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The Newsletter of  
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## Even the Good Ones Come and Go

My mother reads a lot of books I would never read. Yes, I'm kind of a literary snob, but you don't have to be much of a snob to realize that most really good books don't make the New York Times Bestseller list. She trades books with my aunt in Memphis, and they read almost all the same things. I have tried to interest them in what I consider 'better' books, but it has been to no avail.

So I was very reluctant when my mother recently recommended a book to me called *An Innocent Millionaire* by Stephen Vizinczey. I have no idea where she came across it, but she and my aunt both claimed it was wonderful, that the language in it was like nothing they had ever read before. There were blurbs on the jacket by such literary lights as Graham Greene (it was published in 1983), so I figured it couldn't be too bad.

Stephen Vizinczey was born in Hungary and fled after the revolution of 1956 was crushed by the Soviet Union. He settled in Canada, where he quickly learned English and wrote screenplays for a while before he wrote his first novel, *In Praise of Older Women*. This small, semi-autobiographical novel was heralded as an instant classic by many critics. Authors such as Anthony Burgess praised him for 'teaching the English how to write English,' even though English was Vizinczey's second language.

*An Innocent Millionaire* is an adventure story told on a grand scale, about a young man who early in life decides that he will get rich by finding and salvaging the costliest lost treasure ship in history. It reminds me of Sinclair Lewis in its intimate portraits of characters; of Tom Wolfe in its satirical grasp of society at the time; and even of Harold Robbins in its portrayal of people in all their greedy, spoiled indulgence and eccentricity.

So how many people reading this have ever heard of Stephen Vizinczey? None of the libraries in the St. Louis area owns *In Praise of Older Women*. Between them they own a few copies of *An Innocent Millionaire* and one of Vizinczey's volumes of literary criticism. How can it be that an author who was so highly regarded is virtually unheard of?

Is it the fate of good authors to drift into oblivion? We have on our shelves thousands of books by bestselling authors who won't be remembered in another fifteen years, and that's as it should be. Popular fiction comes and goes. But how many really good authors, men and women whose books deserve a wider audience now and into the future, also come and go, their works forgotten by time? It makes me desperate to get out there and find them, to read and keep reading, in search of new gems I don't even know are waiting for me.

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## A New Way to Help Your Library

We're always searching for new ways to make it easier for patrons to support the library. We have recently added one.

The new program is through e-Scrip, a national program that donates a portion of consumer spending at selected retailers to the non-profit organization of their choice. Locally, Schnuck's Markets are a participating retailer.

The next time you visit Schnuck's, stop by their Customer Service desk and pick up a free e-Scrip card. Call the toll-free number on the card, or visit their Web site at [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) to activate the card and designate Webster Groves Public Library as your non-profit organization of choice.

Then, each time you shop at Schnuck's, ask the cashier to scan your e-Scrip card. Up to 3% of your purchase price will be donated to the Library, and it won't cost you a thing. It's a safe, easy, *free* way to help support your library.

## April in the Children's Room



- \* Tuesday, April 8: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.
- \* Wednesday, April 9: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.
- \* Thursday, April 10: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.
- \* Monday, April 14: Storytime with Miss Michelle – 2 p.m.
- \* Wednesday, April 16: Storytime with Miss Michelle – 2 p.m.
- \* Thursday, April 17: Pajama Storytime with Miss Laurene, 7:30 p.m.
- \* Tuesday, April 22: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.
- \* Wednesday, April 23: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.
- \* Thursday, April 24: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 a.m.



## 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 Appeal*, John Grisham
2. *A New Earth*, Eckhart Tolle
3. *A Change of Heart*, Jodi Picoult
4. *T is for Trespass*, Sue Grafton
5. *7<sup>th</sup> Heaven*, James Patterson
6. *Compulsion*, Jonathan Kellerman
7. *Certain Girls*, Jennifer Weiner
8. *Plum Lucky*, Janet Evanovich
9. *Lush Life*, Richard Price
10. *The People of the Book*, Geraldine Brooks
11. *Stranger in Paradise*, Robert B. Parker
12. *Remember Me*, Sophie Kinsella

## Next Month's Book Discussion Selection:

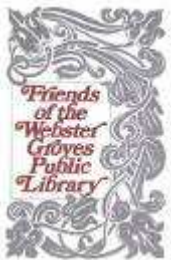
### **The Cave, by Jose Saramago**

**An elderly potter contends with a society that no longer cherishes his handcrafted wares, and with finding a life for himself within that society.**

**May 6 at 6 p.m. Call 961-3784 for information.**

## Staff Favorites: February, 2008

1. *An Innocent Millionaire*, Stephen Vizinczey (Adult Fiction)
2. *Home with God: in a Life that Never Ends*, Neale Walsch (Adult Non-fiction)
3. *North and South* (DVD)
4. *Across the Universe* (DVD)
5. *The Teapot Dome Scandal*, Laton McCartney (Adult Non-fiction)
6. *Loving Frank*, Nancy Horan (Adult Fiction)
7. *Mister Pip*, Lloyd Jones (Adult Fiction)
8. *Waitress* (DVD)
9. *A Prisoner of Birth*, Jeffrey Archer (Adult Fiction)
10. *The Norman Conquests: a Trilogy of Plays*, Alan Ayckbourn (Adult Non-fiction)



## Friends News

### Friends of Webster Groves Public Library Book Fair Scheduled

After a long search, we have finally found a suitable place for this year's book fair. It will be held May 1 through 4 at the old Hollywood Video Store in Yorkshire Plaza. We'd like to thank Koch Development for offering us the use of this wonderful storefront property, which has ample space and great parking. We are excited about the possibilities, and expect to have a record-breaking sale. Hours for the sale and other details will be posted soon around the Library and on the Library's Web site at [www.wgpl.org](http://www.wgpl.org).

As always, we could use any volunteers who would like to help us sort and display books the week before the fair, or to work during the fair. If you are interested, please call Debbie Ladd at 314 968-8759.

### Children's Services Receives Grant to Provide Special Needs Programming

In the fall of 2006, the Children's Department at Webster Groves Public Library pioneered providing library programming to families of children with special needs. After hours programs for children with autism, Down syndrome, Fragile X and other developmental disabilities were facilitated by various experts, such as a musicologist, a yoga instructor and an occupational therapist. That first series of programs was paid for by a grant from Target, Inc. Subsequent programs have been funded by ongoing support from our Friends of the Library.

Children's Librarian Michelle Haffer just received news that she has been awarded a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant of \$1,218 to provide a series of special needs programs during this year's Summer Reading Club. The LSTA is a federal program locally administered by the Missouri State Library.

The schedule of programs will be announced soon. For more information call Michelle Haffer in our Children's Room at 314 961-7262.



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