

THE MAGIC MIRROR

Number 14
(September 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

Wowie! Meowie!

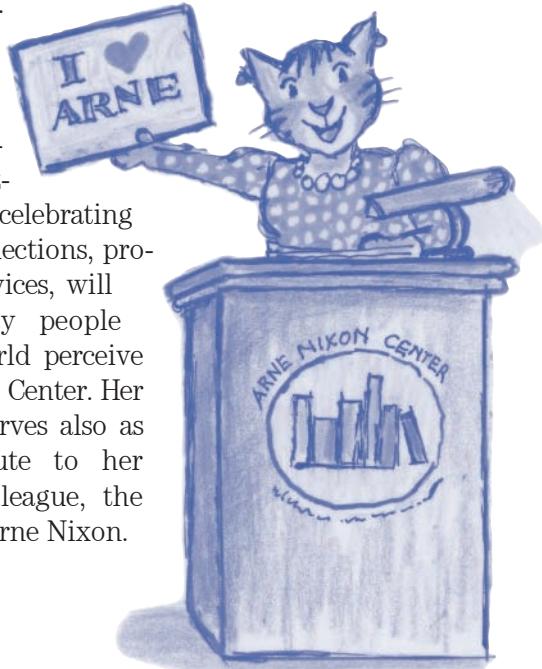


Thanks to award-winning author/artist Aliki for her latest, greatest, most amazing gift to the Arne Nixon Center: 21 pieces of original art for the Center's web site. These colorful pictures feature dozens of charming and playful cats, plus a few birds and mice, too, as only Aliki can portray them—writing, painting, partying, working, and reading, reading, and reading some more. The cats, who were born in Aliki's London studio, will soon have an American address at www.arnenixoncenter.org.

Aliki has donated six of these paintings to the Center, where they may be seen with other original art from three of her picture books, donated in 2005. A finding aid to her works in the Center may be found on the web site.

Aliki, who has written and/or illustrated more than 200 books, worked on the cat pictures between other projects, including her forthcoming picture book, *Push Button*. This features a little boy, based on her toddler grandson, who loves to push buttons. When his finger gets tired, he finds another way to amuse himself (hint: it involves books).

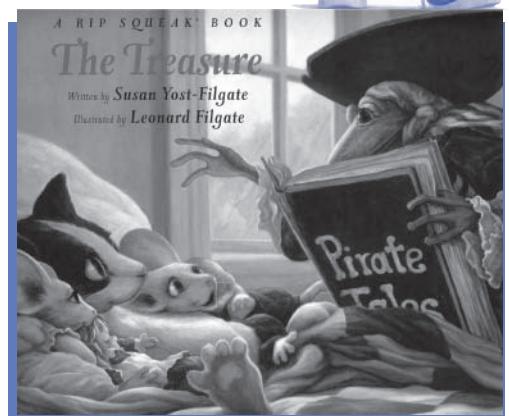
Thanks to Aliki for this generous and artistic donation. Her dazzling pictures, celebrating the Center's collections, programs, and services, will shape the way people around the world perceive the Arne Nixon Center. Her beautiful art serves also as a fitting tribute to her friend and colleague, the late Professor Arne Nixon.



There's a new mouse in town!

ANCA, the Arne Nixon Center Advocates, invite everyone to their annual meeting, to be held Friday, October 24, at The Smitcamp Alumni House, 2625 East Matoian Way (enter from Shaw and Maple, then turn right) on the Fresno State campus. A reception will be held at 6 p.m., followed by a talk at 6:30 p.m. Free parking is available in Lots C and V.

The speaker will be author Susan Yost-Filgate, co-creator of the *Rip Squeak*® series, which she and her husband, illustrator Leonard Filgate, began in 1997. These picture books feature Rip Squeak, an adventurous mouse, his sister Jesse, and their friends, Abbey the kitten and Euripides the frog. The Filgates, who moved to



Fresno three years ago, first sold their books through a German publisher who exhibited them at the Frankfurt Book Fair, where they were discovered by an American publisher. Now the books, art prints, and numerous products are sold in bookstores throughout the U.S. and at Rip Squeak Galleries in Carmel, Monterey, San Diego, and San Francisco, California, and Lahaina, Hawaii. Plans to open additional galleries in other locations are in the works. The books and galleries have proved so successful that the Filgates have recruited additional artists and writers to help with production. For more information, see the web site at www.ripsqueak.com.

The original three *Rip Squeak* books will be available for sale and autographing at this event. Admission is free, but seating is limited. Please call (559) 278-8116 or send e-mail to mrianto@csufresno.edu to make a reservation.

Eric Shanower bookplate honors Michael Cart

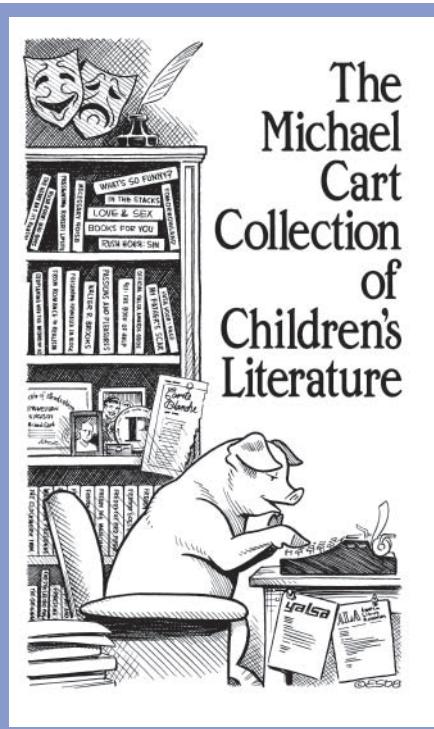
Thanks to Eric Shanower (below) for designing a bookplate to honor his friend Michael Cart. Shanower is the award-winning author and illustrator of *The Age of Bronze* series of graphic novels: *A Thousand Ships*, *Sacrifice*, and *Betrayal*. He is known also for his graphic Oz novels, including *Adventures in Oz*, a 2007 compilation. His web site is www.ericshanower.com.



Michael Cart, a founding member of the Arne Nixon Center's Governing Committee, is a well-known author, librarian, lecturer, book reviewer, and columnist, and he is the country's leading expert on young adult literature. As director of the Beverly Hills Public Library he hosted a television author interview series, "In Print." As president of YALSA, the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library

Association, he led that organization to establish the Printz Award for young adult literature. In an ongoing donation, he is giving his papers and his extensive book collection to the Arne Nixon Center. The plates will be added to the 9,200 books he has given to date, and to other books as he donates them.

The bookplate features Cart's favorite literary character, Freddy the Pig, based on Kurt Wiese's illustrations for the series by Walter R. Brooks. Freddy is shown typing in front of a bookcase filled with the books written by Michael Cart. It's a fitting gift from a proud member of The Friends of Freddy (Eric Shanower) to the past president (Michael Cart) of that illustrious group.



Tales & Tidbits from ANCA

(Arne Nixon Center Advocates)

by Denise Sciandra, ANCA President

"My dear Freda [Moore], Because you are fond of fairy-tales and have been ill, I have made you a story all for yourself—a new one that nobody has read before. And the queerest thing about it—is that I heard it in Gloucestershire, and it is true! At least about the tailor, the waistcoat, and the 'No more twist'. —Beatrix Potter, Christmas, 1901.

"In the time of swords and periwigs and full-skirted coats with flowered lappets—when gentlemen wore ruffles, and gold-laced waistcoats of paduasoy and taffeta—there lived a tailor in Gloucester."

So begins Beatrix Potter's *The Tailor of Gloucester*. Not the typical opening to a tale written for children. Potter enjoyed words and did not talk down to children.

It's my favorite of Potter's 23 tales and was her favorite, too. Perhaps we like it because it combines so many beautiful elements in the illustrations such as fine china, textiles, and elegant fashion.

It's a charming and humorous tale set in Gloucester at Christmastime. The tailor has been commissioned to make a waistcoat for the mayor for his wedding day on Christmas Eve but runs out of twist for the buttonholes and falls very ill before it is completed. His cat, Simpkin, could be helpful if he weren't so concerned about trapping mice for himself.

The waistcoat is completed. "The stitches of those button-holes were so small—so small—they looked as if they had been made by mice."

I have long wanted to visit Gloucester where this tale is set and the opportunity presented itself.

I was in England for the Beatrix Potter Society's 13th biennial study conference held in Cornwall, Devon, and the Lake District. With Connie Neumann, also on the tour, my travel companion, Linda Spalding, and I had the opportunity to make a side trip to Gloucester.

Shortly after we arrived at The World of Beatrix Potter shop in Gloucester, a certified city guide stopped by and asked if anyone would be interested in going on a Beatrix Potter-oriented city tour. Emphatically, yes! The guide gives this tour once a week on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. How serendipitous was our timing! We felt as fortunate as the tailor whose waistcoat for the mayor was finished except for one buttonhole while he slept.

And surely, young Miss Freda Moore must have felt nearly as happy to receive this story in the form of a get well picture letter in 1901.

Published by

The Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature
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Please call for an appointment.
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Magic Mirror

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by Angelica Carpenter

Michael Buckley is the author of the bestselling *Sisters Grimm* series. I met him in July when he spoke at the Winkie Convention (the western regional convention of the International Wizard of Oz Club) in Monterey. Buckley's middle-grade novels feature sisters Sabrina and Daphne Grimm, fairy-tale detectives who live with their grandmother in Ferryport, New York. Here fairy-tale characters, called Everafters, live on after their famous stories have been told. In Ferryport, Snow White teaches school, Prince Charming is the sleazy mayor, and Jack the Giant Killer sells suits at Harold's House of Big and Tall. Oz characters are also well represented.

Buckley has a cherubic face, a wicked sense of humor, and a comedic delivery that reflects his first career as a stand-up comedian. Later he interned with David Letterman, then wrote for "Beavis & Butt-Head," "SpongeBob SquarePants," "Rugrats," and "The Fairly OddParents," before he turned to writing children's novels. Not surprisingly, *The Sisters Grimm* stories have been optioned for the movies.

"No single writer has suffered more at my hands," Buckley told the Winkies, "than L. Frank Baum. I get lots of complaints from kids because the Wizard of Oz is the villain in the fourth book." In *Once Upon a Crime* the Wizard is a Manhattan window dresser (this got a laugh from the Oz-savvy crowd, who knew that L. Frank Baum was once a window dresser and that he had written a book on the subject before he turned to writing children's novels). Buckley's Wizard creates Christmas displays with murderous robots.

"How could I make Oz the bad guy?" Buckley asked, and then answered himself: "L. Frank Baum did! The Wizard is mean! He sends a child on a suicide mission!"

"But," Buckley continued, "Dorothy is the true villain of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. She commits two murders—well, involuntary manslaughters, at least. What do you do when someone is melting? Do you stand there and watch or do you call 911? Then she steals the flying broom. Any idea what those babies sell for on eBay? Then she goes home, leaving the Scarecrow in charge. I think we as Americans know from the last eight years what happens when you leave a country in the control of someone who doesn't have a brain."

He was joking about Oz, but serious about politics. "We fear wonder and ideas now," he said, despairing of the trend. "We shun intelligence."

Later, at the Winkie party, he went farther. "No Child Left Behind is a plot to undermine our public school system," he told a smaller group there. "It drives out good teachers and forces the bad ones to fail."

Readers of this column will know that I share his opinion. I checked with Michael Buckley to see if I could quote this informal conversation.

"Go right ahead," he e-mailed. "Mention that the President's brother Neil runs a charter school corporation. With these guys in charge, public education becomes a joke."

Thanks to Michael Buckley for speaking out against a system that teaches children that reading is a mind-numbing chore. To reaffirm that reading is fun, check out *The Sisters Grimm* books and www.sistersgrimm.com.



Author Michael Buckley

Beatrix Potter conference

The Arne Nixon Center will host a conference with the Beatrix Potter Society on April 18–19, 2009. Speakers will include the Society Chairman, Judy Taylor, author of *Beatrix Potter: Artist, Storyteller, and Country Woman*; *Beatrix Potter: The Artist and Her World*; and two National Trust Guides: *Beatrix Potter and Hilltop* and *Beatrix Potter and Hawkshead*. Also featured will be Katherine Paterson, who twice won the Newbery medal for her novels *Bridge to Terabithia* and *Jacob Have I Loved*. She is also the co-author of a musical play based on Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck*. A performance of the musical, as produced by Associate Professor J. Daniel Herring of Fresno State's Theatre Arts Department, will be included in the conference which will also incorporate the Arne Nixon Center's annual Secret Garden Party. The registration fee and other details will be announced in the spring issue of *The Magic Mirror* and on the web site.

Abby Weisgard visits Center

Abby Weisgard, daughter of the late, Caldecott-winning artist Leonard Weisgard (www.leonardweisgard.com), visited the Arne Nixon Center recently with her husband, Per Boelskifte. They were pleased to find that Arne Nixon

had collected many of Leonard Weisgard's now rare books from the 1940s and 1950s. Their visit came as ANCA, the Arne Nixon Center Advocates, completed a fundraising project to buy five Weisgard paintings, original art



Abby Weisgard in the Nixon Center

for his 1949 *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. The couple lives in Copenhagen, Denmark; Leonard Weisgard moved his family there in 1969. Per Boelskifte, an architect, designed the artist's Copenhagen studio. Abby Weisgard designs store windows for top designers and until his death in 2000, her father used to help her annually with a Christmas window.

One of the Weisgard paintings purchased by ANCA

Copyright © Leonard Weisgard, 1949

Angelica Carpenter wins University Award

Arne Nixon Center curator Angelica Carpenter has won the University Provost's 2008 Award for Distinguished Achievement in Research, Scholarship, or Creative Activities. The award was presented at a campus reception in May. Provost Jeronima Echeverria cited Carpenter for her conferences, which have attracted people to Fresno from all over the world, and for her "cutting edge" books on children's literature.



Robin Rector Krupp

Thanks to author Robin Rector Krupp for donating her papers and original art to the Arne Nixon Center. She is the illustrator of seven books, three of which she also wrote. This former teacher, who performs as The Rainbow Lady (to match her book *The Rainbow and You*) and as Senora Artista (to go with *Let's Go Traveling in Mexico*), estimates that she has spoken to more than 300,000 children. Her other titles include *Get Set to Wreck!*, *Let's Go Traveling*, *The Big Dipper and You*, *The Comet and You*, and *The Moon and You*. Her web site address is www.childrensauthorsnetwork.com/author/RRK.htm.



Reading the World

The Arne Nixon Center will co-sponsor Reading the World XI, a multicultural children's literature conference, to be held March 28–29, 2009, in San Francisco. This conference is hosted by the Center for Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults, School of Education, University of San Francisco, and co-sponsored by University of California, Davis. Speakers will include Michael Cart, Rosemary Wells (www.rosemarywells.com), Francisco Jimenez (www.scu.edu/fjimenez), Junko Yokota (author of *Children's Books in Children's Hands*), Theresa Breslin (www.theresabreslin.co.uk), and Angelica Carpenter (www.angelicacarpenter.com). Save the date and watch for more information in the spring issue of *The Magic Mirror* and on the web site.



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Pam Muñoz Ryan to speak on September 17

The public is invited to "Central Valley Libraries Resource Day," sponsored by book vendor Children's Plus, Inc. This program will offer a talk for teachers, librarians, and fans (fifth grade and older) by Pam Muñoz Ryan, winner of the Pura Belpré Award and many other honors for her books *Esperanza Rising*, *When Marian Sang*, *Riding Freedom*, *Becoming Naomi Léon*, and other titles for children and young adults. Ryan, who grew up in Bakersfield, California, has pledged her papers to the Arne Nixon Center. Her web site is www.pammunozryan.com.



The free program will be offered twice on Wednesday, September 17: at 10 a.m. and again at 2:05 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center, Central Unified School District, 3535 North Cornelia, Fresno, 93722. It will also feature the Arne Nixon Center, the Fresno County Public Library, and the California School Library Association. For additional information address e-mail to the Children's Plus Central Valley representative, Tamera Friesen, at iamthebooklady@hotmail.com or call her at (559) 287-8438.

Save these dates!

2008: October 5

Open house, Leo Politi Library, 1-5 p.m.

October 24

ANCA annual meeting,

The Smittcamp Alumni House, 6 p.m.

December 3

Avi, Fresno Pacific University

2009: January 30

New Library opens

March 28, 29

Reading the World conference, San Francisco

April 17

Life Members' reception, Library, 6 p.m.

April 18, 19

Beatrix Potter conference, Fresno

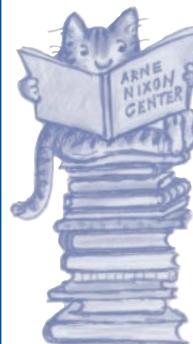
April 19

Secret Garden Party, Fresno

Leo Politi Centennial: open house on October 5

The Leo Politi Branch of the Fresno County Public Library, on the southwest corner of First and Bullard in Fresno, will sponsor an open house on Sunday, October 5, from 1-5 p.m. The program, featuring readings, entertainment, and refreshments, honors Paul Leo Politi and Suzanne Politi Bischof, son and daughter of the late Leo Politi, and Ann Stalcup, his biographer. Leo Politi, who won the Caldecott medal for *Song of the Swallows*, and who wrote and illustrated many multicultural picture books, was born in Fresno in 1908 but lived most of his life in Los Angeles. His friendship with Arne Nixon was the inspiration for the Leo Politi Garden, which will be constructed with funds raised by the Arne Nixon Center Advocates, outside the new Library. For information about the open house, call (559) 431-6450. For information about other Politi Centennial events, see the web site at www.leopoliti.com.

Featured illustrations in this issue



The mouse on the front page is from *The Treasure*, illustrated by Leonard Filgate.

All of the other images are part of the 21 pieces of original art donated by Aliki for use on the Arne Nixon Center's web site.

Avi to speak in Fresno

Everyone is invited to join Avi, author of *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* (winner of the 2003 Newbery Medal); *Crispin at the Edge of the World*; *Poppy*; *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, and dozens of other novels for children and young adults, for a "grand literary conversation" at Fresno Pacific University in the late afternoon or early evening of Wednesday, December 3, 2008. Avi's web site is www.avi-writer.com.

This program is intended for pre-service teachers, classroom teachers, librarians, and others interested in the world of children's literature. Books will be available for sale and autographing. At press time, other plans were not confirmed. Fresno Pacific University is located at 1717 South Chestnut Avenue, Fresno. For more information, address e-mail to Jo Ellen Misakian at jmisakian@fresno.edu or call (509) 453-2291.

Donations of books, materials, and services

(as of June 30, 2008)

Alma Flor Ada: 3 boxes of her papers

Judy Baker: 6 pewter figures

Beverly Hills Public Library: 646 books

Reed Bilz: a copy of Willy Pogency's *Mother Goose*

Les Bohem: various Alice-related materials

Margaret Buckingham: 21 books and two board games

Angelica Carpenter: 27 books and other materials

Charlesbridge Publishing: 14 books

Margarita Engle: 127 books, her papers, two pieces of art
by Sean Qualls

Susan Yost-Filgate and Leonard Filgate: 4 books

Beverly Gherman: 9 boxes of her papers, 3 of her books

Carmen Farr Gregory and Carolyn Thomas: 3 books

Audry Hanson: 4 books

Pamela Harer: a first edition of *Through the Looking-Glass
and What Alice Found There*

Caroline Harnly: 134 books

Houghton Mifflin: 114 books

August A. Imholtz, Jr.: various Alice-related materials

Kane/Miller Book Publishers: 12 books

Kathy Kline and Jacklyn Williams: 6 books

Robin Rector Krupp: 3 boxes of her papers

Lydia Kuhn: 11 books and other items

Lerner Publishing Group: 87 books

Little, Brown and Company: 25 books

Collette Murray: 14 books

Oakland Public Library: 6 books

Sara Pagoulatos: 49 books

Elizabeth Partridge: 6 books

Linda Peterson: 3 boxes of books

Tamora Pierce: 6 books

George Pilling: 3 books

Random House: 274 books

Roaring Brook Press: 20 books

Robert D. San Souci: 8 boxes of his papers

Scholastic: 188 books

Marilyn Simons: 52 books

Linda Joy Singleton: 5 books

John Taylor: 19 books

Answers to quiz:

1 *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi

2 *Hans Brinker or The Silver Skates*
by Mary Mapes Dodge

3 *The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies*
by Beatrix Potter

4 *Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey

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are tax deductible as allowable by law.)

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Research news

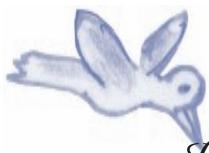
Congratulations to Therese Ewing, whose master's thesis, *Original Picturebooks and Houghton Mifflin Anthologies: A Comparative Analysis*, received the 2008 Outstanding Thesis Award from the Kremen School of Education and Human Development at Fresno State. Ewing also presented her findings, which were based on research done at the Arne Nixon Center, at the 29th Annual Central California Research Symposium held at Fresno State in April and at the 22nd annual CSU Student Research Competition at CSU East Bay.

Can you identify book titles from these first lines?

(Answers on page 7)



The day after my mother died, the priest and I wrapped her body in a grey shroud and carried her to the village church. Our burden was not great. In life she had been a small woman with little strength. Death made her even less.



Q² On a bright December morning long ago, two thinly clad children were kneeling upon the bank of a frozen canal in Holland.



Q³ It is said that the effect of eating too much lettuce is "soporific." I have never felt sleepy after eating lettuces; but then I am not a rabbit.



Q⁴ Mr. and Mrs. Mallard were looking for a place to live. But every time Mr. Mallard saw what looked like a nice place, Mrs. Mallard said it was no good.

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