



President's Letter

Spring has finally arrived after a very, very long winter. Less time to read but warmer weather, more daylight hours and time in the garden. Spring has also arrived at Duncan, which means the city's budget and the Friends book sale are on the calendar.



The city's budget will be completed on Monday, May 5th. As it currently stands, the Alexandria library system will take yet another hit this year. While not as drastic as in previous years, it reflects and perpetuates a

longstanding downward trend. Less money for collection development, which means Duncan will be relying even more on financial support from the Friends.

What is the primary source of our ability to augment Duncan's budget? You and the spring book sale. For terrific picks, Friends-only First Chance preview night falls on Wednesday, April 30th. The sale will open to the general public beginning Thursday during library hours and run through 3 pm on Saturday. Please come and buy a book - or two or three - a CD or DVD, all at the lowest prices in the Washington metropolitan area. I assure you there will be a large selection of the finest material for your personal enjoyment. And, while you're buying books, etc, join the Friends or renew your membership. For further information about membership, please contact Jill Murphy at capsrock2001@yahoo.com To volunteer to help set up future sales - which, by the way is a lot of work so the more helping hands the merrier! - contact Peggy Sweeney at 703-577-0562 or by e-mail at dsweeney@comcast.net.

The Friends Board of Directors has recently initiated what we hope will be a successful endeavor - a monthly social hour. It was certainly a success in March! This informal get-together gives you a face-to-face opportunity to discuss your thoughts and ideas about how the Friends can more effectively allocate your contributions to improve Duncan's various programs. The social hour meets on the third Tuesday of every month, exact time and location can be found on our website, duncanlibraryfriend@gmail.com.

We are also planning to improve the appearance of the Commonwealth Avenue entrance to the library. Under the very capable leadership of Elaina Palincsar, the Friends Board has contracted with Greener Side Lawn & Landscaping to design and implement a great plan. We're just waiting for final approval. Since it won't cost the city any money, approval should be forthcoming. FLASH.....The approval to start the project just arrived as I'm writing this message. The work should begin the last week in April or the very first days of May.

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We always need **volunteers**. Without members donating their time and energy, the Friends will be hard pressed to undertake the wide variety of tasks that Duncan has come to depend upon; e.g., shelving books, book sale preparation, landscaping and maintaining the grounds, and many more activities that the library staff neither has the time, resources nor budget to do. Remember Duncan is your library. Please contribute whatever you can to assure that Duncan continues to be an important asset to Del Ray and the surrounding community.

Happy Reading.

Friar



First Friends Social Hour

Twelve people attended the first Friends Social Hour held at the home of Jim and Carolyn Harris on March 18th. The goal for this event is to encourage Friends and other interested folks to meet in an informal atmosphere with light refreshments and share ideas about Duncan Library and the Duncan Friends. We definitely met that goal! Those present got to know a little bit more about each other, and there was interest in volunteering to help Duncan. How much better can it get!

Mark your calendar for this event—to be held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm.

- *April 15, 2014
- *May 20, 2014
- *June 17, 2014
- *July 15, 2014
- *Aug. 19, 2014
- *Sep. 16, 2014
- *Oct. 21, 2014
- *Nov. 18, 2014
- *Dec. 16, 2014

You'll receive details prior to each Friends Social Hour. Hope to see you!



Spring Book Sale Coming Up!

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

The best thing about book sales is that each one is new and different. The donations have been piling in, and there is certain to be something for everyone. So mark your calendar:



Wednesday, April 30	7-9 pm	"First Chance Night" (Friends members only; you can join that evening if you are not already a member)
Thursday, May 1	10 am-7 pm	Regular Sale
Friday, May 2	10 am-6 pm	Regular Sale
Saturday, May 3	10 am-1 pm	Regular Sale
	1-3 pm	Bag Sale

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).



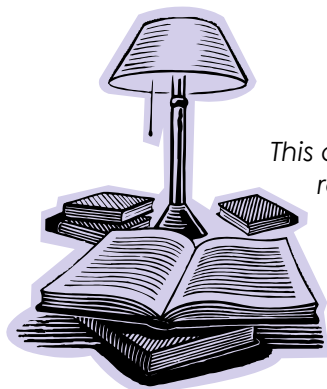
Friends Funds at Work

By Carolyn Harris, Treasurer, Friends of Duncan Library

Here is the 2014 1st Quarter summary of income and how the Friends used the funds to support Duncan Library:

<u>2014 1st Quarter Income</u>		<u>2014 1st Quarter Expenses</u>	
Membership Donations	240	Adult Programs (Film, Poetry & Authors)	26
General Donations	5	Newsletter	75
Online Book Sales	1,636	Library Requested Materials	
iGive	31	Equipment & Furniture	383
Bank Interest	21	Children's (Books & Materials)	1,128
Total	\$1,933	Supplies	122
		Fundraising Expenses	343
		Operational Expenses *	1,354
		Total	\$3,431

* Includes printing new stationery & membership forms and Intuit QuickBooks upgrade



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 Editor, Polly Morrison at pollyjmo@verizon.net.

From Stephanie Clark, Branch Manager, Duncan Library:

Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion by Elizabeth L. Cline is an eye-opening look at the fashion industry today. Cheap knockoffs and clothes made by the cheapest labor overseas have virtually made the garment industry in the US extinct, not to mention that it has us all dressing rather poorly. The author talks about the impacts on labor, wages, and the landfills of all those \$7 t-shirts and throwaway summer shoes. The author began her research as a confirmed shopaholic, but in the end has become a proponent of quality over quantity when it comes to clothing.

A Constellation of Vital Phenomena is Anthony Marra's debut novel and was on the 2013 National Book Award Long List. The book centers on the rescue of a child by a neighbor. Over the course of five days, the many connections between and among the characters over the last eleven years are revealed. Pieces of the story are sometimes missing or have to be put together as if you're reading a puzzle – but it's worth it! I really enjoyed this book and highly recommend it. As one character in the novel says to another, "The whole book is working toward the last page."

From Jill Murphy, Membership Chair, Friends of Duncan Library:

Blood Work by Michael Connelly: A different take on committing murder. This story is all about the blood work for retired FBI profiler Terry McCaleb. McCaleb, recovering from a heart transplant is contacted by the sister of a murdered LA Times employee, whose death is being brushed off by the LAPD as a "wrong place, wrong time" killing. But as McCaleb learns, her death is intrinsically linked to his new life and as he begins to investigate he realizes there is much more to her murder than it appears. Working on the outside of the law, no longer carrying a badge, McCaleb uses his skills and connections only to realize he is the suspect in her murder and two others. Anonymous tip-offs to the sheriff and LAPD turn the investigation in circles digging McCaleb in deeper and deeper. Now only half a step ahead of the police and romantically involved with the murder victim's sister, McCaleb puts everything on the line to find a soulless killer by following the blood work.

From Lisa Giambruno, Secretary, Friends of Duncan Library:

If you enjoy watching 'Downton Abbey' you'll enjoy reading Jo Baker's *Longbourn*. This clever reworking of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is written from the point of view of the servants that keep the Bennet household running. The book follows the *Pride and Prejudice* plotlines but in *Longbourn* we find out how the Bennet girls' romances and heartaches affect those who work for them. I found it a lot of fun and was very moved by the touching ending.

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Books by My Bedside, continued from page 4

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

The *Monuments Men* by Robert M. Edsel is a now well-known story of a special force of American and British museum directors, curators, art historians and others who scoured Europe in the latter days of the Second World War to prevent the destruction of the continent's cultural heritage. While depicting a fascinating bit of history, the book was a chore to read because the writing was plodding, the events poorly constructed and the entire story unnecessarily repetitious. Moreover there was little to no character development. I suggest that you skip this book as well as the movie, which was ghastly.

On the other hand, I highly recommend *The Cairo Affair* by Olen Steinhauer. It is every bit a thriller in the John le Carre mode - and almost at his level. The complex story takes place in the Balkans of the nineties and current day Cairo as it depicts the duplicitous nature of espionage. Nothing and nobody are ever what they seem to be. The narrative kept my full attention even though I had a bit of difficulty keeping the Serbo-Croatian, Egyptian and even American characters straight as it seemed that everyone was known by more than one name. This book is even better than Steinhauer's best selling *The Tourist*.

Poet, short story writer, New Yorker contributor, humanist, naturalist, university lecturer and intrepid traveler Diane Ackerman has written a grand tour of the realm of the senses. *A Natural History of the Senses*, a holistic, sensitive approach to the most basic of subjects - how we sense the world - is a wonderful, funny exploration of very complex issues. As Ms. Ackerman takes us along on her journey, she presents what could be a very dry topic in a wonderful manner, full of fascinating tidbits of information. By the final page, you find that you understand everything you've ever wanted about your five senses and their interaction. My only caution is that this excellent book is best read in small snippets; otherwise, you could very well become overwhelmed. Highly recommended.

From Carolyn Harris, Treasurer, Friends of Duncan Library:

When I started reading *Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt, I was really captured by the characters, who are so well drawn, and the action, which presents many broad themes worthy of contemplation. I wanted to keep reading to learn what happened—and a lot happened! It is very long book, and there are fairly clear "divisions" to the story: Theo's young life and the life-changing events, his life with a wealthy family, moving in with his father and Theo's "after life." I was enthralled (really) until the latter part of the book, and, then, the story—and I—seemed to lose steam. I'm not quite certain what happened, but the story seemed less believable to me and incomplete. However, I would definitely recommend this book, and I hope the reader would find the story compelling to the end.

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

Murder of Crows, Anne Bishop's newest book, was released last month. I pre-ordered the book on Amazon.com and received it the day it was released – Anne Bishop is my favorite author, so I was all over her newest book! *Murder of Crows* is the second book in Bishop's *The Others* series (the first book is *Written in Red*, another AWESOME read!). Meg Corbyn is still busy working in the mail room for the terra indigene, as the *Others* are known, and learning more about the visions she has and how to interpret them. The ponies, which aren't exactly what they seem to be at first glance, are still helping

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Books by My Bedside, continued from page 5

deliver the mail. And Meg's allies who aren't human are still there to protect her from those who would take advantage of her gift of foresight. From sitting on the edge of my seat practically holding my breath during certain parts, to laughing out loud at others, *Murder of Crows* kept me glued to my couch. I started the book at about 5 pm one Friday evening, and finished it at a minute before midnight. If you enjoy the fantasy genre with shape shifters of various varieties (wolf, coyote, crow, etc.), mystery, elementals, vampires, romance, with a dash of magic, The Others series is for you.

From Marilyn Doherty, Circulation Manager, Duncan Library:

I just loved *The Lowland*, by Jhumpa Lahiri. She tells the story of an Indian family, over three generations, in Calcutta and in America, in a spare and elegant style, leaving you with the feeling that you know those people and recognize those places. This one instigated a lot of discussion in my book group about why various characters did what they did.

I've read a couple of older memoirs recently that I really enjoyed. *Boy* by Roald Dahl covers his Norwegian family background and his younger years, up to the time he heads off to East Africa for the Shell Oil Company. His descriptions of life in English public schools leave you wondering how any boy survived. Yet, since his mother saved every letter home, you can tell he remembers acutely the incidents he writes about, and some are rather funny. Also, learn about the inspiration for *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Mennonite in a Little Black Dress by Rhoda Janzen is written by a 40-plus college teacher who has just lost her husband to another man and within a week suffered a bone-cracking car accident. Forced to pick up the pieces and go home to Mom and Dad to recuperate, she observes her parents' old-fashioned ways with almost an outsider's view. With love and wit, she realizes her parents have some rather modern values, despite embarrassing her at times. This one can make you laugh out loud, as you notice that quirky family members are universal.

From Leo Baca, Reference Librarian, Duncan Library

Biscuits, a SAVOR THE SOUTH cookbook by Belinda Ellis is an informative biscuit instruction guide that gives the background of and tools for making good biscuits. Ellis says the secret is in the flour, and that too much gluten is not good for a biscuit. She recommends using pastry flour, and not overworking the dough. Her step by step instructions will hopefully help when I make my first batch.

Boy, Snow, Bird is a gripping story that takes the reader on a wild ride of cultural diversity. The author, Helen Oyeyemi, is a talented storyteller who intertwines fantasy and reality throughout the course of the main character's life. The book deals with racial and gender identity issues, and discoveries. This is a must read!

Their Eyes Were Watching God, by Zora Neale Hurston, is a wonderful story about a personal journey in an era of change. The protagonist, Janie, has a deep understanding of what it means to know freedom, independence, love, compassion, jealousy, and empathy. Her story gives the reader insight about life for African-Americans living in Florida, in the early 20th century.

News from the Library

By Stephanie Clark, Branch Manager, Duncan Library

The Alexandria Library continues to celebrate and commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 1939 sit-in at the Barrett Branch on Queen Street. The Duncan Branch will be hosting events this spring that support the themes of civil rights, human rights, and equality. In April, Dr. Lopez Matthews will join us to discuss his book, *The True Worth of a Race: African American Women and the Struggle for Freedom*. The Youth Services Department will have a special Saturday story time, Heroes on the Field, all about Jackie Robinson and baseball. In May, Dr. Suzanne Smith will discuss her research on Black Swan Records, the first black-owned recording label of the 20th century. And in June, we will have a guest speaker, Kathleen Pablo, from the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Committee talk about women's suffrage and related events that took place at the Occoquan Workhouse. Dr. Veronica Franklin will also visit the branch in June to discuss her research on the impact of segregation on African-American women's mental health. (Dates and times below)



All Alexandria Reads returns in May. This year's selection is *When Washington Was in Vogue: A lost novel of the Harlem Renaissance* by Edward Christopher Williams. We're looking forward to revisiting the Roaring '20s through this love story told through letters between friends. There will be special events throughout the month at all our branches. I hope you'll have a chance to read the novel, join us for a book discussion, and participate in the great programs we have planned. (Full schedule below)

As always, many thanks for the support of the Friends of Duncan Library. The great programs we have planned are generously supported by the Friends – we truly could not do what we do without that support!

Spring Programs

April 12, 10:30am, Heroes on the Field Story Time with craft to follow

April 14, 7pm, Dr. Lopez Matthews will discuss his book, *The True Worth of a Race*

May 28, 7pm, Dr. Suzanne Smith will discuss Black Swan Records

June 16, 7pm, Kathleen Pablo will discuss women's suffrage and related events at the Occoquan Workhouse

June 21, 2pm, Dr. Veronica Franklin will discuss the impact of segregation on African-American women's mental health

All Alexandria Reads Programs

May 8, 3:30pm, Master storyteller Baba Jamal Korom

May 10, 2:30pm, acclaimed storyteller Diane Macklin

May 12, 7pm, Duncan Poetry Society will host E. Ethelbert Miller

May 19, 7pm, Dr. Martin Cohen will discuss American history through film

May 28, 7pm, Dr. Suzanne Smith will discuss Black Swan Records

May 31, 2pm, Deb Fuller will talk about 1920's fashion and style

Get to Know Your Librarian: Leo Baca, Reference Librarian, Duncan Library

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

I am from Albuquerque, New Mexico. I moved to Alexandria with my spouse who works at the Pentagon.

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

In the past I gravitated toward authors like Hunter S Thompson, Charles Bukowski, Jean Genet, and Paul Bowels. Lately, I've enjoyed authors like Elizabeth Keckley, Zora Neale Hurston, and Helen Oyeyemi. I love all these authors because they tell genuine stories.



Favorite books are, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, *The Sheltering Sky*, *Spiders House*, and *The Catcher and the Rye*. I love how they all depict history and social/cultural dynamics in society.

What are you reading currently?

I am currently reading *Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock*. This book is about the two women captured in the iconic photograph, taken of Elizabeth Eckford trying to enter school with the Little Rock nine. Hazel Bryan is captured shouting at her to go home. This has been an emotionally difficult book to read. It reminds me how humans have the potential to exhibit extreme hatred for each other. It also gives me great respect for the African American, who lived through that period and had to endure such loathing from other humans.

What are your outside interests?

I have a history background and love local history. I have been absorbing Alexandria's history since moving to the area over a year ago. I recently studied, and walked by the historic homes on Gentry Row. These fabulous homes are located on the 200 block of Price Street, in Old Town.

What influenced you to become a librarian?

I worked for the Center for Southwest Research, at the University of New Mexico, my last year of college. I liked it so much, that after two years in the real world I returned to library work.

What gives you the most satisfaction as a librarian?

I like to help people by connecting them to information.

How long have you been at the Duncan Library?

I started working at Duncan in January. Before that I was at the Beatley Central Library.

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

The staff at the library cares about the community and our patrons care about the library. I think this is a commendable relationship.

Get to Know Your Librarian, continued from pg. 8

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

I have started to implement adult programs since I started at Duncan. We have nine programs scheduled for our adult patrons, between April and May!

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

Libraries are centers for self-education! We are here to help patrons learn about any subject, they have an interest in, or need for. We can access anything for anyone. Our primary purpose is to provide information without judgment or bias.

How does entertainment fit into the mission of libraries?

Learning comes in all forms. Entertainment, in my opinion, is the best way to learn.

What do you think are Duncan's biggest needs?

Our biggest needs are to have set days and times for adult programs. I would like to implement some programs for the Boomer generation. Programs that could take place on the same day and time would be great. Educational talks, knitting circles and chair yoga would provide this generation with ways to connect and engage with other people. I am thankful, to the Friends of the Duncan Library for providing me with a budget to provide these types of programs for our patrons.

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

The best way the community can help make Duncan a better library is by utilizing our resources, our space, and by attending our many programs. Most importantly they can share what we do for them with their neighbors, and political officials.

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

Recently, I have been assisting patrons sign up for the Affordable Care Act. Daily, I see patrons working on resumes, applying for jobs, and using the computers to write papers.

Do you have a little spare time each month?

If you do, then the Friends need your help... A large quantity of books and other materials are donated daily to Duncan. Each item needs to be scanned in order to determine where it will ultimately end up: an addition to the collection, a sale online or at our semi-annual book sales.

Scanning is necessary and really easy. Please volunteer a little time, whether it be an hour a week or a month. And, importantly, scanning can be done during normal library hours. Get in on the ground floor. To volunteer, please contact Book Sale Chair Peggy Sweeney at 703-577-0561 or by email at dlsweeney@comcast.net

Adult Programs at Duncan

By Walter Gross, Chair, Adult Programs Committee, Friends of Duncan Library



Film Series

Twenty-six movie lovers viewed the February 5 screening of *Vertigo*, Alfred Hitchcock's noirish thriller/ghost story about obsessive love, betrayal, and murder. After the screening, Susan Boyd of Del Ray and a freelance fashion consultant and wardrobe designer for local stage plays, made a well-received presentation about Edith Head, wardrobe designer for *Vertigo*, and the fashions she chose for leading lady Kim Novak. More than a dozen viewers showed up for the post-screening round table discussion at St. Elmo's Coffee Pub.

About 15 to 18 people turned out for the screening of *Psycho*, Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece of horror/suspense cinema that caused a sensation when it was first released in 1962. Fortunately, at the March 5 screening, nobody needed medical assistance or smelling salts after the shower scene. Attendance at the post screening round table at St. Elmo's continued to enjoy a large turnout of film fans with interesting and informative comments about the movie.

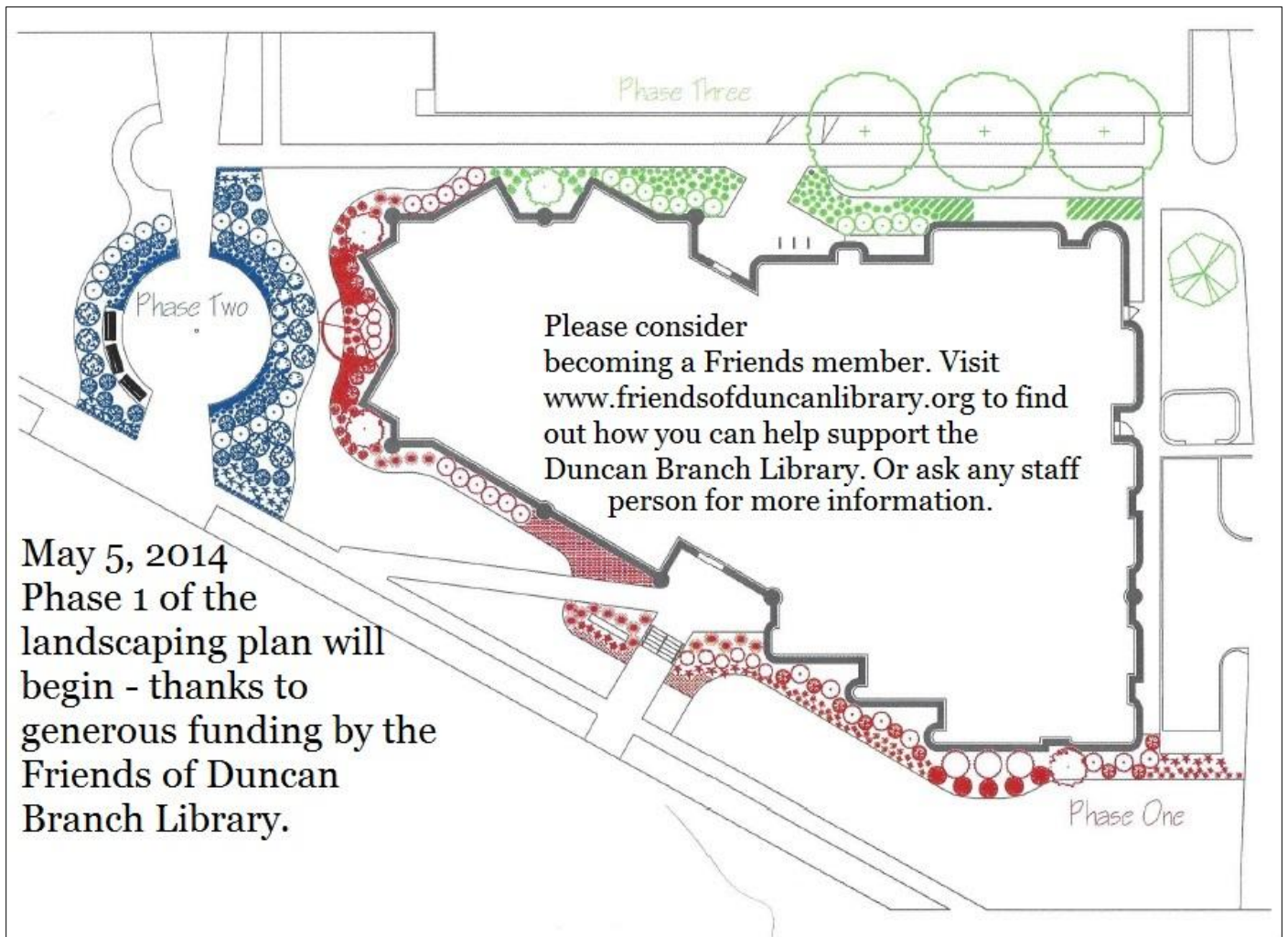
Next month the new film series, "Pre Code Cinema" debuts -- twelve months of films released between 1930 and 1934 when film studios ignored with impunity the restrictions of what became known as The Hollywood Production Code. The series begins with a May 7 screening of a 1932 film starring Ann Dvorak, Joan Blondell, Warren William, and Betty Davis in a melodrama about adultery, child neglect, and excessive use of alcohol and drugs, with revealing lingerie and sexy dancing thrown in for good measure. With so many violations of the Code's taboos, it is a prime example of the type of film that attracted large audiences, but also outraged many religious and conservative groups concerned about the undermining of moral values by the film industry. All films will be accompanied by discussions of the various aspects of the social, cultural, historical, and political atmosphere of the time and how they influenced movies and vice versa. An added feature of this series is the availability of three open dates to be filled with films selected by film club members. A full schedule of the film series is available at the library.

Poetry Club Events

On March 10 a standing room only audience enjoyed a reading by then Del Ray resident, Jodie Hollander, from her poetry collection, *The Humane Society*. Her "romantic, surreal, and tender" poetry comprise a very personal and sometimes painful memoir of growing up in a family of classical musicians. Unfortunately, Jodie's husband has been transferred to Colorado, and Del Ray has lost a very talented writer whose presence enriched the cultural environment of the community. A copy of her book is available at the library and I highly recommend it to anyone who enjoys good writing, poetic or prosaic.

Upcoming at 7:30 pm on May 12 is a special meeting of the Poetry Society in which noted scholar, educator, poet, writer, and literary activist, E. Ethelbert Miller, will discuss the poetry of Langston Hughes, the "poet laureate of the Harlem renaissance." Professor Miller is currently affiliated with Howard University. He has been writer in residence at several institutions of higher learning and the recipient of an honorary doctorate degree from Emory and Henry College. He has taught at various schools, including [American University](#), [Emory & Henry](#), [George Mason University](#), [Harpeth Hall School](#) and the [University of Nevada](#). He was also a core faculty member of the writing seminars at [Bennington College](#).

Landscaping Plan for Duncan Library



Duncan Library

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We're on the Web!

See us at:
<http://www.friendsofduncanlibrary.org/>

E-Communications

Visit the [Friends of Duncan Library website](#) to learn about Upcoming Events at the Duncan Library! You can also Like our [Facebook page](#) to receive notifications of Upcoming Events on your News Feed.

Membership donations can now be made online via PayPal. Visit our website to [renew your membership!](#)

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