

Page 61:

The Newsletter of
Webster Groves Public Library, v. 3 n. 11,
July, 2008

Patriotism in Practice

The Fourth of July is upon us, and patriotism is on my mind. Patriotism has become a theme in the presidential race, which I think is good. Perhaps a real dialog will help people understand that patriotism can take many forms, and is pursued in many ways.

It is pursued, for instance, in the ongoing mission of public libraries in America. There was a recent online discussion among public librarians, lamenting how people are surprised when they meet a librarian and find that person to be charming, or witty, or adventurous, or anything that doesn't fit the public stereotype of librarians. Not all librarians are graying old maids with their hair in buns, on the lookout for someone to shush. Mostly we are soldiers on the front lines, defending the Constitution of the United States of America. Public libraries are in the business of making the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence work on a daily basis, and there's nothing boring about that.

Andrew Carnegie and other early 20th century philanthropists recognized that libraries were the great free university for the common man – that if the Declaration of Independence declared the right to the pursuit of happiness, public libraries were one of the places where that happiness could be pursued in a constructive way. This far into the 21st century we have not lost that central role of helping people study and learn, advance their knowledge, and get on in life.

No institution fights harder for freedom of speech and the right to privacy than the public library. We may even get carried away once in a while – our fervent opposition to the Patriot Act, though founded on dearly-held principles, may have been fighting a tempest in a teapot. To this date there are very few examples of libraries asked to turn over records of what patrons have read or looked at online. But we are unapologetic in putting the powers that be on notice that we base what we do on inalienable constitutional rights, and it will be hard to dissuade us from that mission.

All librarians have experienced talking to a library user who has found something that they find offensive in the collection, whether it's a novel with too much foul language, a movie with too much drug use, or a photography book with too many nude photos. They almost invariably ask us, Do you like this? Often I respond that no, I don't. But what I like has nothing to do with it. There are countless items on the shelves of the library that I would never read, and the same could be said of any public librarian in any town in America. Providing a broad spectrum of materials, something for every taste, and not discriminating based on whether we agree with certain viewpoints is central to what we do. We consider it one of our primary virtues – and moreover, we consider it a distinctly American virtue, and our patriotic duty.

tcoper@wgpl.org



JULY IN THE CHILDREN'S ROOM

ALL SUMMER READING LOGS MUST BE TURNED IN BY JULY 31st!

Wednesday, July 2: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

Thursday, July 3: Craft Time with Miss Michelle – 3 pm

Wednesday, July 9: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

Thursday, July 10: Craft Time with Miss Michelle – 3 pm

Wednesday, July 16: Storytime with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

Thursday, July 17: Craft Time with Miss Michelle – 3 pm

Wednesday, July 23: Story Time with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

BUTTERFLY BIOLOGY

PRESENTED BY
THE BUTTERFLY HOUSE

2 PM JULY 23RD

Thursday, July 24: Craft Time with Miss Michelle – 3 pm

Wednesday, July 30: Story Time with Miss Phyllis – 10 am

Thursday, July 31: Craft Time with Miss Michelle – 3 pm
ALL SUMMER READING LOGS DUE TODAY!

E-mail list growing fast: Have you signed up?

A few months ago, in response to a suggestion by patrons in one of our community engagement meetings, we started an e-mail list of people who are interested in getting library news. The list has quickly grown to include nearly 200 recipients. If you would like to have the library's newsletter and other occasional announcements e-mailed directly to you, just call the library, or tell someone at the desk next time you visit.

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 Friday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day.



This Month's Most Requested Books:

1. *Fearless Fourteen*, Janet Evanovich
2. *Sail*, James Patterson
3. *Audition: a Memoir*, Barbara Walters
4. *Phantom Prey*, John Sandford
5. *The Front*, Patricia Cornwell
6. *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, David Wroblewski
7. *The Whole Truth*, David Baldacci
8. *Three Cups of Tea*, Greg Mortenson
9. *Where Are You Now?* Mary Higgins Clark
10. *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*, David Sedaris
11. *Love the One You're With*, Emily Giffin
12. *What Happened: Inside the Bush White House*, Scott McClellan

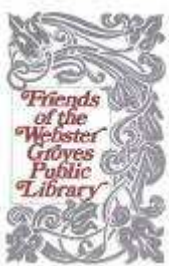
Next Month's Book Discussion Selection:

***Exit Ghost*, by Philip Roth**

Roth's fourth book about Nathan Zuckerman, following *Zuckerman Unbound*, *The Anatomy Lesson*, and *The Ghost Writer* August 5 at 6 p.m. Call 961-3784 for information.

Staff Favorites: July, 2008

1. *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley (Adult Fiction)
2. *Tristan and Isolde* (Adult DVD)
3. *Skeletons at the Feast*, Christopher Bohjalian (Adult Fiction)
4. *The Birth House*, Ami McKay (Adult Fiction)
5. *The Third Angel*, Alice Hoffman (Adult Fiction)
6. *I Shall Not Want*, Julia Spencer-Fleming (Adult Fiction)
7. *Fearless Fourteen*, Janet Evanovich (Adult Fiction)
8. *Phantom Prey*, John Sandford (Adult Fiction)
9. *Prince of Frogtown*, Rick Bragg (Adult Fiction)
10. *Carpe Diem: Put a Little Latin in Your Life*, Harry Mount (Adult Non-fiction)



Friends News

Annual Meeting Report

Thank you to everyone who attended our annual meeting on June 16. We were especially pleased to see several non-board members and 4 of our 5 new board members.

In fiscal year 2007-2008, the Friends donated the following items to the library:

- Computer workstations and installation - \$6,654
- Large Print Books - \$3,000
- Children's Summer Reading Program - \$1,750
- Children's Sport Book Sets - \$1,483
- Cricut Die Cut Machine - \$375
- Canvas Bags - \$370 (Proceeds go towards library programs for children with special needs.)
- In-Library Book Sales - \$3,385 (Proceeds go directly towards the library's general funds.)

The grand total is over \$17,000 in donations. More good news is that membership has increased to 327 households, up almost 40 from last year. Thank you to all of our members for helping to make this a successful year for the Friends.

You Asked for It: Library Adds New Magazine Titles

We recently conducted an online survey of library users, and we were a little surprised to get several comments about our magazines – how many we get, why we don't get others, how other libraries in the area seemed to have a better selection.

We have looked at the situation and we are happy to announce that with the new budget year (starting July 1), we will add no fewer than 20 new magazine titles.

Six of them have already been ordered: British Heritage, Eating Well, Fine Gardening, Kiwi, Mother Earth

News, and Mental Floss.

The rest will be ordered after July 1: Active Trader, Animal Wellness, Armchair General, Baseball Digest, Cook's Illustrated, Cottage Living, Crafts N Things, Details, The Economist, Foreign Affairs, Orion, Quilting Arts, Spin, and Yoga/Joyful Living.

Watch for these new subscriptions to start arriving, and let us know what you think!



Webster Groves Public Library 301 E. Lockwood Webster Groves, MO 63119
(314) 961-3784 www.wgpl.org
A Member of the Municipal Library Consortium of St. Louis County