

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

December 4, 1957

New Children's Books

Leo Politi has authored another book with the Monterey Peninsula as the setting. "The Butterflies Come" is the latest title of the book of this talented artist and writer, with, of course, the Pacific Grove Monarch butterflies' annual visit as the story. A previous picture book of Leo Politi's is "A Boat for Peppe," the story of a little Sicilian-American, son of a Monterey fisherman, who goes out with the boats, and of Peppe's faith that he will return. This book won the 1949 Caldecott Medal. Both books, along with several others by the author, are for sale in Peninsula bookstores.

"The Butterflies Come" introduces Stephen and Lucia as residents of the Monterey Peninsula in California. They loved all the woodland creatures and were friendly and gentle with them. Every year in the fall a wonderful thing happened in their town, so the author relates.

Thousands of orange and black Monarch butterflies came to spend the winter in the same grove of trees and to flutter among the flowers in the gardens. The children welcomed the butterflies with a gay parade.

The facts about the butterflies in this charming story are true. Leo Politi has visited the Peninsula many times to study the subjects about which he has written, and his books will be enjoyed by both young and old, so colorful are the illustrations and so delightful the stories. He has added his own characteristic way of seeing things and has given us some of his loveliest pictures in his two books about the Peninsula.

"The Butterflies Come" is published by Charles Scribner's Sons of New York and is priced at \$2.75.

"A Boat for Peppe" tells of the annual blessing of the fishing fleet in Monterey and how Peppe wishes for a boat of his own and finally gets his wish. As of all Politi's picture books, there is a true understanding of children and a warm feeling for family life. The publishers end their description on the dust cover thusly: "The setting of this book, the old California capitol of Monterey, is particularly charming."

Another charming historical story for children is "The Columbus Story" written by Alice Dalgliesh and illustrated by Leo Politi. The author has written many historical stories for younger children. She has long

been interested in the Columbus story, so we are told on the jacket – for her childhood was spent in Trinidad, that beautiful island discovered by Columbus on his third voyage.

In an author's note Miss Dalgliesh tells us: Ferdinand Columbus, years after his father's voyages, wrote some of the proudest words ever written by a son about a father. In his copy of Seneca's plays there was a prophecy that someday a great new continent would be discovered. Besides this Ferdinand wrote: "This prophecy was fulfilled by my father, the Admiral, in the year of 1492."

Other suitable books for Christmas gifts to children by Leo Politi are: "The Angel of Olivera Street," the story of Pedro a little Mexican boy who takes the part of an angel in the Christmas Posada procession on Olivera street in Los Angeles; "Juanita" who also lives on Olivera street, where she takes part on Easter in the blessing of the animals. "The Song of the Swallows," is a story of the swallows of Mission San Juan Capistrano, and "Little Leo" is a charming, childlike story of the artist's childhood in California and Italy.