



Number 16

(September 2009)

"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

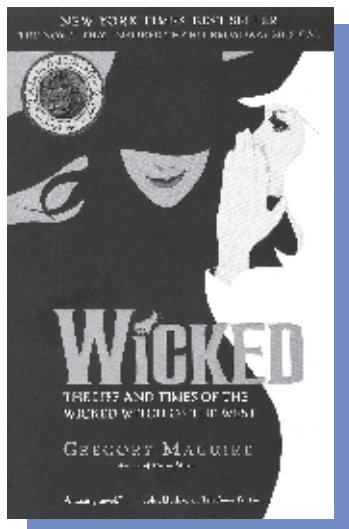
Follow the Yellow Brick Road to Fresno!

The Arne Nixon Center and The International Wizard of Oz Club (www.ozclub.org) invite everyone to a national Oz conference, "Oz: The Books," May 14–16, 2010, on the Fresno State campus. Featured speakers will include Gregory Maguire, author of *Wicked*; Michael Patrick Hearn, author of *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*; John Fricke, co-author of *The Wizard of Oz: An Illustrated Companion to the Timeless Movie Classic*; Kathleen Krull, author of *The Road to Oz: Twists, Bumps, and Triumphs in the Life of L. Frank Baum*; and graphic novelist Eric Shanower, author/artist of *Adventures in Oz*.

The conference will feature a musical, "Time Again in Oz," produced by the Fresno State Theatre Arts Department and directed by J. Daniel Herring. Playwright Susan L. Zeder, who based this play on the third Oz book, *Ozma of Oz*, will also be a speaker. The Henry Madden Library will offer Oz exhibits and a Special Collections exhibit on the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. This world's fair attracted Oz creator L. Frank Baum and artist W.W. Denslow to Chicago, where they later formed a partnership to write and illustrate children's books.

ANCA, the Arne Nixon Center Advocates, will sponsor the conference reception. The Fresno Metropolitan Museum will offer a special Ozzy exhibition. Other community

sponsors include Fresno Pacific University and The Fresno County Public Library. Planning is still underway; some projects are dependant on the future generosity of donors. As plans progress, information will be posted on the Center's web site at www.arnenixoncenter.org. The spring *Magic Mirror* will include a schedule and a registration form.



Margarita Engle to speak September 25

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with author Margarita Engle at the annual meeting of ANCA, the Arne Nixon Center Advocates. The meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, September 25, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno, where ANCA members and others will be the special guests of the Norelma Walker Youth Library. The church is located at 2672 East Alluvial Avenue (just west of Willow), Clovis, California.



Following a reception at 6:00 p.m., the program will begin at 6:45 p.m.. The author's PowerPoint presentation, "Finding the Poetry in History," will include family pictures.

Margarita Engle, who lives in Clovis, is the Cuban-American author of three novels, written in free verse, for young people:

- *The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano*, won the Pura Belpré Award, the Americas Award, and many other national awards.



- *The Surrender Tree*, about a freed slave who treated the wounded from both sides in Cuba's 19th-century struggle for independence, won the Pura Belpré Award, and the Americas Award, and it is a 2009 Newbery Honor book.

- *Tropical Secrets: Holocaust Refugees in Cuba*, published in April 2009, is already winning rave reviews.

The program, to be emceed by ANCA president Denise Sciandra, will include a brief business meeting and a presentation of Jane Addams Award-winning books to the Arne Nixon Center by community activist Ellie Bluestein. The Jane Addams Children's Book Award is a national award, given

(See Engle, page 2)

Our new library opens!

On February 19, the Henry Madden Library reopened its doors after almost two years of being closed to the public. In the first month, thousands of people toured the Library, which has eight acres of interior space. Many visited the new Arne Nixon Center, on the third floor of the South Wing. Huge windows in the Center's reading room and workroom overlook the campus and, on good air days, the snow-covered peaks of the Sierra Nevada.

The Center's new space has received rave reviews from visitors, patrons, and staff. People literally gasp when they see the stacks. One frequent comment has been, "Now it looks like a world-class children's literature collection!" or words to that effect. The staff has spent the summer unpacking boxes from storage and deciding on permanent homes for different parts of the collection. At press time, some signage and furniture was still to be installed. With the building done, work will begin soon on the ANCA-funded Leo Politi Garden, to be built on the east side, between the two wings. Readers are most cordially invited to visit.



Engle, from front page

annually by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Jane Addams Peace Association to the children's book that most effectively promotes the cause of peace, social justice, world community, and the equality of the sexes and all races, as well as meeting conventional standards for excellence. *The Surrender Tree* won for 2009.

Margarita Engle has donated her papers to the Arne Nixon Center and she has also donated original art, by Sean Qualls, from *The Poet Slave of Cuba*. These materials will be displayed at the program. The author's books will be available for sale and autographing.

There is no admission charge for this event. Reservations are required by sending email to mrianto@csufresno.edu or by calling (559) 278-8116.



Tales & Tidbits from ANCA

(Arne Nixon Center Advocates)

by Denise Sciandra, ANCA President

I have dreamed of having the Beatrix Potter Society meet at the Arne Nixon Center. In 2005, I started campaigning with the Society to come to Fresno. Even though I told them all about the wonderfulness of the Arne Nixon Center, that the Center was experienced at hosting conferences, and that other literary societies had already visited, they were uncertain. By 2008, they agreed to a "Celebrate Beatrix Potter" conference that was held in April.

Since 2009 was the one time the Society would be coming to Fresno, I was determined that the conference would be successful. I committed to giving a 45-minute PowerPoint presentation, housing two speakers from England, and hosting dinner for fifteen. That was in addition to my usual involvement with planning, organization, and publicity.

I thought that I'd be a little bit insane before the weekend was over (I was), that I had overcommitted myself (I did), and that I would find the weekend very satisfying (I did).

Often, it is the seemingly unimportant details that create lingering memories. I'm picturing Emma Laws and Liz MacFarlane pulling back the blankets on their beds in the guest bedroom to show off the Peter Rabbit sheets to Selwyn Goodacre—and Betsy Bray capturing the scene with her camera.

At that moment, I shared with them the story of how my son Aaron had unknowingly completed my two sets of sheets just two weeks earlier. He called to say that he had purchased some Peter Rabbit fabric at an antique store and that he would make me anything I wanted from it. He said, "It looks like a sheet." I said, "If it's twin size, mail it to me right away." Not only was it a twin, it matched the bottom sheet I already had!

And then there was my friend Nancy Hatcher. As I was leaving the campus on Saturday, I walked out with her. She noted that I could go home and put my feet up. I explained that I was going home to help my husband Sal prepare dinner for fifteen people. She immediately and emphatically said, "You need help! What time shall I be there?" Nancy was a huge help. I probably got to bed two hours earlier because of her.

Following the conference, I received an e-mail from Judy Taylor, outgoing chairman of the Society. In it she said, "Congratulations on your persistence. It was an excellent meeting."

Maybe next time I propose something to the Society, it will take them only a year to agree to my suggestion.

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by Angelica Carpenter

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Books are donated to the Arne Nixon Center from many sources. Publishers send review copies of their newest titles. Some relationships with publishers date back to the time when Professor Arne Nixon attended international library and reading conferences, pulling a cart full of books behind him and waiting in long lines to get them autographed. The Center continues his tradition of showcasing new books for teachers and librarians, and of inviting the authors and illustrators to speak in Fresno.

Other books come from libraries. The public libraries in Berkeley, Los Gatos, Napa, Oakland, Richmond, and San Francisco have donated thousands that are too outdated, fragile, or politically incorrect for their use. Some librarians, whose libraries are not mentioned above, risked getting in trouble by sending these books to the Arne Nixon Center instead of selling them for next to nothing at a library book sale.

Ex-library books are controversial in a children's literature collection. We use them as place holders until better editions can be acquired. Amazingly, replacement volumes have arrived, from collectors like Reed Bilz, Michael Cart, Linda Park Cassady, Denise Sciandra, Michael Gorman, Pamela Harer, Don and Carol Larson, Blossom Norman, and Mary Purucker.

Other books come from their authors. Karen Cushman, Lois Duncan, Sylvia Engdahl, Margarita Engle, Steve Mooser, Shirley R. Murphy, and Tamora Pierce have all sent books. Susan Cooper sent 32 foreign language editions, saying that she was glad to get them out of her basement.

It's always interesting to know why people give books. Lorraine Bennett attended the Katherine Paterson lecture this spring and was so impressed that she donated four boxes of her childhood books, from the 1930s, and some of her father's childhood books, too.

Ramona Frasher, a professor of children's literature from Florida, offered a collection of 387 paperbacks from China to the Baldwin Collection at the University of Florida. The Baldwin does not collect in Chinese, but Curator Rita Smith knew that the Arne Nixon Center did, and she referred this gift to Fresno.

Rosalie Pratt, who lives in Australia, met a librarian who knew me from the American Library Association. After some correspondence, Rosalie donated 131 children's books from Australia and England this year. She even paid for the shipping, which is very expensive.

Some books come after their owner dies, given by the heirs. It pleases these donors to know that a library values the books collected by their loved ones.

What do we do with duplicates? Sometimes we keep them—titles by authors affiliated with the Center, for example—but we can't keep them all. Unusual books are offered to other children's literature collections and they often reciprocate. Newer titles are offered first to the Teacher Resource Center, a circulating collection in this Library, then to local teachers and children's librarians.

The Center's collection development policy, viewable on our web site, outlines the kinds of books we hope to acquire. The web site also has a wish list of specific titles, but surprises are nice, too. Major donations, like the 6,000 books in the Helen Monnette Amestoy Collection of Books on Cats, can take us in a welcome new direction.

Whoever the donors are—publishers, libraries, or private donors—they all say the same thing, "I'm so glad that there is a collection like this in California!" And when the boxes arrive, and we open them, it's like Christmas, or maybe Christmas in Australia, when the temperature in Fresno is 108°.



Fresno State ceramics student Abiam L. Alvarez and the mugs he created using Alik's design.

Alik donates art

Artist/author Alik, aka the Arne Nixon Center's fairy godmother of art, has donated 21 pieces of original art—as much art as she would have done for a picture book. Alik created special cat-themed illustrations for the Center's web site, to match categories there. Then she donated the actual art: charming pictures, on paper, done in pen and ink, colored crayons, markers, and watercolor pens—"whatever I needed," she explained, "to keep the sketches free."

To thank Alik, the Center commissioned Fresno State ceramics student Abiam L. Alvarez to craft a two-handled mug, using Alik's design. He made two, just in case. Both of these, wrapped carefully, made it safely to Alik's home in London and the good news is, she liked them! The Center's cup runneth over with gratitude for Alik's wonderful donation.



Answers to quiz:

- 1 *The Surrender Tree* by Margarita Engle
- 2 *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer
- 3 *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling
- 4 *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle

Volunteers needed!

The Arne Nixon Center needs volunteers to:

- Cover dust jackets with mylar
- Make boxes for fragile materials
- Process donations
- Work on special projects

Volunteers work three to four hours a week, although other schedules may be arranged. Training is provided. Please call the Center at (559) 278-8116 to volunteer.



Anne Moore making boxes for the Arne Nixon Center.

Join us!

2009: September 25

*ANCA Annual Meeting,
Unitarian Universalist Church,
6:00 p.m.*

2010: February 11

*Tea for ANCA Life Members,
3:00–5:00 p.m.*

April 11

Secret Garden Party, 3:00–5:00 p.m.

May 14–16

*"Oz: The Books!" national conference,
Fresno State campus*

Beatrix Potter Conference

by Denise Sciandra

For the first time in its 29-year history, the London-based Beatrix Potter Society came to California for a conference. And what a conference it was! There was something for everyone, from talks to a play to a garden party.

The conference was held from April 17–19 on the Fresno State campus. The weekend began on Friday evening with a reception honoring ANCA Life Members. That was followed by a mesmerizing talk by celebrated author Katherine Paterson, whose “Stories of our lives” had the audience laughing at times and teary-eyed at others. Many were surprised to learn that Paterson’s best known story, *Bridge to Terabithia*, was written as a response to the death of her son’s childhood girl friend.

Four speakers came from England. Judy Taylor, author and outgoing chairman of the Society, entertained the audience with her talk, “Where did Jemima and her friends come from?” One conclusion that caused a titter in the audience was that Mr. Puddle-duck has two wives, Jemima and Rebeccah. Although Potter is not widely known for her humor, Selwyn Goodacre, a Beatrix Potter expert, gave a talk titled “The humour in the little books of Beatrix Potter.” Emma Laws, Frederick Warne Curator of Children’s Literature at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Liz Hunter MacFarlane, House and Collections Manager for the Hawkshead and Beatrix Potter Property of The National Trust, jointly presented a talk about Beatrix’s brother Bertram, “The art of Bertram Potter.” They noted that were it not for his connection with Beatrix, his work would undoubtedly not be the subject of a lecture in California.

Denise Sciandra, ANCA president and Beatrix Potter Society member, gave a PowerPoint presentation, “View from the top of the stairs: Beatrix Potter, an early preservationist.” In it, Sciandra gave a history of Potter’s life



Conference speakers Judy Taylor, Selwyn Goodacre, Betsy Bray, and Dale Schafer.

in nature and showed many beautiful scenes from some of the more than four thousand acres of land that Beatrix Potter placed into The National Trust.

J. Daniel Herring directed a play, “The Tale of Jemima Puddle-duck,” that had been adapted from Beatrix Potter’s story by Katherine Paterson, Stephanie Tolan, and Steve Liebman. It was produced by Fresno State Theatre for Young Audiences and the actors were all students from the university. The simple, yet clever, set and costuming were very effective.

The grand finale was the annual Secret Garden Party held in Mr. McGregor’s garden in Old Fig Garden (see story on page 6). Beatrix Potter herself, portrayed by Scotswoman Linda Spalding, and Peter Rabbit were present. Dan Pessano brought several of his Good Company Players who sang songs from “The Wiz.”

Both ANCA members and Society members raved about what a good time they had these three days. New friends were made. Old friends got reacquainted. Both ANCA and the Society gained new members.

In its July newsletter, the Beatrix Potter Society chairman, Rowena Godfrey, noted that the Fresno conference was “an outstanding success.” Darlene Atkins, who wrote about the events on Friday, said, “What a weekend was in store ...!” Anadel Law’s closing comment was, “A million thanks to Dale Schafer, Denise Sciandra, and Angelica Carpenter, who masterminded this delightful and informative weekend!”



Director J. Daniel Herring (left, standing) with the “Jemima Puddle-duck” cast and Katherine Paterson (seated at far right).

ANCA hosts Beatrix Potter Secret Garden Party

ANCA, the Arne Nixon Center Advocates, hosted a record-breaking crowd of 215 at their seventh annual Secret Garden Party on April 19. The Beatrix Potter-themed event was held, appropriately, in Mr. McGregor's garden—the lovely formal garden of John, Rebecca, and Katharine McGregor, in Fresno's Old Fig Garden neighborhood. Master Gardeners Jessie Ciancetti, Mary Perez Dong, Sue Kendall, and Sharon Matson welcomed party-goers with information about the beautiful flowers and plants. The guests, including people who had attended the Beatrix Potter conference earlier in the weekend, came from all over California, from nine other states, from England, and from Fresno, of course.



Rebecca and Katharine McGregor.

A jolly good time was had by all.

Special guests included officers of the British based Beatrix Potter Society; Beatrix Potter herself, as played by Linda Spalding; and Peter Rabbit, aka Milford Miles, wearing a warm, furry costume provided by Petunia's Place bookstore. Warm was the key word as the afternoon high reached 92 degrees Fahrenheit, tying an all-time

record for the date. Iced lemonade and champagne helped to keep things cool as Event Chair Cynthia MacDonald welcomed guests. ANCA President Denise Sciandra then introduced President John Welty, Library Dean Peter McDonald, and director Dan Pessano, who presented five performers from Roger Rocka's Dinner Theatre, singing selections from their upcoming musical "The Wiz." Howard Watkins was the event photographer; his pictures can be seen at www.arnenixoncenter.org.

The party brought in \$20,000 in sponsorships. Funds raised, which are essential in this year of ongoing budget crises, will be used to supplement the Arne Nixon Center's programs and collection.



Sharon Rossi



The cast of "The Wiz" from Roger Rocka's Dinner Theatre performed at the party.



Bette Peterson (far left) and Grace Pengilly (far right) with friends.



Dale Shafer (on the left) and her twin, Joyce Miller.

It's electric!

On an effort to save resources, both financial and ecological, the university is encouraging all departments to move from paper to electronic formats.

Electronic versions of past issues of this newsletter are currently available at www.arnenixoncenter.org under "Publications." If you would like to receive electronic issues as they are published, please send e-mail to mrianto@csufresno.edu, and please remember to notify the Center if your e-mail address changes. The paper version will remain available for those who prefer it.

Past newsletters have included the names of donors who gave either money or materials. These names will now be published on the web site, as donations are received, but they will no longer be included in *The Magic Mirror*. Thanks to all our donors for bearing with us through these changes. Your gifts mean more than ever in a year of budget crises.



Christy Hicks, Rosemary Lawrence, Pat Bird, and Terri Monson.



Peter Rabbit and friends.

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 CSUF Foundation.

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Can you identify book titles from these first lines?

(Answers on page 4)

Q¹ Some people call me a child-witch,
but I'm just a girl who likes to watch
the hands of the women
as they gather wild herbs and flowers
to heal the sick.

Q² I'd never given much thought as to how I would die—though I'd had reason enough
in the last few months—but even if I had, I would not have imagined it like this.

Q³ It was seven o'clock of a very warm evening in the Seeonee Hills when
Father Wolf woke up from his day's rest, scratched himself, yawned, and spread
out his paws one after the other to get rid of the sleepy feeling in their tips.

Q⁴ It was a dark and stormy night.

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