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The Newsletter of
Webster Groves Public Library, v. 3 n. 9,
May, 2008

My Door is Always Open

This is one of those things that administrators, managers, teachers and other professionals the world over say all the time that people seem not to take seriously: as if we just say it as a pleasantry, like 'hi, how are ya?' or 'let's get together sometime.' But the fact is, most of us mean it.

Most people who run a business or public service or teach just about any subject actually do want to hear from the people they serve. How else do we know how we're doing? How else do we get new ideas? How else do we keep in touch?

I enjoy when a Webster Groves citizen and library user stops at my door and asks if I have a minute. I usually do have a minute, and I usually learn something of value, whether it's something we're doing wrong, something we're doing right, or an idea for something we could do better. Yes, there's the occasional blow to one's pride in reflecting that I should have thought of that, or I thought we were doing better at one thing or another; but an administrator who's not willing to swallow his or her pride and accept good ideas – wherever they come from – has no business being an administrator.

For the past year and a half the library has been doing strategic planning, trying to map out a direction for the next five years. We have done a community survey, an online survey, and held a series of meetings at the library wherein people were invited to come and offer their thoughts. Many good ideas resulted, and we took our fair share of criticism for a few things too. We hope to make use of the good ideas and use the criticisms to improve. Many things we thought going into the process turn out looking different after getting public input.

Many people think that public boards, like a library board, are insular, secretive groups with agendas carved in stone. Nothing could be further from the truth. Without openness, without adequate public input, we couldn't do much of anything.

Don't forget that the library's Board of Trustees meets every month. These are open, public meetings, held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month (except December). The agendas are posted at the library the day before the meeting, and always include the item 'Public Agenda' towards the top. That's the place where any interested citizen may comment, ask questions, or make suggestions to the board. If you have anything you'd like to share with your library board, make a point to come by the next meeting. If you can't make the meeting, don't forget – my door is always open.

tcooper@wgpl.org

May in the Children's Room

May 29th: Time to start signing up for
Summer Reading Club



This year's theme is
Catch the Reading Bug



Tuesday, May 6: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

Wednesday, May 7: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

Thursday, May 8: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

Wednesday, May 14: Storytime with Miss Michelle – 10 am

Thursday, May 15: Pajama Storytime with Miss Laurene –
7:30 pm

Tuesday, May 20: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

Wednesday, May 21: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

Thursday, May 22: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

On Friday May 30th we will have a special program presented by the Butterfly House. They will bring us our special guest for the summer, Hissing Cockroaches! We hope you can make it to this kick-off event for Summer Reading Club. The fun starts at 10 am. But even if you can't come that day, we'll have the hissing cockroaches in a special cage in the Children's Room throughout the summer.

Ed Golterman Talks about Kiel Opera House

Ed Golterman has a mission: to get the city of St. Louis to make good on its promise to restore historic Kiel Opera House. He has been fighting this battle for years, and now he has written his second book on the subject, *The Mugging of Kiel Opera House: Civic Regress*. At 7 pm on Tuesday night, May 20th he will visit

the library to talk about his book and his ongoing struggle to save one of the great old institutions in the city of St. Louis.

Copies of the book will be available to purchase at the event. For more information call 314 961-3784.



Library Hours

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

The library will be closed Sunday, May 25 and Monday May 26 for Memorial Day.

This Month's Most Requested Books:

1. *A New Earth*, Eckhart Tolle
2. *A Change of Heart*, Jodi Picoult
3. *Hold Tight*, Harlan Coben
4. *Certain Girls*, Jennifer Weiner
5. *Guilty*, Karen Robards
6. *The Whole Truth*, David Baldacci
7. *Where Are You Now?* Mary Higgins Clark
8. *Compulsion*, Jonathan Kellerman
9. *Lush Life*, Richard Price
10. *Sundays at Tiffany's*, James Patterson
11. *The Appeal*, John Grisham
12. *Three Cups of Tea*, Greg Mortenson

Next Month's Book Discussion Selection:

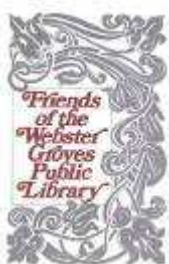
***The Gathering*, by Anne Enright**

In this 2007 Booker Prize-winning novel a large Irish family gathers to bury one of their siblings.

June 3 at 6 p.m. Call 961-3784 for information.

Staff Favorites: May, 2008

1. *Practical Gods*, Carl Dennis (Adult Non-fiction)
2. *World Without End*, Ken Follett (Adult Fiction)
3. *The Autoimmune Epidemic*, Donna Jackson Nakazawa (Adult Non-fiction)
4. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, Sherman Alexie (YA Fiction)
5. *In the Valley of Elah* (Adult DVD)
6. *The Cruellest Month: a Three Pines Mystery*, Louise Penny (Adult Mystery)
7. *Into the Wild* (Adult DVD)
8. *A Fraction of the Whole*, Steve Toltz (Adult Fiction)
9. *Things We Lost in the Fire* (Adult DVD)
10. *Knuffle Bunny: a Cautionary Tale*, Mo Williams (Juvenile Fiction)



Friends News

The Book Fair over the Years

As I am writing this, the Friends are busily preparing for our 2008 Book Fair; it will be a memory long before the next edition of the newsletter comes out. The Friends have been holding a Book Fair for over 30 years and our locations have been all over town, from church basements to the old warming hut at the ice rink to the Masonic Lodge. For the last two years we've used commercial store fronts.

Every year produces new challenges, like the first year at the warming hut when it was discovered that there was no electricity for the calculators. Last year our space was much smaller than usual and we found ways to go up by building shelves out of boards and cardboard boxes of books.

Year after year though, one thing stays the same – the books. We know that we will always get more fiction than any other category and many titles will be repeated again and again. Last year we had at least 8 copies of *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*. History and cookbooks are usually two of our biggest categories every year, with very few duplicates. But even with many years of book fairs between us, there are always books we have never seen before. An example is the book *Jest-nuts* by L. J. Bridgman, a children's book from 1903 that combines poems about proverbs with funny pictures. Bridgman was an artist who worked in the same era as Maxfield Parrish, Beatrix Potter, and Arthur Rackham. Despite illustrating many books, he is basically unknown.

That is the lure of the Book Fair, for the volunteers who put in many unpaid hours sorting and hauling books and for the people who buy the books; over 100 years later, we have a treasure. It may or may not be valuable monetarily but it reminds us of a bit of our culture that might otherwise be lost. Of course we haven't set a date for next year's fair, though we're sure we'll have one, and we're sure it will full of literary treasures waiting to be discovered. If you'd like to get in on the fun (and hard work), you can call Debbie Ladd at 314 961-3784.



Edward Boccia Reading from his work

Celebrating National Poetry Month at the Library

In an ongoing tradition, two poets visited the library in April to read from their works. Edward Boccia, a retired Washington University fine arts professor, painter, and poet, and Matthew Freeman, a University City resident who has published two books of poems, read to a large and appreciative crowd. Afterwards they sold and signed copies of their books. This is the third year in a row that Webster Groves Public Library has featured a poetry reading during National Poetry Month, and the readings always attract good crowds of people eager to listen. Stay tuned next April for our next featured poet!



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