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Newsletter Contents

President's Letter	1
Editor's Letter	2
News from the Library	2
Book Sales	3
Youth Services	
SummerQuest	4
Get to Know Your Librarian	5-6
Landscaping Update	7
Friends Funds at Work	8
Adult Programs	9-10
Friends Spotlight	11-12
Books By My Bedside	12-14
Infographic	15
E-Communications	16

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Note: L Charles "Friar" FitzGerald, President of the Friends of Duncan Library and usually the author of this column, was out of town for much of the summer. In his absence, Vice-President Linda Walker wrote the column.

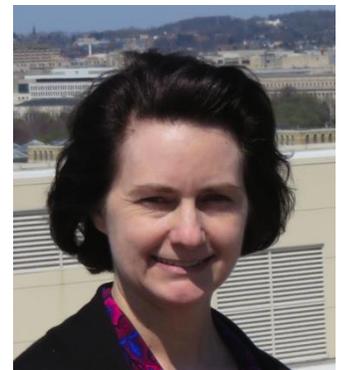
I hope everyone enjoyed the summer. What a relief it was to not be as brutally hot as it was last year! Hopefully you had a chance to visit and enjoy the First Thursday street festivals. Friends of Duncan Library volunteers were on hand for last month's event, themed "Del Ray's Got Talent...and Fashion!" We teamed up with Del Ray Variety to promote "It's Fashionable to Read," where kids (with their parents' help if needed!) could complete a worksheet that could be exchanged for a free book from Del Ray Variety.

And speaking of volunteers, we'd love for you to join our volunteer team. No matter what your interests, we can find a way to use your skills! Whether it's helping with book sales or sorting book donations, working on landscape and beautification projects, or assisting with adult programs such as the Cinema Club or Poetry Society, we've got a spot for you! Please email duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com if you are interested in becoming a volunteer.

We are always looking for new volunteers and new ways to raise funds to support the Duncan Library. We just became a part of AmazonSmile.org. If you shop on Amazon like I do, shop through AmazonSmile, and .5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases will go to the charitable organization of your choice. We're

hoping you'll choose us! Shop Amazon through the link found on our website at <http://www.friendsofduncanlibrary.org/> to support Friends of Duncan Library.

Our Fall Book Sale is just a few weeks away, to be held from November 6–8. A special Friends First Chance Preview night will be held on Wednesday, November 5. What a great time to renew your Friends membership and check out the great deals to be had! This year we're offering a special treat. We'll be selling coupons good for one children's or young adult book that make great giveaways to all those trick-or-treaters you'll be getting on Halloween! Visit our website to see when the coupons will be on sale at the Duncan Library <http://www.friendsofduncanlibrary.org/special-events/>.



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EDITOR

By Vivian Nuñez, Newsletter Editor, Friends of Duncan Library

It is a pleasure to join the Friends of Duncan Library as the new Newsletter Editor. I am originally from Colombia and lived in several countries before arriving to beautiful Del Ray. When we started looking for a neighborhood to settle down, we were seeking a place where we could be part of a community. Del Ray has proven to be that unique place and the Duncan Library has become my community.



But...

Como la nueva editora del boletín de Los Amigos de la Biblioteca Duncan estaré escribiendo en español y creando algunas secciones de interés para todos aquellos de habla hispana o que quieran practicar este bello idioma.

La Biblioteca Duncan abrió sus puertas en 1968 y desde entonces ha brindado servicios a la diversa comunidad que la rodea. Para asegurar que la biblioteca siga brindando servicios, Los Amigos de la Biblioteca Duncan, a través de diversas actividades, fortalecen los lazos entre la Biblioteca y la comunidad.

Y esta claro que la comunidad de Del Ray es una comunidad diversa, donde residen personas de todas partes del mundo y la cual ofrece un poco del mundo a quienes la visitan.

Los Amigos de la Biblioteca Duncan apoyan muchas de las actividades que la biblioteca ofrece. Por ejemplo, has participado en una de las Noches de Poesía o de Cine? Si has visitado la biblioteca en el verano, estoy segura que notaste los bellos jardines que la rodean! Y ahora en Noviembre se llevará acabo la Venta de Libros donde encontrarás lecturas interesantes a bajos precios!

Estos son solo algunos ejemplos de las actividades que apoyamos.

Así pues, que los esperamos a todos por la Biblioteca. Este espacio es de todos y para todos. Bienvenidos!

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

By Stephanie Clark, Branch Manager, Duncan Library

Just as this newsletter is being published, the National Friends of Libraries Week begins—October 20-25; so this is a perfect opportunity to say thank you to all of our Friends for the very generous support the Duncan Branch Library has received. When it's all added up—landscaping, SummerQuest programming, craft supplies, movie licenses, adult programming, teen programs, and assistance purchasing juvenile fiction and non-fiction books—the Friends contributed over \$25,000 to the Duncan Branch in fiscal year 2014. We cannot say thank you enough!



The primary way the Friends raise funds to support the Duncan Branch is through the book sales. I hope you'll join us for the November sale to support the Friends and the Duncan Branch. We appreciate all the donations throughout the year. Not only do they stock the book sales, but library staff look through them first to see if there are items we can use for the collection. Your donations save us money that we can then use to buy even more new books. Thank you!

Be a Friend. Volunteers are welcome to assist in a variety of projects that support Duncan Library and its contributions to the cultural life of the Del Ray Community. For more information, contact duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com or drop by the library for a membership form.

Did you know you can check out magazines now? The current issue is still for in-library use only, but you can check out up to 10 back issues for up to three weeks. All of our back issues are now located on the shelves along the back wall behind the Reference Desk. Feel free to browse through the boxes and check them out!

You can also stream and download music for free through Freegal Music, a new service offered through Alexandria Library. Available at <http://alexandrialibva.freegalmusic.com/homes/index>, you can download (and keep!) up to 5 songs per week and stream up to 3 hours of music per week. All you need is your library card number to log in and get started.

Please mark your calendars for the annual Holiday Open House, another great event made possible by the Friends of Duncan Library. This year, the celebration will be December 10 at 7PM. Refreshments and entertainment provided. I hope you'll join us for this fun event!

SAVE THE DATE!

Fall is here...which means our Book Sale is Coming Up!

By Peggy Sweeney, Book Sale Chair, Friends of Duncan Library

The Fall Book Sale is almost here! Come see what the generous donations have brought in—There is certain to be something for everyone! So mark your calendar:

Wednesday, Nov 5	7-9PM	First Chance Night (members only, but others can join that night)
Thursday, Nov 6	10 AM-7PM	Regular Sale
Friday, Nov 7	10 AM-6PM	Regular Sale
Saturday, Nov 8	10 AM-1PM	Regular Sale
	1-3PM	Bag Sale - Sale ends 3PM



And we are always looking for volunteers. If you would like to help with the book sale preparations or the sale itself, please contact Peggy Sweeney at dlsweeney@comcast.net. (Volunteers do not have to be members.)



SUMMERQUEST 2014: "FIZZ, BOOM, READ," SPARKS CURIOSITY

By Elisabeth Murray, Youth Services, Duncan Library

Words cannot truly capture the energy and excitement experienced by the Duncan Branch Library's Youth Services department during SummerQuest, this year themed "Fizz, Boom, Read." In July and August, we hosted 30 SummerQuest programs with almost 1,800 patrons attending. Of those programs, 21 were paid for by Friends of the Duncan Library.

During Mad Science of D.C.'s chemistry and physics program we witnessed fire tossed towards the sky. Don't worry; this was next door at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center, which has vaulted ceilings and less flammable material on site. Library super patron, Sarah Schweers, said that watching the indoor fireworks was a very memorable experience.

"I liked it because it wasn't a trick," she said. "It was science."

Other programs also sparked curiosity. At Under the Sea, we watched, captivated, as a kid stroked the sandpaper-like sides of a foot-long shark. The Duncan Branch Library overflowed with youngsters and adults, too, eager to see snakes and alligators during the ever-popular visit from Reptile World. We were also enchanted by stories told by a six-foot spider—storyteller, Gary Lloyd, in a spider costume. The rhythmic drumming of Atumpan, the Talking Drums reverberated throughout the building as our kids learned how to treat one another fairly. Plus, at one of our "Mystery Monday" science events, our young patrons constructed hovercrafts using DVDs withdrawn from our collection, made mini "lava" lamps and blew-up balloons using chemistry rather than lungpower. These experiences reflect just a few of the many notable moments from our SummerQuest programs.

I cannot say thank you enough to Friends of Duncan Library for your extremely generous financial support of our SummerQuest programming. Your commitment to children's programs allowed us to host even more performers for our six-to-twelve year old patrons this summer than in the past. We would not have been able to offer these amazingly entertaining educational opportunities without you.

Thank you!

SPECIAL THANK YOU...

For this edition of the Newsletter it is an honor to highlight Venetta Twichell Bueno, our Youth Service Assistant. Thank you, Venetta for your 30 years of dedicated service. You've touched a lot of hearts, big and little!

Venetta was hired as a library page at the E. C. Burke Branch in 1984. In 1985 she was promoted as a full time circulation assistant. In 1992, after the birth of her first son, she took a part time position in the children's department. And in 1999, she transferred to the James Duncan Branch, where since then, she has been delighting patrons with her storytelling skills and love of books.

But let's hear from Venetta in her own words...

GET TO KNOW YOUR LIBRARIAN: VENETTA TWICHELL BUENO, YOUTH SERVICE ASSISTANT AT DUNCAN LIBRARY

Are you from Alexandria? If not, from where? What drew you to Alexandria?

I was born in New London, CT. My family moved to Alexandria for my dad's job with the Navy (civilian) when I was three months old. So I feel like I am from Alexandria. It's my hometown.

Who are your favorite authors? Favorite books? Why do you love them?

My favorite books are the picture books that I use for my story times. If it's in rhyme or I can sing it, even better! I love Karma Wilson, Emily Gravett, Jane Yolen, there are too many to list.

I don't always get time for actual "grown up" books, but when I do, I enjoy YA fiction, historical fiction and the occasional romance.

What are you reading currently?

Crochet: The Complete Step-by-Step Guide, by DK Publishing, Inc.

It has so many patterns I would love to make. I'm working on one from the book now, but I can't say what it is since it is a gift for a fellow staff member.

What are your outside interests?

I love to crochet! I almost always have a project in tow with me.

I also love camping. My husband and I own 30 acres of wooded land in Spotsylvania County that we love to escape to. We have a travel trailer there, but eventually want to build something.

I love animals; we currently own a (rehomed) Doberman, three rescue cats and a ball python snake.

Do you speak any language other than English? If so, which one(s)?

English, but I am slowly learning a little Spanish.

What influenced you to become a librarian?

While all the children call me a librarian, I'm not one. I am a Youth Services Assistant, (Library Assistant II)



What gives you the most satisfaction as a librarian?

I love working in the Youth Services Department. Especially with the younger crowd, they are so honest with their feelings. If they love you, they love you. No hidden agendas.

I love doing searches for the patrons, whether young or old. A patron might come in and ask for a subject, say trucks or princess books. I always enjoy the look on their faces when I bring them a stack. More than they ever thought we would have. I also love surprising people by remembering all their children's names.

I tell people all the time how much I honestly love my job and from the number of regulars who come to my programs, I think it shows. I even have patrons who have moved to other jurisdictions that drive back to Alexandria to attend my programs weekly.

What aspect of the Duncan Library do you think is particularly laudable?

We are extremely family friendly. Our programs for children of all ages are very well attended. With the addition of Elisabeth Murray as our Youth Services Manager, those numbers have been increasing steadily!

What changes have you seen at Duncan since you began working here?

So many families! Del Ray and the surrounding areas have become the "hot spots" in Alexandria for young families.

From your observation how much are the public access computers used for functions other than social media or YouTube?

I personally don't do much with the public access computers, but I do see lots of our patrons using them for job searches and for updating their resumes.

What is your particular function at the Duncan Library?

I am the Youth Services Assistant.

I conduct both the Baby Time program on Mondays for the under ones and Stories and Songs, a multi-age program on Tuesdays. This one is so popular that I have to do it twice.

I am also in charge of processing the new books when they arrive, which is a favorite task of mine because I get to see the books first before anyone else gets them.

Do you believe that libraries primarily serve an educational function? If not, what is the primary function of a library?

I would like to say books, but we offer so much more now.

How does entertainment fit into the mission of libraries?

In the children's side, it's what catches their attention. We offer fun and educational programs that keep them coming back. Once they realize how much fun reading can be, they become library lovers for life.

What do you think are Duncan's biggest needs?

We could use more staffing in the Children's area. With our numbers for all programs on the rise, another staff member would be awesome.

And finally, how long have you been at the Duncan Library?

As of October 4, 2014, I will have worked at the Duncan branch for 15 years and a total of 30 for the library system. I was at the Burke Branch before. I've been at the Alexandria Library system so long that I was part of the group that hand entered all the books into our first computer system.

Be a Friend. Volunteers are welcome to assist in a variety of projects that support Duncan Library and its contributions to the cultural life of the Del Ray Community. For more information, contact duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com or drop by the library for a membership form.

DUNCAN LIBRARY LANDSCAPING

By Elaina Palincsar, Landscaping Chair, Friends of Duncan Library

The City of Alexandria began an Adopt-A-Garden program in which volunteers team up with the city to care for the grounds of various places. The program was a good match with the goals of the Duncan Library's landscaping program. In order to meet the requirements of the Adopt-A-Garden program a landscaping plan had to be developed and approved by both the City and Library Administration. Several landscaping companies were contacted and The Greener Side was selected because of their ability to both design and install the plants and their willingness to work the plan in phases.



The Landscaping Plan was reviewed, discussed and approved in its entirety by Mr. John Walsh, the City Horticulturist. Approval of the complete plan will ensure continuity and the project can go forward as funds become available. The work on the first phase of the project, the Commonwealth entrance, began in May funded by Friends of Duncan Library and designed and executed by The Greener Side.

The Green Roof Demonstration Garden will remain at its current location providing patrons with an idea of what the library's green roof, the first such on a public building in Alexandria, looks like. All plant materials in the landscape plan comply with the City's Adopt-A-Garden guidelines, i.e. native plants, low maintenance, no poisonous materials, among others.

With a city-approved plan, we can begin to work in earnest as Adopt-A-Garden members. Help will be needed to maintain, not just the first phase, but all the areas that surround the building. We hope the installation will inspire interest and support to facilitate the completion of the remaining phases. Improvements are planned to improve pedestrian access on the parking lot side of the library and replace the damaged bench that was removed from the circle garden with two city-approved benches. We will be reaching out to the business and civic associations as well as individuals to help support and continue this long awaited project. The plantings show respect for the importance of the library; we hope that they also give pleasure to our patrons.

FRIENDS OF DUNCAN LIBRARY IN SOCIAL MEDIA



Like us on Facebook: Friends of Duncan Library



Follow us on Twitter: @DuncanFriends

FRIENDS FUNDS AT WORK

By Carolyn Harris, Treasurer, Friends of Duncan Library

Here is the 2014 3rd Quarter* summary of income and how the Friends used the funds to support Duncan Library:



2014 3rd Quarter* Income	
*Note: Since last newsletter—June 10 through September 30, 2014	
Membership Donations	\$1,380
General Donations	\$7
Dedicated Donation (Book Sale Coupons)	\$275
VA Arts Commission Grant	\$325
Online Book Sales	\$1,032
iGive	\$31
Bank Interest	\$37
TOTAL	\$3,087

Recap: 1st & 2nd Quarter Total Income=\$7,789 & Total Expenses=\$17,163

2014 3rd Quarter* Expenses	
Adult Programs (Film, Poetry & Authors)	\$150
Young Adult/Teen Programs	\$479
Newsletter	\$150
Landscaping	\$7,525
Use of Dedicated Donation (annuals)	\$600
Library Requested Materials Children's (Books & Materials)	\$677
Supplies (color printer ink)	\$371
Equipment & Supplies	\$109
Fundraising Expenses	\$348
Operational Expenses (Includes checks, postage, accounting support, volunteer recognition, ALA annual renewal & PayPal fees)	\$389
TOTAL	\$10,798

NEW WAYS TO SUPPORT THE FRIENDS AND DUNCAN!!!

Did you know that every time you buy something at Amazon you could support Friends of Duncan Library?



Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Friends of Duncan Library whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

Here is what you have to do:

1. Go to smile.amazon.com
2. Select "Friends of Duncan Library" as your preferred charity
3. Shop!

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Leo Baca

ADULT PROGRAMS AT DUNCAN

By Leo Baca, Duncan Reference Librarian and
Walter Gross, Chair, Adult Programs Committee,
Friends of Duncan Library



Walter Gross

Cinema Club

Our last movies included Design for Living, She Done Him Wrong and Gold Diggers, movies that made us laugh and sing and kept us entertained for the duration of the screening.

Coming up next is another double feature, this time exploring the world of the double standard, Pre Code style. Norma Shearer plays a wife who catches her husband cheating on her and sets out to show that two can play that game. The second film stars Ruth Chatterton as the head of an auto manufacturing company who uses her male assistants as her sexual playthings. Both films met with box office approval but caused widespread outrage among the guardians of the public morality.

Then, on November 12, we will screen the first of three versions of the same Dashiell Hammett classic detective novel. Although the last (1941) version is the one that became a film noir classic and made Humphrey Bogart a major star, this earlier (1931) version is still entertaining, and, because it was released before the Production Code was enforced, contains scenes and dialog later judged to be taboo and excised when it was rereleased in the mid-Thirties, and forbidden in the latter version.

The December 3 offering, is a toga party disguised as biblical epic as only the great Cecil B. DeMille could depict it. Frederic March, Claudette Colbert, and Charles Laughton star in this tale of Roman hedonists versus Christian martyrs. This may be the film that broke the camel's back and forced Hollywood to abide by the Production Code, although there are so many others that could claim that distinction. Code violations

abound and although it is tame in comparison to more recent depictions of Roman decadence, it is easy to understand why so many upstanding citizens of the Thirties objected it.

Call 703 746 1705 for the titles to upcoming films.

If you love movies and like to talk about them, please join us. And **join the Cinema Club**. It's free and entitles you to notices and advance information about upcoming films. **Email me at wgross3@comcast.net**, and I will put you on the list.

THE FRIENDS OF DUNCAN LIBRARY AND
ST. ELMO'S COFFEE PUB PRESENT

PRE CODE CINEMA
1930-1934

DOUBLE FEATURE

**WHAT DOUBLE STANDARD?
WOMEN CAN BE JUST AS
TRIFLING AS MEN.**

**NORMA SHEARER AND
RUTH CHATTERTON SET
OUT TO PROVE IT!**

CODE TABOOS:

- ✓ INFIDELITY
- ✓ KEPT WOMEN
- ✓ ADULTERY
- ✓ PROMISCUITY
- ✓ PROSTITUTION
- ✓ NUDITY
- ✓ REVEALING CLOTHES
- ✓ GLORIFYING CRIME
- ✓ DRUG USE
- ✓ ALCOHOLISM
- ✓ GOLD DIGGERS
- ✓ RISQUE DIALOG
- ✓ CHILD ABUSE

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 29 AT 6:30 PM

SCREENING AT DUNCAN LIBRARY 2501 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE
POST SCREENING ROUND TABLE AT ST. ELMO'S

Poetry Society

Next meeting will be on November 10 at 7PM in the Duncan Library meeting room. Bring the two poetry collections (anthologies excluded) that you would take with you to a deserted island. We will read and discuss poems from your selections.



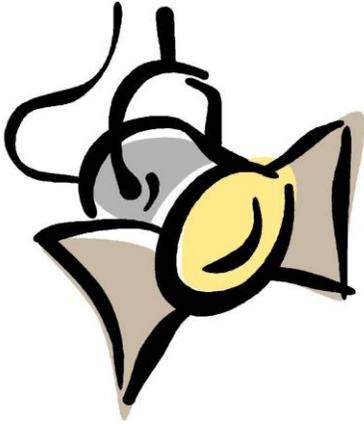
DO NOT FORGET OUR BOOK SALE!

It will take place at Duncan Library Branch from November 5-8, 2014

You can't make it?

No worries! You can still support Friends of Duncan by **becoming a member!!**

Visit our website for more information: <http://www.friendsofduncanlibrary.org/>



FRIENDS SPOTLIGHT:

Carolyn Harris - Treasurer



Where are you from?

Ah, quite a tale! I was born in El Paso, Texas and my early years were spent in Central Texas. I started 1st grade in Northern Indiana, and from there it was 12 schools in 12 years—Indiana, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Oregon, Iowa, back to Indiana. The shortest stay was 3 weeks and the longest was my entire high school years in one place! My parents were just wanderers, I guess. It's usually easiest to say I'm from Indiana.

Who are your favorite authors? Favorite characters/genres? Why do you love them?

Robertson Davies is my favorite author, and I was fortunate to hear him speak and read from his work. I also like Gail Tsukiyama, who I heard at the National Book Festival one year. I also am a fan of Kim Murphy and her James River plantation ghost tales. Kim, who lives in Charlottesville, was one of the first Duncan Author Talks speakers; we are now FaceBook Friends! For lighter reading I have all of Victoria Thompson's Gaslight Series, which is set in turn of the century NYC. And, Emilie Richards is a local author I enjoy, who has a series based on quilting and another mystery series. I really enjoy stories that challenge me to solve something, figure out a path, or educate about something new to me. So, I read many mysteries, and I also enjoy character-driven stories, a little romance, and some fantasy.

What are you reading currently?

I'm listening to All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr, and I'm reading Espresso Stories by Alexander McCall Smith. All the Light is parallel stories of Werner and Marie-Laure set in France toward the end of WWII. It is, by turns, enchanting and horrifying, and I'm "hooked." Espresso Tales is a light serial novel about four residents of the same building, 44 Scotland Street. I'm really rooting for six year old Bertie to make his break away!

What do you do professionally?

Fortunately, I am retired now. I worked primarily in the education field as a public school teacher, a computer program curriculum developer, an adjunct professor, and a researcher. I really enjoyed working with students—the paperwork not so much.

What are your outside interests?

I am a singer, and currently I'm preparing a "parlor recital" with a friend who is a pianist. I have a terrific voice teacher, who guides me. I also am a "sewist," and I enjoy making quilts and garments and creating machine embroidery. I've made around 50 baby quilts, and there's one in progress right now. I enjoy bicycle riding, but after my lumbar spinal fusion I wasn't doing so well climbing the hills to my home. I added an electric assist, and now I can get a "boost" when I need it. Watch for me on my little red bike!

When did you join the Friends of Duncan Library?

I am one of the early Duncan Friends, and I think it's been about 10 years. I've always held an office, and now I am treasurer. However, I'd like to encourage other Friends to think about replacing me next election. Change is good.

What aspect of the Duncan Library do you think is particularly laudable?

Duncan is simply a warm, welcoming place that I think must feel quite comfortable to most people. This is apparent from the staff to the programs. I believe the Friends has an excellent relationship with the Branch Manager and staff, and I feel good about how our Friends contribute to the "awsomeness" of Duncan.

Tell our readers something that might surprise us about you.

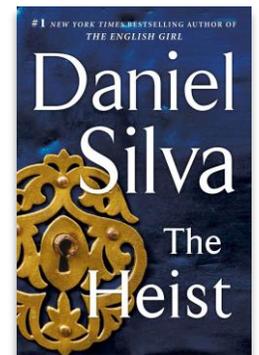
I am taking adult ballet lessons from Miss Lynn. I started a year ago, and I can see progress. When I was a girl I took ballet class—cut short after my mother told me I was graceful as a cow. Everyone in my class now is very supportive, and I really enjoy the barre work—it's almost meditative to me.

BOOKS BY MY BEDSIDE

This column features books that Duncan Staff and Duncan Friends are currently reading or have recently read. If you'd like to contribute to a future newsletter issue, please contact our new Newsletter Editor, Vivian Nuñez at vivian@infinitymedia.im.

From L Charles "Friar" FitzGerald, President, Friends of Duncan Library:

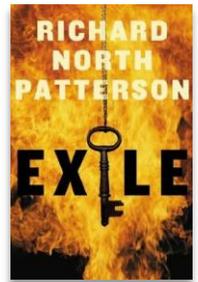
The Heist, the fourteenth in Daniel Silva's Gabriel Allon series, is one of the best. Allon's work as a world-renowned art restorer of grand masters serves as an ideal cover for his other job as a high echelon Mossad agent. In this story he transitions from being one spy among many to becoming Israel's top intelligence chief—a job he neither aspires to nor has he sought. Here, as in other of Silva's books, you will see how stolen artwork serves as a substitute for money in the world of corrupt governments and their equally corrupt leaders. While very well written, the plot is at times a bit disjointed and overcomplicated. Fortunately, however, the characters remain fresh and engaging. If you are as much an aficionado of espionage thrillers as I am, you will want to read this fast paced book. And if you haven't yet read this series, don't delay.



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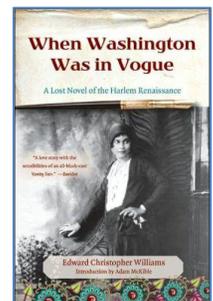
From Jill Murphy, Membership, Friends of Duncan Library:

Exile by Richard North Patterson is a political and legal thriller. If you have strong opinions around Israeli/Palestinian conflict, you may want to steer clear of this book. Set in San Francisco, the first few chapters move between the present day and 13 years ago during David Wolf's final year of law school at Harvard where he has a fleeting and secret romance with a betrothed Palestinian woman. David is Jewish but not practicing or strongly tied to his Jewish roots. Skip back to present day, he is a practicing defense attorney engaged to Carol, whose father survived the Holocaust. They are the upper crust of San Francisco's Jewish community, and the story culminates when the day after entertaining the prime minister of Israel, he is murdered while riding in a motorcade to the airport. David and Carol witness the car bomb first hand. A few days later, David's long lost love from law school calls; she needs a defense attorney as she has just been arrested for the assassination.



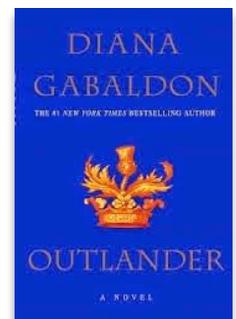
Lisa Giambruno, Secretary, Friends of Duncan Library:

I read a lot of great books this summer but my favorite by far was the All Alexandria Reads pick of **'When Washington Was in Vogue: A Love Story'** by Edward Christopher Williams. This 1926 love story written and set during the Harlem Renaissance was lost until recently. Be sure to read the fascinating forward by Professor Adam McKible, who rediscovered the novel while doing research as a graduate student. (Alexandria Library had Adam McKible speak about the book as one of their All Alexandria Reads events, and I am still kicking myself for having missed it.) This epistolary novel primarily documents a love story while giving the narrator, Davy Carr, plenty of opportunities to comment on race and class in 1920s Washington, DC. The book has been compared to the 'Great Gatsby' since it was published in serial format around the same time and takes place in the same era. It reminded me more of Jane Austen's novels, particularly 'Emma'. I really enjoyed this novel and don't think it is something I'd have run across if the Alexandria Library hadn't highlighted it this past summer. I can't wait to see what the Alexandria Library picks for their next All Alexandria Reads program.



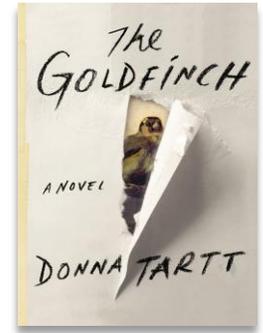
From Linda Walker, Vice-President, Friends of Duncan Library

Outlander is a book written by Diana Gabaldon, published over 20 years ago. In the summer of this year (2014!), it was made into a television show on Starz. I knew about the show before I knew about the book. I watched the first few episodes, became hooked, learned there was a book, and I think you can figure out what happened from there! The female protagonist is Claire Randall, a British nurse who served during World War II. Her husband Frank was also in the military. After the war, the two are reunited and travel for a second honeymoon to Scotland, where Frank also works on researching his family history. Claire, in the countryside on her own one-day, visits a site containing some ancient stones (think Stonehenge in Scotland). The next thing she knows, she is no longer in Scotland in the mid-1940s; she has been magically transported to Scotland in the mid-1740s. There, Claire immediately runs into a man in a British Army uniform, who is the spitting image of her husband. The man turns out to be Captain Jack Randall, a many times great-grandfather of her husband Frank. Their meeting does not go so well. Just before Jack "compromises" Claire, she is whisked away (kidnapped!) by a band of Scottish highlanders. One of the highlanders is injured, and Claire uses her nursing skills to help him. That highlander is the male protagonist, who is introduced as Jamie McTavish. And so the story begins. If you like a book or television show that includes elements of fantasy, romance, history, and humor, Outlander might just be for you!



Stephanie Clark, Branch Manager

The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt was a bit of a disappointment. The first section of the book is really good—what you would want and expect from this author. But then the story falls apart and just did not hold my attention. It felt like work to read the middle section, and the final section picks up somewhat but there's no real ending. There were sections that felt like really good short stories that had been cobbled together. Some much tougher editing was needed to pull what could have been a compelling story together. As anticipated and in demand as this title has been it just does not compare to her earlier titles. *The Secret History* and *The Little Friend* are more compelling and better-written stories, well worth the time to read the 500+ pages of each.

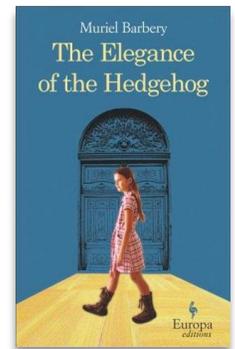


I Am the Beggar of the World: Landays from Contemporary Afghanistan translated and presented by Eliza Griswold is a short book of two-line poetry shared primarily among women in Afghanistan. The author explains this oral tradition and its subtle rebellions as well as how the poetry changes over time to fit current events. I really enjoyed this book, but I did wish there had been more landays included.

Ruth Hailu, Reference Librarian

In **The Elegance of the Hedgehog**, by Muriel Barbery, we have two narrators: a concierge to an apartment occupied by well-to-do families, and a 12 year old girl, the daughter of one of the residents who hates her upper-class life, wanting to kill herself rather than continue to live with them.

The girl, Paloma, comes to the concierge's lodge whenever she can, and bad mouths her parents and the neighbors. The concierge, Ms. Renée Michel, is a middle aged, self-taught intellectual who can hold her own discussing Tolstoy, Proust, Plato, Descartes and all other classical writers and philosophers. Yet, she does not want her wealthy tenants to know about her knowledge. She, in turn, holds contempt for them, and says that "friendship across class lines is impossible."



Still, Ms. Michel became friends with Mr. Ozu, an art lover and a very cultured gentleman from Japan. One day, she made an offhand comment that alerted Mr. Ozu to her love of literature. He treats her as an equal; invites her to his tastefully furnished apartment; and they became good friends, continuing to discuss the nature of beauty, art and literature.

The author, a philosophy teacher in Paris, seems to insert philosophy in everyday life. It's no wonder millions of copies were sold in France where philosophy is a compulsory subject in all the lyceums, and where most people know about the great thinkers. But everything in the book seems to suggest that class distinction decides everything; however, I think this seems a far cry from the reality in France. It is not a book I would suggest for a beach-read, but it's a great book.

Have you read a great book? Tell us about it!

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