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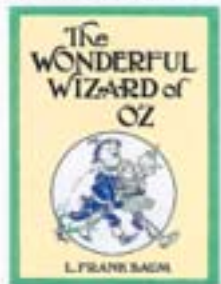
• Life in LAMORINDA •

Lamorinda Reads *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

By Sophie Braccini

LAMORINDA READS!

3 Communities, 1 Book



Lafayette Library ~ Moraga Library ~ Orinda Library
<http://guides.ccclib.org/onebook>

There are many ways to enter the Emerald City: The Hollywood way; the Wicked way; and the original 1900 Baum way, by picking up a copy of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. This year, for the third annual "Lamorinda Reads" program, the three local librarians have chosen to revisit the original novel written by L. Frank Baum, and reflect on the different interpretations that have evolved over the years.

"We wanted to find a book for all generations so families can read together," said Orinda Librarian Caroline Gick, continuing, "We were inspired by the success of the play "Wicked," that presents a different twist to the story and got many adults intrigued by the original book."

"It has universal appeal for people of all ages and allows for interesting conversations about the differences between the movie and the book," adds Lafayette Librarian Susan Weaver, who believes that families bond around good reading.

There are many unique aspects to the novel that readers who only saw the movie will discover. "One of the interesting differences is that the novel never depicts Dorothy as a damsel in distress to be rescued by her friends," explains Gick, "but rather the reverse, with Dorothy, a figure heavily influenced by the feminism of Matilda Joslyn Gage, rescuing her friends (Matilda Gage was one of the leaders of the suffrage movement and Baum's mother-in-law)."

The 1939 movie interprets the Oz experience as a dream, in

which many of the characters that Dorothy meets represent the people from her home life. Gick notes that in Baum's original novel, Oz is a real place to which Dorothy would return in sequels and which would later provide a refuge for Aunt Em and Uncle Henry when they are unable to pay the mortgage on the new house that was built after the old one really was carried away by the tornado.

"The values that the movie embodies are different than those of the book," adds Frank Murray, Saint Mary's College Dean for Academic Development, who has taught a wide range of theater courses, including theater history of all periods. "The movie was shot shortly after the depression; Kansas is black and white, it is not fun and people have to work hard. In the Land of Oz, the characters are performed by the same actors as the farm hands, showing that ordinary folks who use the traditional American values of courage, good heart and smarts will succeed."

"*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* continues to be interpreted from many angles and books continue to be published today," says Gick, "in fact, two new books on Baum and the Wizard of Oz were published in 2009 to discuss, refute and interpret the meaning of the book and Baum's writing of it. The mystique surrounding it that results from the continued interpretations and suppositions keeps its popularity and intrigue alive for teens and adults. Have a read and come to your own conclusions!"

Oz Events and Activities

October 5: Kick off! Get your book and the complete list of activities at your local library.

October 5 - October 18: Book cover contest for teens; design a cover for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and win up to \$100 in gift cards. Open to students in grades 6-12 who either live in or attend school in Lafayette, Moraga, or Orinda. Artwork must be submitted on 8.5"x11" paper and be accompanied by the entry/release form (available on the website, <http://guides.ccclib.org/content.php?pid=20304&sid=378402>). On October 5th, after school, the Lafayette library will be set up with paper and supplies for teens to start working on their art. Deadline for entries is October 18th.

October 7: Play Wizard of Oz Trivia at the Lafayette library, 3:30 p.m.

October 8: Get Crafty at the Lafayette Library, 3:00 p.m.

October 10: Follow the *Yellow Brick Road, Alternate Aspects of Oz*. Saint Mary's College professors Frank Murray and Reid Davis talk about the alternate visions of Oz on stage and screen. Orinda Library, 11:00 a.m.

October 16: *Up Close and Personal with L. Frank Baum*, with author Angelica Carpenter, founding Curator of the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature at California State University, Fresno and president of the International Oz Club. Moraga Library, 3:15 p.m.

October 18: Wizard of Oz staged reading at the Town Hall Theatre; songs by the Theater's kids. 2:00-4:00 p.m., 3535 School St., Lafayette.


October 20-22: Wizard of Oz Wand Arts and Crafts, Moraga Library, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

October 22: Book discussion of *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, Gregory Maguire's acclaimed 1995 novel. Moraga Library, 2:00 p.m.

For more information go to <http://guides.ccclib.org/content.php?pid=20304&sid=378402>.

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Unique Art Project for Foster Youth

... continued from page 2

"That was the moment I knew I had to do something more than hang art on the walls." She committed to six weeks of Sunday afternoons, teaching teen foster youth at two Youth Homes about some of the many facets of art. "Hope Matters," a large multimedia collage, is the culmination of all their hard work.

"I think art is a gateway into our humanity - a way to tap into your value as a human being - a place to find refuge. It's especially important for at-risk kids, whether that's playing piano, gardening or poetry," said Taylor.

What started out as an art project became something much larger, "a way to address a social ill that I feel a responsibility to address as an artist and as a mother," said Taylor. Along the lower edge of the

piece is an especially poignant quote by Frank Warren, "The children the world almost break because the adults who save it."

Kathy Bowles, Development Director of Youth Homes, explains their work, "Ours is a story of stability in a sea of insanity, a commitment to neglected youth, and hope."

"Foster Care is a huge problem in California - over 68,000 youth are in foster care in California alone. Children who are abused, neglected and abandoned end up in foster care - removed from their homes by the Superior Court for their own protection. There are many different levels of foster care; placement of the kids depends on their emotional and behavioral needs. By the time kids get to our program, they have been in as many as 10-20 different placements in

their short life. The stories of these kids break your heart," said Bowles in a statement.

Youth Homes provides counseling for foster youth along with a number of other services: they recruit foster families, have an aftercare program for 16 to 25-year-olds and a mentoring program. It's a challenging undertaking for this non-profit. Although they have a variety of fundraising efforts, this year they will be hosting their first gala event, "The Art of Hope - Celebrating Youth Homes and the Power of Community" on October 10 at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville. The collaborative collage "Hope Matters" will be auctioned off to raise money for the program. For more information go to www.youthhomes.org.



Victor Rasilla General Contractor

Moraga, California Ca. Lic. B789238

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