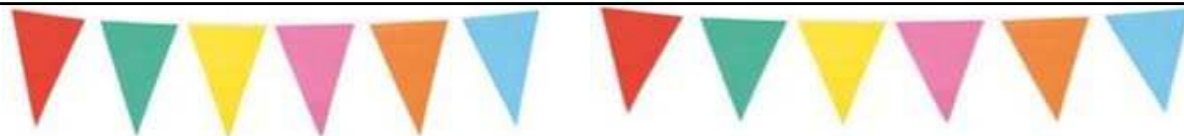




Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301

duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com



**Please join the Friends of Duncan Library & the
Duncan Library Staff for a Dessert Reception to Welcome
Our New Branch Manager, Pat Ryckman.**

**Wednesday, September 28th
7:00 to 8:30 pm**

James M. Duncan Branch Library
2501 Commonwealth Ave.

Fall Book Sale!! October 12-15, 2011

Are you missing the opportunity to browse through bookstores to find some treasures? Do you remember happening upon books that became lifetime favorites just because you had the opportunity to search the shelves? The Fall Book Sale provides an opportunity both to clear some room on the bookshelves by donating books for sale and to refill those spaces with some of the wonderful books that have been donated by generous neighbors. Over 3,000 items will be available including books, audio books and DVDs. If you haven't been before you may be surprised to see so many recent publications and since they have been donated by your friends and neighbors you can be sure that many will be of interest. There will be over 1,000 books for children so bring them along to enjoy the special events! The schedule is:

Wednesday, October 12: Duncan Friends Preview Night	6:00pm -9:00 pm
Thursday, October 13	10:30am -7:00 pm
Friday, October 14	10:30am -6:00 pm
Saturday, October 15	10:30am -4:00 pm

If you have a little time to help please consider helping us to sort books and man the sale to the public. You will meet some wonderful neighbors who are dedicated to our library and you will make a big difference in our community by investing just a few hours of your time. Please contact duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com to find out more.

Book, audio book, CD and DVD donations are being accepted now. Please bring your items to the front desk of the library.

President's Letter: New Faces and New Books

We extend a warm welcome to our new Branch Manager, Pat Ryckman. Please introduce yourself to Pat when visiting the library and join us for her welcome reception on September 28th.

As the Fall Book Sale approaches, we welcome your donations of books, CDs and DVDs and hope that you will find the time to volunteer for a couple of hours. The enthusiasm of the organizers and other volunteers makes the brief volunteer time a lot of fun.

The Amazon wish list for the Friends of the Duncan Library is a big success. Staff add new selections frequently. If a book on the list interests you please consider donating it to the library and asking that the library staff notify you as soon as it is received. See page 8 for more details on how to donate.

The summer included wonderful children's programs including activities for students in high school and older, Author Talks continue over a wide range of topics along with first rate movies and our lively book club. Come to the book club even if you haven't read the book and enjoy a wide range of opinions from a group that is sure to make you feel welcomed.

Due to the hard work of the Beautification Committee and volunteers our library remains a vital asset to our neighborhood. The Friends continue to support the Duncan Library in many ways, helping the staff, raising money and making our library the best that we can for our patrons. We are grateful for your continued support and encourage your suggestions.

Tony Springer, President, Duncan Friends

Friends' Funds at Work

By Carolyn Harris, Treasurer, Duncan Friends

Duncan Friends continue to support the services and programs of Duncan Library. Here's a summary of how the Friends have used funds in the third quarter of 2011:

Summer Quest Programs & Materials	2,950
Adult Programs: Author Talks Book Purchases & Refreshments	55
Beautification	250
Fundraising Costs: Book Sale Banner update, Volunteers Food	145
G&A: QuickBooks Training, Printing & Postage, State Filing Fee	<u>275</u>
Total	\$3,675

Duncan Library News and Notes

By Kyle Maier, Duncan Library

First and foremost, we would like to welcome our new Branch Manager, Pat Ryckman, who is new both to Duncan Library as well as to Alexandria. Pat comes to us from North Carolina. Please stop by and introduce yourself to her when you are at the library.

The summer was jammed packed full of activities at Duncan Library. Our reading programs for the children were quite successful and attendance was high. Many of the events were filled to capacity and all the programs received great reviews from our young patrons. Our thanks go out to the Friends for supporting these activities that help keep children interested in reading and learning during their school vacations.

If you have some spare time, the library is always in need of new volunteers to assist with shelving materials. If you are interested in a volunteer position, please send an email to Ruth Hailu at rhailu@alexandria.lib.va.us.

We look forward to seeing you at the library!

The Duncan Book Discussion Group: Cleopatra, A Life

By Ruth Hailu, Duncan Library Reference Librarian

In August, the Duncan Book Group discussed "Cleopatra, A Life," the biography of the Egyptian queen by Stacy Schiff. The book uses the original sources written near the events to separate facts from fiction in the life of Cleopatra. The book brought up some interesting topics of discussion for the book group, but the text itself is hard to make your way through at first. While full of interesting facts about Cleopatra and the time period, the lack of a story driving it forward makes for a slow read—until Caesar and Mark Antony enter the picture. When they are introduced, the book picks up speed since the reader is now following a proper story and not just a collection of facts. The story of Cleopatra and Antony is so filled with political intrigue, war and romance that this section of the book could compare to the latest summer page turner in its gripping effect on the reader. Schiff improves the story by showing that Cleopatra's persuasion and political power had more to do with her romance than any great beauty. For proof, just take a look at the images of Cleopatra on the pictures of the Egyptian coins included in the book.

Cleopatra lived until her late thirties, dying thirty years before the birth of Christ. Although she lived 2000 years ago, she knew the earth was spherical and revolved around the sun and that one could sail from Spain to India. The pyramids were already 2500 years old and sported graffiti when Cleopatra took Caesar to her country's well

known tourist attraction. Throughout the book Schiff shows how the time period in which Cleopatra lived allowed her to flourish as a woman ruler. Egypt at the time allowed legal rights for women that were unmatched in Rome or other contemporaneous cultures. In fact, Schiff shows that because of her great fortune, there is no equal match today.

The biggest surprise is perhaps that Cleopatra was not of Egyptian ancestry. Three hundred years before, Alexander the Great had put the first of the Greek Ptolemy family on the throne of Egypt. Cleopatra was to be the last. For those three hundred years the Ptolemy family followed a practice of sibling marriage in order to protect their family dynasty. Cleopatra's parents were brother and sister. Schiff points out in numerous places in the book that Cleopatra's public relations spin of the time was to associate her and her children with the Egyptian gods in order to reinforce their power.

The book group's discussion centered on the role of women in Egypt and discussed some of the historical facts that Schiff mentions which were not commonly known. Although Schiff does not dwell on the slavery which existed in Egypt at the time, the book group's discussion included comments on that institution as part of the discussion of the culture in Egypt and Rome at the time. Once again, the many opinions and comments from the group made for an interesting evening.

WATCH YOUR MAIL FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL LETTER

By Carolyn Harris, Acting Membership Chair

Duncan Friends annual membership campaign has just kicked off. As we head into the fall membership drive, we have 143 Friends who have donated \$5, 585 since last October. Please complete your form and return it as soon as possible, and think about increasing your donation amount. Duncan still has many, many needs that aren't covered by the City budget. Think about volunteering, too; the Friends also have many needs for help including a proper Membership Chair. And, tell your friends and neighbors about the good work we do to support Duncan Library and encourage them to join and make a tax deductible contribution. Forms are available at the library or send a request to duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com. Wouldn't it be terrific to reach a goal of 200 Friends for the coming year? Let's make it happen!

Summer Quest 2011

By Kyle Maier, Duncan Library

Summer Quest was quite successful again this year and the programs attracted children to the library on a regular basis. We drew more than 2,100 people to our special Children's Programs over the summer and had more children claim their certificates for fulfilling the reading goal of at least 10 books for school-age children.

We had two different programs, one for the younger children, ages 0-5 years, and one for school-age children, ages 6-12 years. The Duncan Friends financially support the programs for the older age group; we also receive financial assistance from the Virginia Commission for the Arts for the program by Barefoot Puppets.

This year's theme was One World, Many Stories. In a region that has residents from such diverse backgrounds, this theme seemed to be meant for Alexandria. It also made it easy to choose a variety of performers.

We began with Magician Joe Romano – kids ask about him throughout the year! He is a definite crowd pleaser, and I was as delighted as the kids when his show was almost completely new to us (not that we have figured out past tricks).

Barefoot Puppets returned again this year and we could not really have fit any more children into the room. This year I was smart enough to stake out my floor space in advance but I still had to defend it from the crowds. They presented 3 Anansi the Trickster stories and afterwards they showed us how the puppets work.

Bill Jenkins returned with new musical instruments for us to try from his trips to both Asia and South America. It's always fun to play along with Bill or to his recordings of Santana.

Next Andrew returned from Under the Sea wearing one of his required wild print shirts. He brought

various fish and crabs and other sea creatures to show to us. The puffer fish is always a big hit! Unfortunately a wild thunderstorm spanned his entire program and kept attendance down.

A surefire draw at Duncan Library is live animals, and Animal Ambassadors did not disappoint. Becky introduced us to a parrot, a hog-nosed snake, a tarantula, a pygmy hedgehog, and a bearded dragon. I think that many of us were split into two groups: those that wanted a pygmy hedgehog for a pet and those that preferred a bearded dragon.

Shazam Magic made a first appearance at Duncan and he was well worth the wait. He entranced us with feats of prestidigitation and legerdemain. Yes, he did explain to us what the words meant as well as how they are pronounced.

Blue Sky Puppets also made their first trip to Duncan where they presented The Three Not-So-Little Pigs which involved an original take on the traditional story as well as a rocket ship.

Finally we had the Maryland Science Center come to finish up the season with their program on matter entitled, "What's the Matter". This required a lot of materials changing their state of matter, frequently involving the use of fire, much to the delight of the children. I was worried when I did not see their cannon, which they usually set off at the conclusion of their program. "Not to worry," they assured me; they had other ways to make loud noises and explosions. They told the truth!

Again I would like to thank the Friends for supporting the library in offering these programs. I know the children and I had a great time attending them; more than 500 attended the 8 programs. I always have fun planning them. These summer enrichment programs keep children involved with the library and encourage them to keep reading for pleasure and to enhance their literacy skills for school.

Author Talk: by Maria Lima

Blood Sacrifice

By Leonard Goldstein, Chair, Author Talks/ Adult Programs

What does a young woman in a paranormal family (think shapeshifters, werewolves, and faes, oh my!), comfortably settled in Rio Seco, a town in the Texas Hill Country, do when she falls in love with a handsome vampire and finds that it's becoming more and more complicated to get along with the town's humans and with her own family? That, along with mysterious deaths, disappearances, and conflicts among the supernatural community, has been heroine Keira Kelly's problem for the entire Blood Lines series of novels, and on August 31 their author, Maria Lima, addressed a group of 13 to introduce the just-published fifth and last of the series, *Blood Sacrifice*.

Though born in Cuba, Maria came to the US as a young girl. She and her family spent some years on the east coast; she was placed directly into schools with no ESL classes to help her figure out what was happening, causing her to feel very much an outsider from society (a situation which later helped her shape the character of Keira).

Maria's family eventually settled in Lago Vista, Texas, a very small town much like Rio Seco (there were six students in her high school graduating class), where she could finally feel at home. Lago Vista had its drawbacks—it was located in a "dry" county, which meant you had to drive 35 miles for a beer—but it had the small-town neighborly feel of a place where everyone knew everyone else, and this is where Maria eventually decided she would set Keira and her family.

When Maria settled on the Blood Lines series, she had trouble at first selling her books, because publishers called them "unclassifiable" —there was nowhere on the shelf (or computer database) where they quite fit. Now there is a category, paranormal romance, and the genre has advanced to the point that there are young-adult versions with "sparkling vampires."

Another problem she had to confront when creating her series was what "rules" of vampirism she was going to include in her own world of the supernatural. She decided that she would have to include the existence of magic and spells—it would be hard to have vampires and werewolves without it—but she would ignore purely arbitrary ideas, such as the inability of vampires to cross a threshold without being invited in. So vampires are very sensitive to sunlight (as are albinos) and a stake through the heart will kill them—as Maria notes, a stake through the heart will kill just about anyone. But they can be seen in a mirror—they're real, they're physical objects, how could a mirror not reflect them?

It takes Maria about nine months to turn out a book, with the first half of that time devoted just to figuring out what the book will be about and how it will fit in with the others. She confesses that she just can't follow the hallowed advice of many authors, to write something every day, if only a thousand words, in a disciplined, orderly process. Instead, normally on a Friday or Saturday she'll sit down and turn out a big chunk of text—one week she did 36,000 words, a sizable portion of a 98,000-word book.

Her master plan for Blood Lines was temporarily derailed when after the appearance of *Blood Heat*, the fourth volume in the series, her publisher told her they'd be issuing just one more book. Maria had to take some extra time to work out how to condense her planned final two volumes into one slightly longer book and tie up every loose end in the series, going back as far as Volume 1, *Matters of the Blood*, while still leaving the way clear for a possible extension of the tale in years to come.

Maria concluded her talk with the plans for her next project—the recording of the entire Blood Lines series on audio books. Her first step will be to brush up on her Welsh pronunciation to portray the Welsh-speaking branch of Keira's family. If only they'd been Latino!

Author Talk: by Liz Seccuro *Crash Into Me*

By Leonard Goldstein, Chair, Author Talks/ Adult Programs

In the fall of 1984 Liz Seccuro, then a U. Va. freshman, attended a frat party. She ended up drugged and then gang-raped. Though she reported it to U. Va. authorities, it was glossed over, and she was erroneously told that Charlottesville police had no jurisdiction over the fraternity house involved; it was strictly a matter to be handled internally. Questions were raised as to how unwilling she had actually been, and even her mother's first question was "What were you wearing?" Finally tired of struggling and getting nowhere—though her chief attacker dropped out shortly afterwards with academic problems—she let the matter drop and eventually finished her undergraduate program. She could not hand her attackers a victory by moving to another school, as if it had been her fault.

Over 20 years later she received a letter from the chief attacker, acknowledging his role and seeking forgiveness. Liz spoke at the Duncan Library on Wednesday, June 29, 2011 about her book *Crash Into Me*, which details the consequences of that letter and her subsequent search for justice. She started by taking a poll of the 26 in the audience, asking them to close their eyes and then raise their hands if they'd ever been sexually assaulted or knew of anyone who had been. It turned out that the "Yeses" were about 40% of the group, which Liz told us was a surprisingly low figure. Rape is still a problem in this country. While we may not have incidents like that of journalist Lara Logan, who was raped with the involvement of nearly 200 men in Cairo while reporting on the anti-Mubarak

demonstrations last February, we are still too likely to react to such happenings with questions like "What did she expect? Why was she in Egypt anyway?" An 11-year-old was attacked? Why did she dress older than 11? She was wearing lipstick, wasn't she?

Sexual assault is a widespread crime which is too frequently not publicly discussed. Other national problems such as AIDS and autism have received wider public awareness through the national programs, and it is Liz's hope that the group One in Four (the ratio of college women who have survived rape or attempted rape), primarily organized by and directed at college men, will do the same for sexual assault and rape (though she noted that some men have been found to join because it makes them appear more sensitive and sympathetic to women they're trying to attract).

Liz finished her talk by reading the opening pages of her book, which recount the shock and terrible memories brought back when years after, out of the blue, she received a letter just as she, her husband, and their little daughter were about to get in the Escalade and go off on vacation. The letter, whose most frightening aspect was that he had somehow found her married name and address (quite easily, from the U. Va. alumni association, it turned out), was from William Beebe, her rapist, asking her to get in touch with him. His name appears in her book, but it was never uttered at the talk. After all these years Liz still can't bring herself to say it aloud.

Upcoming Author Talk

Gary Sarnoff will be at Duncan Library on Wednesday, October 26, just about World Series time, to tell us about his book *The Wrecking Crew of '33: The Washington Senators' Last Pennant*, which title, sadly, pretty well sums up the state of major-league baseball in Washington for most of the time it's existed here. But there's always next year...

Stay tuned for announcements of future talks! Author Talks are given at Duncan Library on a monthly basis; they are free and open to all. A copy of each book discussed, signed by its author, is added to Duncan's collection through funding by the Friends of Duncan Library.

Poetry Reading by Neva Herrington *Blue Stone and Her BMW*

How do you preserve the memory and come to terms with the passing of a beloved daughter who died of heart failure, was brought back to life in the hospital four times, and then six months later died again in a murder that wasn't solved for eight years? Poet and creative writing professor Neva Herrington did it in a chapbook, or small book of poems, that she wrote both before and after her daughter Elizabeth's final death in Fredericksburg in 1994. On the evening of July 13 she read a selection of poems from that chapbook, *Her BMW*, and from an earlier collection, *Blue Stone*, to an enthusiastic audience of 23.

Neva's presentation, and the poems themselves, were not unbroken outpourings of gloom and despair. The poems covered a wide variety of subjects—walking through a giant model of a heart at a world's fair exhibit while it thumps all around you, a sonnet about buying coffee cake at the local, much-missed Brenner's Bakery, even reminiscence about appearing, during her college days, in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the future Barbara Bush. And of course there are the occasional strange questions she gets at readings: "Are those real poems or did you write them yourself?"

But the main part of Neva's reading was devoted to the poems about her daughter, from subjects like what became of the BMW she loved to drive, to the Pegasus helicopter that airlifted her to the hospital, to, finally, the geranium plant that Neva named for her daughter, and which also passes through episodes of near-death, only to flourish again. Let's end with that poem and the hope it expresses. As Neva says, there's not enough joy in the world.

NAMESAKE

The leaves of the geranium I named
for her are curled up like her hands
the night of her heart attack, a sign,
the nurse said, she was giving up.
But she let death go that time.

So this geranium, four years ago
all leaves when I invoked
her spirit on its behalf, scared
if nothing changed, eternity
might also have its boundaries,

shortly flowered in such abundance
friends noticed. Now these stiffened stems
look past treatment as usual,
at risk to prove her here in a flower,
performing for joy in the world.



Duncan Library

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**Friends of Duncan
Library Newsletter:**

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GET INVOLVED - Duncan Library's Amazon.com Wish List

Help stock our children's library with supplies as story time programs re-launch in September, or purchase an item to be put on Duncan's shelves! The Friends of Duncan Library's Amazon Wish List is now updated and available at amazon.com—search "Friends of Duncan Library." All items go DIRECTLY to the Duncan Library. Thank you for your support!

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