street."



## Unpredictable

There is no calendar in this issue of *The Magic Mirror* as future events are somewhat unpredictable. Some time in the coming months, by June at the latest, the Arne Nixon Center (and many other departments) will move out of the South Wing of the Library, clearing it entirely so that the building can be remodeled. At press time it was not clear where staff or books would be housed during the transition period, which is expected to last until January 2009. When all is done, the Arne Nixon Center will move back into the South Wing.

The Center's phone number will remain the same through these changes and staff will be available by e-mail, too. Class visits can be arranged in classrooms, but not in the Library.

The new Library will include a Leo Politi Garden designed by landscape architect Bob Boro. ANCA, the Arne Nixon Center Advocates, raised \$75,000 for the construction of this garden, which will be a tribute to Arne Nixon's dear friend and Fresno's most famous children's author/illustrator. The garden will be located in the space between the new building and the South Wing and will be constructed at the end of the building project and finished in 2009.

We apologize for the inevitable inconveniences that will be caused by the coming changes. We hope you'll join us in anticipation of greatly improved service in a wonderful new Arne Nixon Center in the years to come.



## Tales & Tidbits from ANCA

(Arne Nixon Center Advocates)

by Denise Sciandra, ANCA President

Leo Politi was my friend. I know this because he says so in the note he wrote on the wrapping of the artwork that he brought to Fresno for me. Let me explain.

Professor Arne Nixon invited Leo Politi to Fresno to his literature conferences annually during the 1970s and 1980s. Arne and Leo were a perfect match. They both loved multi-cultural children's literature. Nixon taught at Fresno State. Fresno was Politi's birthplace in 1908.

Politi would bring artwork to sell at those conferences. I had long admired his colorful print of "Three Little Girls in Pink." The year I asked for this print he didn't have it but said that he would bring one the following year. I thanked him thinking that there was little chance that he would remember this conversation. I was wrong. The following year, he arrived with this 21" by 28" print laid out flat and wrapped in brown paper with a note that read in typical Politi style:

"These three Japanese girls in pink is an order from last year and I want to make sure the young lady whom I don't remember the name but is a good friend gets them."

Leo Politi became a beloved Fresno native through these conferences. There was much support to name a Fresno library in his honor.

When Alice F. Reilly, Fresno County Librarian, sent a letter to Politi seeking his approval to name a branch library in his honor, this was his response on January 27, 1974:

"Dear Mrs. Reilly, Please forgive my delay in answering your letter. I feel so honored and grateful for naming one of the Fresno Branch Libraries with my name. Needless to say you are more than welcome to use my name. If there is a space on the wall and you would like me to make a picture I will be happy to do it and donate it to the Library. Thank you again and please give my gratitude and love to everyone responsible for this honor. Very sincerely, Leo Politi."

Politi did "make a picture" for the library. It was a watercolor, 4' by 12', of children reading under a tree and others playing nearby. He brought it to the May 20, 1974, dedication himself in a trailer towed by a car that he drove from Los Angeles. He was 67 years old at the time.

This gentle artist has enriched the lives of many people from Fresno to Los Angeles. I plan to celebrate the centennial anniversary of my friend who was born November 21, 1908. You can, too. Celebrations are listed at [www.leopoliti2008centennial.org](http://www.leopoliti2008centennial.org).

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by Angelica Carpenter

CURATOR'S  
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Linda Joy Singleton lives in her dream house, atop a Sierra foothill east of Stockton. The wrap-around porch offers a 360-degree view of live oaks and rolling hills. Her husband built the house himself, just for her. "I told him that I wanted somewhere for lots of books and lots of animals," she said.

Three dogs and a couple of cats got shooed outside when I arrived. Linda took me upstairs to her airy pink aerie (well, it feels as if you could soar right out the window), where she writes children's and young adult novels. In 20 years she has published 32 books.

Her subjects vary. For *Cheer Squad* she spent four days posing as a coach at a cheerleader camp. "I did the research for this on the Internet," she explained.

She ghost wrote #59 of the Sweet Valley Twins series, about a barnyard. "That was easy," she said. "I had a barnyard!"

She is philosophical about her work. When the editor of her 20th book e-mailed, "We're changing your name and we're changing the series, and I'll be gone for two weeks," Linda remained calm.

"They always send those kinds of e-mails late Friday afternoon," she said. Nothing discourages this hard-working writer, whose red curls bounce when she talks. She was celebrating the fact that her first hardback would soon be published: *Into the Mirror*, a mystery about a foster child who discovers secrets about her past.

Linda and I met through the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. "Come see my collection," she had urged, and now, proudly, she showed me her library. On the custom-built shelves were 5,000 girls' series books, arranged, mostly, by the names of their heroines. Many series authors use pseudonyms, Linda explained; often the author changes, but the series continues. She collects series ephemera, too: games, dolls, t-shirts, jewelry, perfume, lunch boxes, and tea sets.

"I started with Judy Bolton," she said. "When I was thirteen, I wrote a fan letter to Margaret Sutton and she wrote back!" Linda treasures this letter, and others from Sutton, written over the years as Linda grew up and the two became friends.

Linda's collection grew, too, to include Trixie Beldon, Nancy Drew, Ginny Gordon, American Girls, Dorothy Dainty, The Babysitters Club, Beverly Gray, and Patty Fairfield. I collect Patty books, too—different editions from Linda's. I was thrilled to find a Patty illustration that I had never seen before.

In 1985 a group of Judy Bolton fans formed the Society of Phantom Friends and Linda soon joined. Later the organization expanded its scope to cover all girls' fiction, with an emphasis on series books. The Phantom Friends meet via their newsletter, *The Whispered Watchword*, or online, or in person at sites related to their favorite books, and they have helped to publish a reference book, *The Girls Series Companion*. Their Web site is [www.nancydrewsleuth.com](http://www.nancydrewsleuth.com).

I am pleased to report that Linda is donating her papers to the Arne Nixon Center. I left with a car full of boxes, a head full of new knowledge about girls' series books, and a heart full of admiration for this talented author.



Author Linda Joy Singleton

You go, girls!



# ★ Munchkin Stars (or, A walk on the Walk of Fame) ★

by Angelica Carpenter

As president of the International Wizard of Oz Club, I get invited to some fascinating events. Last November I went to one of the glitziest; my husband, Richard, and I joined Oz fans in Hollywood to see the Munchkins get a star on the Walk of Fame.

The surviving actors who played Munchkins in the 1939 MGM movie "The Wizard of Oz" are now in their 80s and 90s. Margaret Pellegrini, Jerry Maren, Meinhardt Raabe, Clarence Swenson, Karl Slover, Mickey Carroll, and Ruth Duccini have appeared at many Oz events, but none so exciting or rewarding as this one when, collectively, the 124-member cast of Munchkin Land was awarded a star on Hollywood Boulevard.

The celebration began November 19th in the lobby of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. Here the Munchkins were interviewed for "Entertainment Tonight" and photographed with VIP guests like Robert Baum, the great-grandson of Oz author L. Frank Baum; Judy Garland's son Joe Luft; and Judy's Hollywood co-stars, Margaret O'Brien ("Meet Me in St. Louis") and Ann Rutherford (the "Andy Hardy" films).

Soon the party adjourned across Hollywood Boulevard to Grauman's Chinese Theatre, where the movie originally premiered. The courtyard, famous for its handprints of the stars, was filled with paparazzi. Searchlights arced through the night sky and cameras fed live footage over the worldwide Web. No red carpet for these stars, however; a custom-made Yellow Brick Road was roped off to form a grand entrance for the famous little people.

Inside that fabulous theatre, we enjoyed reminiscences from the actors and Meinhardt's traditional speech: "As Coroner, I must aver, I've thoroughly examined her..." and then we settled down to watch a special, restored version of our favorite movie, which was interrupted occasionally by cheers.

*Grauman's Chinese Theatre, complete with paparazzi*



head hitched to a flower-bedecked carriage. It was the "Horse of a Different Color you've heard tell about!" Like the horse in the movie, it had been temporarily dyed with purple Jell-O. One by one the seven stars arrived, each with an entourage of family and friends. Three wore costumes replicating their Munchkin characters. They were helped, with some difficulty, into the tall carriage.



*Margaret Pellegrini and Angelica Carpenter  
(and part of the Horse of a Different Color)*

The marching band from Hollywood High School stepped into formation and led the way back to Grauman's, playing, of course, "We're Off to See the Wizard." A huge crowd cheered and there were more photographers than before. Then Johnny Grant, the honorary mayor of Hollywood (who, sadly, has since passed away) presided over the star ceremony.

Captured by all those news crews, the image of seven elderly Munchkins soon appeared on front pages and on television around the world.

Meanwhile, back in Hollywood, we returned to the Roosevelt for a luncheon that was held in the room where the first Academy Awards were presented. On this day it was filled with green glowing tables and an immense Emerald City backdrop.

The Munchkins have introduced countless people to the Land of Oz. Ted Bulthaupt of Hollywood Blvd. Cinema in Woodland, Illinois, led the effort to reward them by getting 50,000 fan signatures and letters of support from people like Ted Turner, Stephen Spielberg, George Lucas, Hugh Hefner, and even me! This star was much appreciated by the actors and their fans, like me!



## Tenth anniversary party

The Arne Nixon Center celebrated the tenth anniversary of its founding on Friday, December 7th, at a Library party sponsored by ANCA, the Arne Nixon Center Advocates. After a champagne reception, 75 guests were welcomed by Library Dean Peter McDonald and University President John Welty. ANCA President Denise Sciandra asked other ANCA board members present to introduce themselves and to tell how they came to be involved with the Arne Nixon Center.

The program had a Dickensian feel as Denise spoke about the past, showing historical slides of Arne Nixon and some of the famous authors and illustrators he hosted in Fresno; Angelica Carpenter spoke of the present, highlighting recent publications based on research done in the Center and the Center's special collections; and Marcie Morrison, the Library's Director of Development, pictured the Center's future, showing slides of the new Library, inside and out, and mosaics to be included in the Leo Politi Garden, which ANCA funds will build outside the new Library.



Above: 10th anniversary party-goes in December. Because wood is the traditional gift for a tenth anniversary occasion, Pinocchio was featured on party invitations and in the event program.



Left: Bette Petersen and Gerry Hughes

Right: Library Dean Peter McDonald, Director of Library Development Marcie Morrison, Sandy Stubblefield, and Fresno State President John Welty



## The football version of "No Child Left Behind"

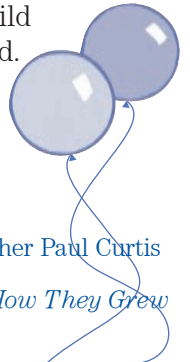
*[This document has been posted widely on the Internet. We don't know who wrote it, but whoever it is, we salute you!]*

1. All teams must make the state playoffs, and all will win the championship. If a team does not win the championship, they will be on probation until they are the champions, and coaches will be held accountable.
2. All kids will be expected to have the same football skills at the same time. No exceptions will be made for interest in football, a desire to perform athletically, or genetic abilities or disabilities. ALL KIDS WILL PLAY FOOTBALL AT A PROFICIENT LEVEL.
3. Talented players will be asked to work out on their own without instruction. This is because the coaches will be using all their instructional time with the athletes who aren't interested in football, or have limited athletic ability or whose parents don't like football.
4. Games will be played year round, but statistics will only be kept in the 4th, 8th and 11th games.
5. This will create a New Age of sports where every school is expected to have the same level of talent and all teams will reach the same minimal goals. If no child gets ahead, then no child will be left behind.



### Answers to quiz:

- 1 *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- 2 *Five Little Peppers and How They Grew* by Margaret Sidney
- 3 *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick
- 4 *A Long Way from Chicago* by Richard Peck



Above: ANCA board member Cynthia MacDonald and the Arne Nixon Center's Jennifer Crow

Photos by Howard Watkins



# Alice in the Arne Nixon Center

by Kang Hoon Lee, Ph.D.

*Dr. Kang Hoon Lee was a visiting scholar in the Arne Nixon Center from September through November, 2007.*

In her article “Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?,” Ursula K. Le Guin wrote, “It is by such statements as, ‘Once upon a time there was a dragon,’ or ‘In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit,’—it is by such beautiful non-facts that we fantastic human beings may arrive at the truth.” Back in the 1980s in Korea, in a literature class, a student asked, “What help is it to study literature when you are in poverty?” And the answer from the professor was that you could at least forget hunger by reading books. Well...my answer now is that love for beauty, art, and imagination is an innate quality of all human beings and that Le Guin was absolutely right.

If the pursuit and enjoyment of beauty, art, and imagination are important, regardless of outer reality, then cultivating such interests in the young is essential, and even a duty, for teachers and parents. Reading books helps people develop a healthy state of mind and it serves as a basis for a healthy society. This is why children’s literature is important. Who knows if a well-read child in our class will be a great writer or artist someday? In some cases the childhood experience of reading affects a person’s whole intellectual and emotional life.

When I was ten years old, I read Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* translated into Korean. Some images and linguistic expressions in it were so interesting (sometimes so weird) that they remained vividly in my mind, influencing my interest in language and literature later on. After I got a Ph.D. in literature, I started to study the *Alice* books.

Children’s literature is taken lightly in Korea. There are not many scholarly studies of the subject, and not many reference books, of course. I contacted the LCSNA (Lewis Carroll Society of North America) about studying in America. They put me in touch with the Arne Nixon Center, which is famous for the study of children’s literature and which has a large collection of books on Lewis Carroll. The Center graciously invited me to study in Fresno.

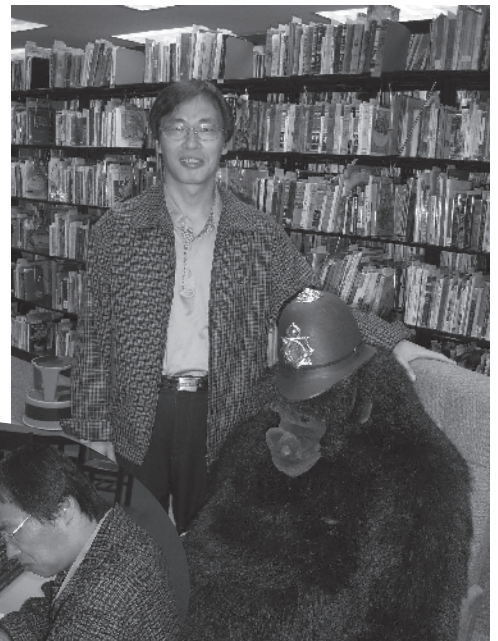
When you enter the Center, Koko, the big black gorilla [a life-sized, stuffed toy gorilla, representing a real gorilla featured in children’s books], guards the treasure trove of books and checks to see if you are a children’s book lover. Then you get a warm-hearted welcome from the staff. What impressed me most was not only the collection, but also the staff’s enthusiasm to improve education about children’s literature. They have meetings, seminars, and conferences on children’s literature all year

round. These events actually help to guide the way to children’s imaginations through books. The staff makes catalogues, offers theoretical guidance, invites authors, illustrators, and scholars to participate, and provides the public with helpful information and guidance.

Good hardware is useless without good software to match. It’s not just the books that make the Arne Nixon Center so excellent; it is the people running it. They, especially Curator Angelica Carpenter and Library Assistant Jennifer Crow, did their best to help me with finding, reading, and making lists of books, and with other personal needs, like buying a suitcase to fill with books to take home with me. Angelica Carpenter, who is a board member of the LCSNA, gave me important information on Lewis Carroll and the *Alice* books and we discussed other children’s literature topics, too. Her knowledge and information were invaluable for the book I am preparing.

Back in Korea, reading my books, memories of the Arne Nixon Center flash upon me. I feel like Wordsworth, on his couch, enjoying happy memories in his “daffodil” poem. I think that the best way to repay the staff for their hospitality is to write a good book and to help others to understand the true value of children’s literature. When you visit the Arne Nixon Center, three years from now, I hope that you will find my contribution to the Center on a book shelf there. Oh, this reminds me. Do you like cats? Interested in cat books? Then you must visit the Arne Nixon Center for its collection of 6,000 cat books. But you cannot find mouse books on the same shelf with cat books!

*Dr. Lee and Koko*



*Dr. Lee takes notes*

# Margarita Engle wins Pura Belpré award

Congratulations to Margarita Engle, who recently donated her papers to the Arne Nixon Center. This Cuban-American author, who lives nearby in Clovis, has garnered several major awards for her 2006 book, *The Poet Slave of Cuba*. She traveled to Toronto to accept the International Reading Association's Children's Book Award for non-fiction for young adults, to New York when the National Council of Teachers of English proclaimed her book a Notable Book in the Language Arts, and to Washington, D.C., to accept the Américas Award given by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs, coordinated by the University of Wisconsin and the Hispanic section of the Library of Congress.

The Américas Award is given to both the author and the illustrator. It was at the Library of Congress where Margarita first met her illustrator, Sean Qualls. Like her, he is a rising star in children's literature. Sean gave a piece of original art from the book to the Center and Margarita bought and donated two additional illustrations.

Margarita was at home with her family on the evening of Sunday, January 13, 2008, when the telephone rang. It was the Pura Belpré Committee of the American Library Association, calling to tell her that she had won the Pura Belpré Award. This goes to a Latino/Latina writer whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino Cultural Experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. It is presented every two years (Margarita had forgotten this, and had thought that awards for 2006 books were all over), so her 2006 book won one more big prize in 2008.

"I cried, of course," she said. "I could hear the whole committee there, on the speaker phone. They were all yelling 'Congratulations!'"

Her next book, *The Surrender Tree*, to be published in April, was discovered in Margarita's work as a botanist. It tells the story of Rosa la Bayamesa, a Cuban woman born in slavery and freed during Cuba's first war with Spain, in 1868. At that time planters freed their slaves so that planters and slaves could fight the Spanish together. Rosa la Bayamesa became a nurse, healing fighters from both sides with native plants and hiding them in tropical jungles and caves.

photo by  
Marshall W. Johnson



Margarita Engle and the book cover  
artwork she's donating to the Arne Nixon Center

## 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.)

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# Can you identify book titles from these first lines?

(Answers on page 5)

Q1

Here we go again. We were all standing in line waiting for breakfast when one of the caseworkers came in and tap-tap-tapped down the line. Uh-oh, this meant bad news, either they'd found a foster home for somebody or somebody was about to get paddled.

Q2

The little old kitchen had quieted down from the bustle and confusion of midday; and now, with its afternoon manners on, presented a holiday aspect that, as the principal room in the brown house, it was eminently proper it should have.

Q3

The story I am about to share with you takes place in 1931, under the roofs of Paris.

Q4

It was always August when we spent a week with our grandma.  
I was Joey then, not Joe: Joey Dowdel, and my sister was Mary Alice.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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