



## President's Letter

Spring has arrived in Alexandria. Besides lovely weather, more daylight hours and flowers blooming everywhere, what does this season mean for the Duncan Library? Two things of great importance: the city's budget and the Friends spring book sale.

The city's budget will be finalized by City Council on May 6th, and it doesn't look particularly good for the library system. Even though our real estate assessments have gone up - as will the actual tax rate - the budget as it stands now proposes to reduce the city's library allocation, including eliminating positions and cutting back Duncan's hours of operation by two hours a week. The current proposal will eliminate evening hours one night a week, leaving Duncan with only one late night. Evening hours are critical for working families and programs in our only meeting room. Between 2011 when the hours were cut and 2012 when they were restored Duncan saw a 50% increase in checkouts during evening hours. The meeting room is in constant demand on Monday and Wednesday evenings, month after month.

What can you do? Contact the City Council on the city's website: <https://alexandriava.gov/council> and in the text, click on the blue ink to send a group e-mail to the Mayor and Members of the City Council. You can also stop by the library and sign a petition not to cut the budget, thus allowing Duncan to remain open on Monday nights. Whichever way you choose, take a stand.

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### Duncan Library's Spring Book Sale!!

The Book Sale starts with the Friends Preview: First Chance Night on Wednesday, May 1, 7-9 pm

It is open to the public on:  
Thursday, May 2, from 10 am to 7 pm  
Friday, May 3, from 10 am to 6 pm, and  
Saturday, May 4, from 10 am to 3 pm

**Friends, we need your help!** Watch for the email or mail requesting that you sign up for 1 or more shifts on VolunteerSpot. You'll have fun and your library and community will benefit!

And this year we have a new bonus for volunteers--earn a free book for every shift worked! There will be lots to choose from!

Any questions, please call Peggy Sweeney at 703-577-0561

## President's Letter – continued from page 1

The Spring Book Sale is fast approaching. For the best picks, Friends-Only First Chance Preview Night is Wednesday, May 1st. The sale will be open to the general public during library hours on the 2nd and 3rd as well as in the morning of Saturday, the 4th. Please come browse and buy a book, a CD, or DVD at the cheapest prices in the area. Your purchase will go a long way toward helping the library maintain its programs during these fiscally challenging times. While you're at it, join the Friends or re-up your membership. For further information about membership, contact Gay Hurst at [gay\\_hurst@yahoo.com](mailto:gay_hurst@yahoo.com) or to volunteer during the book sale, please contact Peggy Sweeney at 703-577-0561 or by email at [dlsweeney@comcast.net](mailto:dlsweeney@comcast.net).

I can think of two especially marvelous programs that have resulted from your membership, your interest and your book purchases: the Poetry Society and the Duncan Film Club, both under the guidance of Adult Programs Chair Walter Gross ([wgross33@comcast.net](mailto:wgross33@comcast.net)). The Poetry Society debuted in February and was a great success. Its subsequent meeting on April 8th was a reading and discussion of the Beat Poets and took place at St. Elmo's - what better place - earlier this month. Your contributions have allowed the Friends to enhance Duncan's poetry collection and will continue to do so as recommendations flow in.

What can I say about the Film Club? It's been wildly successful and meets on the first Wednesday of every month. In addition to film noir, the club is introducing the film legacy of Alfred Hitchcock. Your membership contributions and book sale receipts provided the necessary funds to substantially upgrade Duncan's audiovisual capabilities.

I cannot stress too emphatically our need for volunteers. Without members donating time and energy, the Friends will be sorely pressed to fill board vacancies or to undertake the wide variety of tasks that the library has come to depend upon; e.g., shelving books, book sale preparation, beautification of the Duncan grounds, and many more functions for which library staff is not available.

Last, but certainly not least, Duncan's new librarian, Stephanie Clark, has settled in and brings with her a great deal of energy and many new ideas. If you haven't met her, please stop by and say hello. At the same time you can tell Stephanie what you can contribute to help Duncan continue to be the wonderful neighborhood library that we've all come to know and love.

That's it for now. I - along with my colleagues on the Friends Board of Directors - welcome your thoughts and suggestions. Contact information is included in this newsletter. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president.

Friar  
*President, Friends of Duncan Library*



## Books by My Bedside

This column features books that Duncan Staff and Duncan Friends are currently reading or have recently read.

### From Stephanie Clark, Branch Manager, Duncan Library:

*Richest Woman in America: Hetty Green in the Gilded Age* by Janet Wallach

This biography of Hetty Green is interesting in its parallels to today's financial markets. Hetty Green and her family believed there was an obligation to increase their wealth and prosperity for the next generation. Hetty learned her father's lessons well. She used that knowledge to buy when others panicked and sold; and she invested in more conservative options while others chased the most recent Wall Street bubble (Warren Buffet seems to be this era's version of Hetty Green). This is a fascinating story of one woman's relationship to wealth and an interesting description of her time.

### From L Charles "Friar" FitzGerald, President, Duncan Friends:

*Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher* by Timothy Egan. Justifiably famous photographer Edward Curtis was thirty-two years old in 1900 when he gave up everything to capture on film the Native American Nation before it disappeared forever. Egan's incredible adventure narrative and penetrating biography tells that untold story behind Curtis's iconic photographs that document the stories and rituals of more than eighty Native American tribes. An excellent read!

*Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn is a New York Times Best Seller, a category of books I generally don't read. However, in this fast paced, sharply written and ingeniously plotted suspense thriller about a marriage gone terribly, terribly wrong I made an exception.... and I'm glad I did. It's a book that you'll either love or hate; there is no in-between.

### From Carolyn Harris, Treasurer, Duncan Friends

*The Garden of Evening Mists* by Tan Twan Eng

Missed connection on international flight but luckily rerouted, of course in a middle seat. I had tears running down my face as I finished this book. The author's use of language is exquisite. The novel takes place during three different time periods: the late 1980s, when the main character writes down her story, the early 1950s, when the main action takes place, and WWII, which provides the backdrop for the story. Yun Lung Teoh, a Chinese Malay, returns to the Cameron Highlands after a successful career as a lawyer and judge and the sole survivor of a brutal wartime internment camp. In the Highlands, she meets Aritomo, the former gardener for the Emperor of Japan. Despite her hatred of the Japanese, Judge Teoh becomes Aritomo's apprentice so she can learn to build a Japanese garden in memory of her sister who died in the camp. The story is filled with historical and specialty information about Japanese gardens, archery, and tattooing, and there are many secrets and mysteries that unfold along with much sadness.

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**From Peggy Sweeney, Book Sale Chair, Duncan Friends: as a teacher, grandparent, and curriculum developer, I am especially interested in books for children.**

*Unspoken: A Story from the Underground Railroad*, by Henry Cole.

One of my recent discoveries, this wordless book is told from the point of a young girl who discovers someone hiding in her barn. The beautiful illustrations drew me into the story, and the ending had me in tears. The pictures and story are simple enough for a young child (once they know about slavery), but the subject is haunting enough to hold the attention of an older child (or adult).

*We Were There, Too: Young People in U.S. History* by Phillip H. Moose

Another of my recent discoveries was while doing some research. It is a wonderful collection of true stories of children in history, from young sailors with Columbus to Ryan White dealing with discrimination at school. The stories are truly inspiring, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading them. My only concern is that the size of the book might prove daunting to some students. It would be ideal if teachers had a way to selectively assign articles and then follow up on them.

*Storybook Art: Hands-On Art for Children in the Styles of 100 Great Picture Book Illustrators*, by MaryAnn Kohl.

As a picture book fan and amateur artist, I couldn't believe finding this wonderful book! It is rich with ideas, history, and related information. Unfortunately, the illustrations are in black and white, and you have to go to the authors' websites (listed in an appendix) to see examples of their art. Still, if you're willing to do the digging, this book is pretty exciting.

**From Diane Wood, Duncan Friend**

*Far From the Tree, Parent, Children and the Search for Identity*, by Andrew Solomon

This book about children with disabilities and their parents is remarkable! The kids are amazing as are their parents. They speak beautifully and Andrew Solomon writes beautifully.

*Olympia – Paris in the Age of Manet*, by Otto Friedrich.

Another excellent book. Manet's painting was hung from the ceiling to prevent damage from the people who viewed it at the Salon des Refuses.

Let us know if you have a book that you'd like to write about. **Anyone is welcome to submit—we'd love to have your review included here!** If you are interested in submitting something for a future newsletter, please contact newsletter editor Polly Morrison ([pollyjmo@verizon.net](mailto:pollyjmo@verizon.net)).

# GIVE BACK THE HOURS!

ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY DUNCAN BRANCH	
MONDAY	10:00 - 9:00
TUESDAY	10:00 - 7:00
WEDNESDAY	1:00 - 9:00
THURSDAY	10:00 - 7:00
FRIDAY	10:00 - 6:00
SATURDAY	10:00 - 5:00

The city's proposed FY 2014 budget will reduce by half the evening hours in which Duncan remains open to serve working families, students, and many others. The practical effect will be to reduce the evening availability of Duncan's only meeting room to two hours a week. That means many of the ongoing activities valued by the public, such as the book group, the poetry club, and the movie night would need to compete unnecessarily with outside organizations booking the room for programs and meetings. The Del Ray community will also be deprived of valuable time for research projects, job searches, and tutoring sessions.

To oppose the threatened reduction and urge the City Council to leave the library budget alone, you can post your comments on the city's budget website <http://alexandriava.gov/budget> or sign an e-petition at <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/give-back-the-hours>. Even better, come to the Duncan Library on any Monday or Wednesday evening during April between the hours of 6 and 9 and sign the petition in person. A Friends volunteer will also provide you with a list of Council Members, their contact information, and where you can register your protest in person.

Let's keep Duncan Open and serving the Del Ray community.

Your Vote Counts.

## News from the Library

By Stephanie Clark, Branch Manager, Duncan Library

I would like to start by thanking everyone for the very warm welcome to Duncan Library! I have so enjoyed meeting everyone and learning about the neighborhood! A big thank you to the Friends for the wonderful Open House they hosted for me and Kyle Maier!

We've been busy planning for two big events – All Alexandria Reads in May and Summer Quest in June-July. This year's book for All Alexandria Reads is *Listening is an Act of Love: a Celebration of American Life from the StoryCorps Project*. Similar children's selections are *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say, *Granny Torrelli Makes Soup* by Sharon Creech, and *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman. All branches of the Alexandria Library have wonderful programs planned for the month of May to celebrate. Duncan Library's Saturday movie matinee, Book Discussion Group, and the Duncan Poetry Society will highlight themes from the book. Special events include:

- Gary Lloyd, a local storyteller, on April 27 at 2pm (all ages);
- Handmade Storybooks with writer and book artist, Sushmita Mazumdar, on May 14 at 3:30pm (grades K-5);
- a Tae Kwon Do demonstration by Master Yang on May 15 at 3:30pm (all ages); and
- an Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony on May 25 at 11am.

Summer Quest programs will begin in mid-June. We've invited favorites such as the Great Zucchini, 123Andres!, Shazam Magic, and ReptileWorld. Full schedules will be available in late May. Please check out the website, pick up a schedule at the Library, or give us a call to find out all the exciting programs we have planned! In case you were not aware, all of the Summer Quest programming for ages 6-12 are made possible through funding provided by the Friends.

Also of interest – beginning in March, we have a Senior Information corner stocked with literature from Alexandria's Senior Services ([www.seniorservicesalex.org](http://www.seniorservicesalex.org)). There are a number of flyers and pamphlets available, and we've placed them all by the magazines on the Adult Services side of the Library. I hope you'll take a look and find the information interesting and useful.

As always, we thank the Friends for their generous support of Duncan Library! In my short time here, I have not heard “no” to any request yet. More often than not, we're asked if we're sure we don't need more! It is a pleasure to work with the Friends of Duncan Library.

## Friends Funds at Work

By Carolyn Harris, Treasurer

Here is a 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter summary of income and how the Friends used the funds in 2013 to support Duncan Library:

2013 Income		2013 Expenses	
Membership Donations	150	Adult Programs (Authors, Film & Poetry)	350
Other Donations	122	Staff Recognition/Hospitality	473
Online Book Sales	1,125	Newsletter	59
Bank Interest	83	Library Requested Materials	
Total	\$1,480	Equipment & Furniture	1,126
		Supplies	85
		Operating/Fundraising Expenses	205
		Total	\$2,298

## **Getting to Know Stephanie Clark, Branch Manager at Duncan Library**

### **How long have you been at the Duncan Library? What is your particular function?**

I started January 7, 2013 – so not long at all! I am the Branch Manager at Duncan Library. I get to do a bit of everything – circulation services, reference services, children's services. I also get to work with the other Branch Managers and Library Administration on larger issues of concern to the Library system. And I'm the liaison with the Friends of Duncan Library.

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

I grew up in South Carolina - in Spartanburg (the Upstate). I moved to Alexandria in May 2001 right after I graduated from the University of South Carolina's College of Library and Information Science. I had visited Alexandria a number of times when visiting my brother, who had moved up a couple of years before I did. Old Town reminded me so much of Charleston, SC (one of my favorite places) so it immediately felt like home.

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

I read a lot so it's hard to narrow down to just a few, but I'll try. Gabriel Garcia Marquez is one of my favorites. I try to reread *Love in the Time of Cholera* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* at least once a year. I enjoy magical realism and Garcia Marquez's sense of time (very circular, never linear in any of his stories). I'm a huge fan of southern gothic authors – Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner, Harry Crews (he is an acquired taste), Tennessee Williams. This genre also has touches of magical realism – so maybe that's the theme to all my reading!

### **What are your outside interests?**

My husband and I enjoy traveling. We try to balance long road trips out West with visits to Europe. We haven't been traveling much currently because I'm working on a Master's in Public Administration. But I'm planning on making up for all that missed traveling with a graduation trip to the Serengeti.

### **What influenced you to become a librarian?**

Becoming a librarian kind of happened by accident. I spent my childhood reading anything and everything so spent a lot of time at the nearest branch library. When it was time to start looking for a first job, that seemed like a great place to work and they just happened to have a part time shelving job open. When I graduated high school, they promoted me to a part-time circulation desk position. When I graduated college, they upgraded my position to full-time. It became obvious, at that point, that there were very few promotion options left unless I got a master's in library science. So I did.

### **What gives you the most satisfaction as a librarian?**

I get the most satisfaction from seeing the library being used and enjoyed by the community. There's such a great sense of ownership of Duncan Library by the surrounding neighborhood. I like knowing that for a lot of families the Library is their "3<sup>rd</sup> place."

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

I think the staff here are wonderful! They all care very much about the Library and community we serve. I have been so impressed with all of them and the great work they do. Equally laudable is the generosity and support of the Friends. They're a dedicated group of people working to support the Library, and it is very much appreciated by those of us working here!

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

I think the biggest change is Kyle Maier's promotion to Branch Manager of the Burke Library. The children's programs and collection are as strong and vibrant as they are because of her hard work and the wonderful partnership she and Venetta Bueno have had working together. It's going to be VERY hard to find a new Youth Services Manager to fill Kyle's shoes.

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

I think public libraries have three functions – the “great equalizer,” a “third place,” and fostering community engagement. Libraries have historically been seen as equalizers, meaning they help to even the playing field for those who don't have access to as many resources as others. The library as third place is the idea that individuals and families have three main places they spend their time and engage with their communities. The first two are obvious – home and work or school. Many places compete to be a third place for the community. I think a vibrant neighborhood library, like Duncan, serves that function well. Last, community engagement is the idea of going beyond just providing information and facilitating conversations to assisting in building understanding and empathy around community issues. I see a growing role for libraries in providing reliable information resources that will assist our patrons in learning about issues of concern, developing understanding of those issues and opposing viewpoints, and making informed decisions.

***How does entertainment fit into the mission of libraries?***

When you think of libraries as a third place for the community, entertainment is a natural fit with the mission.

***What do you think are Duncan's biggest needs?***

Our most pressing need currently is a new Youth Services Manager. I hope by the time this is being read that we'll be in the midst of interviews and making a decision soon! Stay tuned for updates!

Once that position is filled, I hope we'll be able to revive our teen programs, outreach to the schools and rec centers, and start up the Pajama Story Time again. Having that position filled will also allow me to begin to focus more on working with local community organizations to develop adult programs.

***Do you have any suggestions about how the community could make Duncan a better library?***

Join the Friends and volunteer to help with book sales and other events! With budgets getting ever tighter, the Friends are a huge help in supporting Library programs and collections.

***Finally, from your observation how much are the public access computers used for functions other than social media or YouTube?***

The public access computers are used for a wide variety of activities. We have many patrons who use the computers to look for work and apply for jobs. Others are working on homework or personal projects, connecting with community or government services that require forms to be filled out online, reading newspapers the Library does not subscribe to, emailing friends and family, etc.



## Adult Programs at Duncan Library

*By Walter Gross, Adult Programs Committee Chairman*

The Noir Movie series continues to enjoy good turnouts. There are only two more movies on schedule before we move on to the Hitchcock series in July. On May 8, Mickey Spillane's *Kiss Me Deadly* will be the feature and the series will conclude on June 3 with *A Touch of Evil* directed by Orson Welles and starring Welles, Charlton Heston Janet Leigh, and Marlene Dietrich.

The Saturday Matinee series has drawn modest audiences for the first two screenings. We are experimenting with features that will attract larger attendance.

On February 11, the Duncan Poetry Society's first meeting attracted fifteen poetry fans who participated in an entertaining and informative evening of reading and discussing sonnets through the ages, particularly those of William Shakespeare. Future sessions will include a variety of poetry genres such as contemporary poetry, the Romantic Poets, poetry of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, children's poetry, and epic poetry.

Now for the bad news. The threatened FY 2014 budget cuts would strip the 7:00 to 9:00 PM evening hours on Mondays from Duncan's budget. This means that the Poetry group, which now meets on Monday evenings would have to move to Wednesdays or be without a home. The Wednesday evening schedule already has the movie group, the Library's book club, and the Friends' Board meeting penciled in. If the City Council takes away the Monday evening hours, adjustments will be necessary. The Board will work with our new Branch Manager, Stephanie Clark, to make the best out of a bad situation, but the better solution is to make the City Council restore the hours. The Friends must help. Sign petitions, email, and call and write the Mayor, the Vice Mayor, and the Council members (see page 5 for details). Get your friends and neighbors involved. Good things are happening with Duncan's varied programs and services. We need to do everything we can to continue the progress not step backwards.



## Duncan Library

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### Friends of Duncan Library Officers:

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#### We're on the Web!

See us at:  
<http://duncanlibraryfriends.intuitwebsites.com>

## Your Friends Need You – Get Involved!

The Vice President slot on your five-person Executive Board is vacant. The only real requirements of the position are chairing the monthly board meetings when the president is unable to attend, and being conversant in social media. Neither task is difficult and the monthly time commitment is minimal. If you don't have a few hours a month, tell your friends - they may.

Also, it's never too early to consider becoming a member of the 2014 Executive Board. Three positions will become vacant next year: Vice President, Secretary, and Membership Chair. None of these positions is overly time-consuming and, importantly, the person occupying any one of them is able to help create and oversee the agenda of the Friends of Duncan Library.

We need you. **Please consider volunteering.** For further information, please contact Friends Treasurer Carolyn Harris by phone at 703-683-4943 or email [cdharris3@gmail.com](mailto:cdharris3@gmail.com) or Friends President Friar FitzGerald at 703-485-7523 or [lcharles.fitzgerald@gmail.com](mailto:lcharles.fitzgerald@gmail.com).

Carolyn and I look forward to hearing from you.

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