



Gung Hay Fat Choy! Happy Chinese New Year! This newsletter will be devoted to things new to honor the celebration of the Lunar New Year in many Asian countries and communities here in the U.S. News from the dragons is a wonderful review of Dragon Fire, Ocean Mist in [BookLoons - an online book review site](#).

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Northwest Beaches: Time for a New House for the Hermit Crab

Everyone loves hermit crabs - those wonderful little crabs that scuttle across the bottom of tide pools dragging their houses with them. Their soft abdomens are curved just so in order to curl around the central column of the snail shell they call home. But like a growing kid who outgrows her clothes, a hermit crab needs to find a new shell as it gets bigger. When it finds a bigger shell it simply leaves its too small shell behind and moves into the bigger one. But often there are more crabs than there are available shells - and this leads to fierce battles between crabs for who gets the new house! A great classic book about the adventures of a hermit crab in a tide pool is [Pagoo by Holling Clancy Holling](#).

We're used to seeing hermit crabs in tide pools but there are some species that live on land, especially in tropical regions.. Some of these land species are sold in pet stores and make great pets for many years. But make sure you have a supply of shells for new houses for them!



Yvonne Palka

Yvonne is the award-winning sumi-e artist who wrote and illustrated *Dragon Fire, Ocean Mist*. A retired college professor, grandmother, biologist and naturalist, she is passionate about introducing children and adults to the wonders of the natural world.

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".....With Palka's sumi-e brushwork supplying the illustrations and an informative reader's guide at the end of the book that discusses the story's actual setting, dragons in literature and brush painting, this is an interesting tale for young readers ready to handle a chapter book. Dragon Fire: Ocean Mist also received the 2009 bronze medal in the Best First Chapter Book category of the Moonbeam Children's Book Awards sponsored by the Jenkins Group Publishing service."

Bob Walch, BookLoons



**Dragon Fire
Ocean Mist**
Written & Illustrated
by
Yvonne Palka

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Hermit crab not so sure whose holding his shell!

Dragons: Chinese New Year and a Golden Dragon Parade

The Chinese New Year is a lunar celebration, beginning with the new moon on the first month of the year and traditionally lasting for two weeks. This year it will begin on Feb 14th. Celebrations will be happening in homes and communities around the world - check out the one in [Seattle's International District on Feb. 13th](#). There will be a lion dancers, music and many childrens events in this inclusive Asian-American festival. Traditionally the New Year's celebration is celebrated with a special dinner in the home for all the family. The house is thoroughly cleaned, bills are paid and grudges and debts forgiven - all to make ready so that good luck and prosperity will prevail in the new year. People and communities celebrate with firecrackers, lots of lights, and the color red to scare away the evil spirits and bad luck which might come our way. Ancestors and families are honored, everyone wears new clothes and children delight in receiving red envelopes containing crisp new paper money.

Where does the golden dragon come in? Well, at the end of the two weeks many communities have a parade with lanterns and a huge golden dragon. Today the biggest [golden dragon parade is in San Francisco](#) - check it out on Feb 27, 2010 - the dragon is 250 feet long!

Asian Art : The Year of the Tiger.

This year, 2010, is the year of the tiger in the Chinese zodiac. Folks born in the year of the tiger (of which I'm one.....) are said to be optimistic, brave, lovable, magnetic and



Lion Dancer in Seattle's Lunar New Year parade



Year of the Tiger - make your own paper bag puppet.

independent. Recent tiger birth years are 1986, 1998, 2010. All through this year you will find tiger image themes in Asian art. So why not begin by making a tiger puppet? There are great instructions as well other [Chinese New Year craft ideas at this website.](#)



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