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The Newsletter of
Webster Groves Public Library, v. 3 n. 2,
October, 2007

The Echo

People often come to the library looking for past issues of The Echo, the yearbook of Webster Groves High School. They call and ask if we have them, and if we have them all. Our answer is always yes and no. We have them, but we do not have them all. Our copies are donated, so we get what people donate. Our earliest edition is 1923. Our latest is 2002. In between we have good coverage of some decades, not so good for others. In the 1930s we are only missing 1932, but in the 1960s we only *have* 1962, 1964 and 1969.

There's something nice about all our copies being donations. A man came in a while back and wanted to see some copies from the '30s. He came to me a minute later, showing me how covered they were with graffiti and people's notes to one another, thinking it was vandalism that had occurred at the library. No, I told him, they come that way. These are all somebody's old year books, and they come with whatever notes were inscribed to them back in the day. He didn't like that much, but after a while I stopped back by and asked him if he was finding what he was looking for. He said he couldn't stop reading all the notes people had written to their friends. In the end, he found it to be the most fascinating part of these archival yearbooks. The notes are more formal in the 1920s and 1930s, usually just signatures. It's not until the 1940's that people start writing 'to a swell guy,' and scribbling poetry like, 'don't make love at the garden gate/love is blind but the neighbors ain't.'

The advertisements at the back of the book are also a source of information and entertainment. It's intriguing to see what businesses used to be in Webster Groves, and which ones, like Straub's Market, have been here forever. I especially like the ad from Charlie's Barber Shop in the 1950's: Hey you cool cats, come in and get that mop chopped! Local history is often where you find it, and our copies of The Echo are one of the best sources.

Of course the bad part is, we depend on people to donate them. I guess there's nobody from, say, 1947 or 1948 who's ready to give up their old yearbook. We have to wait. On the other hand, maybe somebody's sitting on an old copy, thinking they'd like to do something useful with it, and doesn't know what.

Let this serve then as our appeal to the community: we need your old yearbooks! There is a list at the library, and we'll put it on our Web site too, of the years we need. Any other donations we can keep in a storeroom where we keep spare copies of local materials, in case we lose a copy of a year.

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New Computers Are On the Way! Thanks to a State Library Grant and our Generous Friends Group!

Anyone who uses our public access computer terminals knows that for the past couple of years, they have been rapidly aging. Several have gone out of commission. We have tried to find ways to replace them, and now we can.

We were just notified that we have been awarded a grant from the Missouri State Library to purchase all-new computer terminals. The money comes from Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds, a federal program locally administered by the Missouri State Library. The exact nature of how it works is complicated, but it basically pays for 60% of the replacement equipment and the library has to pay the rest.

Or we would have to if it weren't for the generosity of our hard-working Friends group. Hearing about the grant and the new computers inspired them to offer to pay the additional amount.

Now we can provide new computer terminals for the hundreds of people who use this service every week. Watch for the new computers sometime this fall.

October in the Children's Room



October 15 – Pumpkin Decorating Contest Begins. Judging will be on October 22. For details, call 961-7262 or visit the Children's Room.

NO CARVED PUMPKINS, PLEASE!

- * Tuesday, October 9: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Wednesday, October 10: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Thursday, October 11: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Tuesday, October 23: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Wednesday, October 24: Storytime – 10 a.m.
- * Thursday, October 25: Storytime – 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. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini
2. *Bridge of Sighs*, Richard Russo
3. *Book of the Dead*, Patricia D. Cornwell
4. *Eat, Pray, Love*, Elizabeth Gilbert
5. *Run*, Ann Patchett
6. *You've Been Warned*, Richard Patterson
7. *Water for Elephants*, Sara Gruen
8. *Into the Wild*, Jon Krakauer
9. *Playing for Pizza*, John Grisham
10. *Songs without Words*, Ann Packer
11. *Bones to Ashes*, Kathy Reichs
12. *The Almost Moon*, Alice Sebold

Next Month's Book Discussion Selection:

***South of the Border, West of the Sun*, by Haruki Murakami: November 6 at 6 p.m.**

Staff Favorites: October, 2007

1. *Phantom of the Opera* (DVD – 2004 version)
2. *Funhome: a family tragicomic*, Alison Bechdel (Graphic novel)
3. *The Sari Shop*, Rupa Bajwa (Adult Fiction)
4. *Astrid and Vernonika*, Linda Olsson (Adult Fiction)
5. *A Death in the Family*, James Agee (Adult Fiction)
6. *Forbidden Games* (DVD)
7. *Freedom Writers* (DVD)
8. *Nang Nak* (DVD – in Thai with English subtitles)
9. *Kikujiro* (DVD – in Japanese with English subtitles)
10. *I am Legend*, Richard Matheson (Adult Fiction)

Long-Time Patron Fondly Recalls Her Time at the Library

At a recent meeting of the Friends of the Library, a patron spoke up about how she had been coming to Webster Groves Public Library since 1935. Debbie Ladd, president of the Friends, thought it would be a great idea to interview the patron, Janice Grossman. Here are her reminiscences:

“I first started going to the library when I was seven and had just moved to Webster in the summer of 1935. According to the book *100 Years, 100 Selma* it must have been brand new, having been built by WPA in 1935 and being between the junior and senior Webster Groves High School. I remember it just as it looks on page 5 of the aforementioned book, although I don't remember seeing students shelving there. The children's books were on the lower shelves of the south side of the reading room. I don't remember any children's programs. We children often sat on the floor looking the books over. As I grew, I was a voracious reader and every summer I used the library weekly, sometimes riding my bike one mile from Bristol Road. Bristol School had a large library, but I tired of a lot of the books. Webster Groves Public Library introduced me to the travel books of Richard Halliburton and Jane Austen novels.

In 10th or 11th grade we were required to write a term paper. My subject was the Red Cross and I was allowed to use the stacks in the Public Library on the east side of the reading room. The checkout desk was between the two rooms. Silence was rigidly imposed, but I was a talker and probably warranted any discipline.

After a short hiatus in early married life, I moved back to Webster Groves, and used the library to research programs I was giving in church women's groups and to follow historical interests I developed because of some movie or TV show, e.g. Romanovs, et cetera. My three children attended story hour in a room to the left of the hall where the bathrooms were located. I remember Miss Mardorf very well. She was so helpful and pleasant.

When my children were growing, they used the library regularly. It was two blocks from our house. As I began to get into teaching, I used the library for my resources, and I used my first computer to find books on subjects I wished to pursue.

I would say the library introduced me to the world in history and modern times. It was not my interest in high school or college. I became a lover of travel and investigating the areas I have seen.”

Do you have any special memories of the library you'd like to share? Contact Tom Cooper at tcooper@wgpl.org, or by calling 314 961-3784. We'd love to hear from you!



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