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The Newsletter of  
Webster Groves Public Library, v. 4 n. 7,  
March, 2009

## READING ABOUT READING

There has been a lot of talk lately about reading.

There is a list of books assembled by the The Guardian, a major British newspaper. It's supposed to be books that everyone should have read, and the claim is that the average reader has read no more than six of them. People are sharing the list on Facebook and other online forums, everyone counting up how many they've read. When I saw the list, I quickly counted up the dozen or so titles that I wouldn't read under any circumstance. That's often how it goes with book lists. They're very subjective, and rarely include everything that anybody thinks they should include. I think anybody could scan any 'best books' list and quickly name three or four authors that should be on it.

Another discussion centers on the question whether online reading is the same, or even a similar experience, to reading books. Studies find that readers absorb less content when they read online, make fewer notes, reflect less on what they've read. I'm not surprised by this finding, but I'm not sure it's a bad thing. Many of the people who are reading things online these days may have never been book readers, so the fact that they're reading something might be an improvement over past practice.

Finally, there is an ongoing discussion about Amazon's Kindle, and the likelihood of it taking over any significant portion of people's reading. We've been waiting years now for electronic books to catch on, but they haven't. This may be due to the content. NetLibrary, one of the main providers of electronic books to libraries, carries mostly a lot of older non-fiction content. If you're interested in a five year old book on diet and health, you might find it in NetLibrary. But don't look for current popular stuff. On the other hand, it may be that the content is not there because nobody's asking for it. The way modern markets work, if people in their masses were clamoring for the latest John Grisham novel in an e-book format, it would be available.

But the Kindle is the best format for electronic books yet. It is comfortable to hold, apparently easy to use, and there is a lot of affordable content available from Amazon. Maybe sometime soon we will see people using Kindle, or some other e-reader, all the time.

I've learned not to make predictions. I think anybody who does is blowing smoke, and I find that most people are willing to listen to those people whose predictions are closest to what they want to hear. For now all I can say is that libraries are checking out more books than ever (we checked out nearly 17,000 in January this year). Whatever people are reading, and however they are reading it, we are still very much a literate society, and will probably be for years to come.

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## MARCH IN THE CHILDREN'S ROOM



Tuesday, March 10: Story Time with Miss Phyllis, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, March 11: Story Time with Miss Phyllis, 10 a.m.

Thursday, March 12: Story Time with Miss Phyllis, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, March 8: Pajama Story Time with Miss Laurene, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 24: Story Time with Miss Phyllis, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, March 25: Story Time with Miss Phyllis, 10 a.m.

Thursday, March 26: Story Time with Miss Phyllis, 10 a.m.

Monday, March 30: Story Time with Miss Michelle, 2 p.m.



## Building News

Since the passage of Proposition L, many people have stopped by the library to ask when the work will start. Our answer is that the work has started. It's just that there's a lot of work to do before anything actually *physically* happens to the building.

We are in the process of assembling a building committee to oversee the hiring of an architect for the project. After that the complete design of the building could take several months.

We will try to keep everyone informed of progress each step of the way. There will be a standard column in this newsletter; a page of our Web site devoted to building news; press releases when there is significant news to report; and when there is an actual design to look at, we will post it in the library for people to see and comment on. Stay tuned!

## Website of the Month:

### Consumer Warning Network

[www.consumerwarningnetwork.com](http://www.consumerwarningnetwork.com)

Given the national mortgage foreclosure crisis, this site has gained considerable notoriety and been reported on by many news sources. Started by a Florida attorney, this is the site that encourages people whose homes are in foreclosure to go to court and ask for the bank or mortgage company that is foreclosing to 'produce the note,' which, according to news accounts, can't be done in most cases. The site details how it's done and provides free downloads of the necessary documents.

## Library Hours

Monday-Thursday	9 am to 9 pm
Friday and Saturday	9 am to 4:30 pm
Sunday	2 pm to 5 pm

## This Month's Most Requested Books:

1. *The Associate*, John Grisham
2. *Heart and Soul*, Maeve Binchy
3. *The Shack*, William P. Young
4. *The Hour I First Believed*, Wally Lamb
5. *Plum Spooky*, Janet Evanovich
6. *Lethal Legacy*, Linda A. Fairstein
7. *Run for Your Life*, James Patterson
8. *Cutting for Stone*, A. Verghese.
9. *Outliers: the story of success*, Malcolm Gladwell
10. *Handle with Care*, Jodi Picoult
11. *Revolutionary Road*, Richard Yates
12. *The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Society*, Mary Ann Shaffer

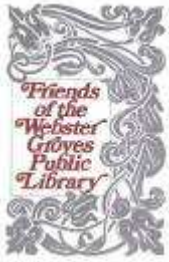
## Next Month's Book Discussion Selection:

*Rabbit, Run*, by John Updike

April 7<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. Call 961-3784 for information.

## Staff Favorites, March, 2009

1. *Extreme Birds: the worlds most extraordinary and bizarre birds*, Dominic Couzens (Adult Non-fiction)
2. *The Triple Bind: saving our teenage girls from today's pressures*, Stephen P. Hinshaw (Adult Non-fiction)
3. *Service Included: four-star secrets of an eavesdropping waiter*, Phoebe Damrosch (Adult Non-fiction)
4. *Dream House: a novel*, Valerie Laken (Adult Fiction)
5. *The Five Love Languages of Children*, Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell (Adult Non-fiction)
6. *All the Colors of Darkness*, Peter Robinson (Adult Mystery)
7. *Boomsday*, Christopher Buckley (Adult Fiction)
8. *Smoke Signals*, Sherman Alexie (Adult Fiction)
9. *Mirror, Mirror: a history of the human love affair with reflection*, Mark Prendergast (Adult Non-fiction)
10. *Nose Down, Eyes Up: a novel*, Merrill Markoe (Adult Fiction)



## Friends News

### READiscover the Classics for Adults!

For the past few months, the Friends of the Webster Groves Public Library have sponsored a program to encourage children to read classic children's literature. We are so pleased with the response that we have decided to expand the program to adults. The rules are the same: read one of the classic books we recommend (or one of your own – good literature, please), write a short review or draw a picture, turn it in to the circulation desk and we will reward you with a special Webster Groves Public Library book bag. There are lists of suggested books hanging by the Friends sale areas and some of these books are displayed on top of the Large Print bookshelves. The review forms are available at the circulation desk. For inspiration, check out the bulletin board by the water fountain where we have posted the children's reviews. They are delightful to read!

## Celebrating Black History Month with Bobby Norfolk



An enthusiastic group listens attentively

On Saturday February 14<sup>th</sup> the library hosted Emmy Award-winning storyteller Bobby Norfolk. A large crowd of children and parents delighted in Norfolk's humorous and fanciful interpretations of old favorites such as *The Tortoise and the Hare*.



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A Member of the Municipal Library Consortium of St. Louis County