



## President's Letter

Summer's arrived, a time when everything moves at a slower pace. It's also vacation time USA, time to catch up on all that reading that you've promised yourself over the past year. And, what better place to find the perfect book(s) than the Duncan Library?

The Friends' Board of Directors will continue to meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month - even during the summer - because there are so many new ideas and initiatives that are under discussion.

I'm pleased to report that the May book sale was a resounding success, thanks in large part to Peggy Sweeney, Thom Downing and all the other hard working volunteers who donated considerable time and energy over three-plus days. If you were unable to participate in May, more opportunities will unfold over the next few months. The Friends held a very

successful sidewalk book sale at A Show of Hands on the 2nd of June from 8:30 - 12:30. A similar sale is in the works for some time later this summer. The prices are "a steal," and the titles constantly change as the Library receives more and more donated books, e-books, CDs, DVDs. The Duncan community is so generous that we hardly have sufficient room to store all of the wonderful titles that are donated.

Another of our new programs, this one under the leadership of Walt Gross, is the Film Noir Series, the first of which was screened on Wednesday, June 6th. It was such a resounding success that a new film will be shown every month in the Duncan Meeting Room. What helps make this event so successful is not just seeing a great movie but the open-to-all discussion that follows at St Elmo's. What a great opportunity to see some of the classic films you may have missed but always wanted to see - or to

see again. So join Walt and escape into the realm of the great movies of yesteryear. (On July 11th a new movie will be screened, and the first Wednesday of each month thereafter.)

Our Author Talks, under the guidance of Lenny Goldstein, hosted on Monday, June 11th, in the Library's Meeting Room, author Lyle Smythers, who introduced his very recently published adventure-fantasy *Feasting with Panthers*. This provided a great opportunity to be among the first to read the book, meet the author, and discuss the ideas and concepts that led to its publishing. Author Talks will be on sabbatical for a while to determine the availability of authors as well as the room.

That's the news for now. Have a great summer, and remember, this is the best season to read! You'll hear from me again in the autumn with more news about what your support of the Duncan Library will bring...

*L Charles "Friar" FitzGerald  
President, Friends of Duncan Library*

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## Books By My Bedside

*This new column features books that Duncan Staff and Duncan Friends are currently reading. Let us know if you have a book that you'd like to write about and we'll be happy to include it in a future version of the newsletter!*

From Leonard Goldstein, Author Talks Committee Chair, Duncan Friends:

### **Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad, 1863-1869**

Stephen E. Ambrose

This is the gripping tale of a 19th-century moon-shot project accomplished, almost entirely by hand labor, against the greatest odds. A transcontinental railroad had been a dream of American expansionists since not long after the coming of the first railroads in the 1830s, but became a serious goal with the attempts of the '49ers to reach the gold fields of California, a journey that could typically take more than six months and cost over \$1000 whether attempted overland in the U.S., across the fever-infested isthmus of Panama, or around stormy Cape Horn. The transcontinental project was initiated by President Abraham Lincoln—secession had removed the long-standing obstacle of having to decide on a slave-state versus free-state route—and swung into high gear after the end of the Civil War in 1865. The two companies that built the road, the Central Pacific from Sacramento eastward and the Union Pacific from Omaha toward the west, were run by the sort of robber-baron bankers who'd feel at home among the worst examples of today's Wall Street plunderers (and might even give them a few tips), but had the ability to organize tens of thousands of men to survey and lay out the 1800-mile route—today's I-80 parallels it closely—cut through mountains and drill tunnels (six inches on a good day), build bridges, grade the roadbeds, and lay track despite blizzards, desert heat, and Indian attacks, while resorting to increasingly desperate measures to finance the project but still assuring themselves of a very tidy sum in their personal bank accounts. Only six years after inception the two lines met at Promontory Summit just north of the Great Salt Lake, making it possible to ride in (relative) comfort from New York to California in a week at a cost of \$65, or, for \$71 more, in a first-class Pullman sleeping car. Mission accomplished!

From Carolyn Harris, Treasurer, Duncan Friends

### **Calico Joe**

John Grisham

This book was so much fun for me to read. As a long-time baseball fan it evoked many pleasant memories of older days of baseball enjoyment. I also found the story of family, ethics, and emotions moving.

### **Canada**

Richard Ford

*Canada* gave me a “flat” feeling, but I kept reading to find out what happened to Dell. At almost every turn there are hardships, struggles, and tough choices for the characters. I found it an interesting and different coming-of-age perspective.

*Books By My Bedside, Continued from pg. 2*

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

**The Good Father**

Noah Hawley

This psychological novel explores the consequences of the assassination of a presidential candidate on the family of the perpetrator, in particular the father. The story explores how the parents of an individual who commits a horrendous act come to understand and accept the actions of their child and poses questions about parenting, the limits of love, and good vs. evil. Engrossing and well written.

**The Passion of Power**

Robert A. Caro

The fourth installment of a projected five book biography of Lyndon Johnson. (I must admit that I haven't read the first three, primarily because Johnson's life prior to the 1960 campaign through the first months of his presidency holds little interest for me.) If you love biography, especially political biographies, this book should be on your list.

**Bring Up the Bodies**

Hilary Mantell

This sequel to the author's 2009 Man-Booker Prize winner Wolf Hall, is told by Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's hatchet man. It covers the period in which this powerful and willful monarch grows increasingly disenchanted with Anne Boleyn, as his eyes turn to Jane Seymour. Political intrigue at its very best. Highly recommended for anyone interested in Tudor History.

## Two Great Book Sales in a Row!!

*By Peggy Sweeney, Book Sales Chair*

The Duncan Library Spring 2012 Sale was kicked off Wednesday night, May 2, with the Friends Only First Chance Night, and ended Saturday, May 5, with a two hour finale, from 1-3 pm, with books selling at \$5.00 a bag. Thanks to all the generous book donations and the hard-working volunteers who set up and ran the sale, we earned over \$5300!

Just three weeks later we tried something new. We held a four hour sale on Saturday, June 2 at A Show of Hands at Mt. Vernon and E. Del Ray. The hours were timed to coincide with the Del Ray Farmers Market, which was just down the block. The weather was beautiful and the air festive with many dogs and small children. People seemed surprised and happy to come upon our sale. Again, thanks to our donors and volunteers, we earned over \$400.

All the earnings go directly to support Duncan Library with new books and programs.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of the volunteers who contribute anywhere from one to many hours. They are a very capable, and I must say, pleasant, group of people to work with. I encourage Friends who have not yet gotten involved to give it a try. I can almost guarantee you will enjoy it, and you'll be making improvements possible for our library.

## In The Shadow of Tysons Corner

*By Ruth Hailu, Duncan Library*

My daughter, her nine year-old son Jonathan, and I were part of a group that recently went to Claude Moore Farm at Turkey Run, in the shadow of Tysons Corner. The Friends Community School in Maryland organized the trip, with the goal of showing the nine and ten year-old students how their forefathers lived when they came from England to Virginia in the 1770s.

Our group, made up of students and some of their family members—about 24 people in total—had a vague notion of what life would be like on the Claude Moore Farm (a simulation of a small farm), but we really hadn't anticipated everything that awaited us. There was nothing there that we take for granted today—no electricity, running water or toilets.

On a drizzling Monday morning in April, we drove to the farm, located off of GW Parkway. We parked on grass lots and entered the encampment area. We all looked at each other and wondered whether we were looking at eighteen-century photos or seeing real people! Fathers and their sons wore long-sleeved white shirts, breeches just below the knee, knee high socks and hats. Mothers and their daughters also wore shirts with long sleeves, a hand-made tiny round cotton cap, ankle length skirts, aprons tied around the waist, and knee-high socks. The teachers told us that we could each take one set of clothing to last for our two and a half day stay.

Each family brought basic necessities, including sleeping bags, blankets, pillows, flashlights, a shovel or an axe, personal toiletries, a warm coat, etc.

The fun began with setting up our tents among beautiful, straight and leafy tall trees, but on soggy ground! Each family worked on pitching their own tent. My daughter's tarp was not big enough to cover the tent floor so we squeezed Jonathan between us. One morning we woke up with the rain soaking everything—humans, sleeping bags, blankets, etc.

Two parents and two students dug out a pit for toilet about a quarter of a mile away from the tent area, making the flashlights we brought absolutely indispensable.

Parents had also been asked to bring enough food items to last us for our stay. The coffee cans, baked goods, vegetables (for soups and pioneer stews), eggs, bread and more nearly filled up the coolers we all brought, which we kept in a "root cellar." As a result, the 21<sup>st</sup> century "colonialists" enjoyed three meals a day: breakfast, lunch (which colonialists referred to as "dinner") and supper. We prepared our meals on an outdoor fire—we called it the kitchen fire. Someone had to stay by the fire at all times to keep it burning.

Craft time! Parents with skills held workshops for everyone. Colonialists did everything with their hands, so the workshops buzzed with weaving baskets, candle dipping, spinning wool, making husk dolls, and learning calligraphy. Each student had to run around participating in each of these activities.

This trip opened our eyes to the reality that everything we enjoy today, and which we take for granted, had a high cost in terms of human labor. We learned firsthand about the determination, imagination, initiative, courage and hard work of those brave men and women who lived over 250 years ago. The students that participated in this adventure will surely benefit given that this extraordinary opportunity will be hard to forget.

# Friends Funds at Work

By Carolyn Harris, Treasurer, Duncan Friends

Here's a summary of income for January through June 2012 and how the Friends have used funds thus far in 2012 to support Duncan Library:

Income		Expenses	
Membership Donations	870	Adult Programs (Film Series)	427
Other Donations	150	Author Talks	81
Bank Interest	139	All Alexandria Reads	233
Book Sales	5,926	Summer Quest	3,499
iGive	26	Library Requested Materials:	
		Children's	62
		Equipment (blinds, stools, carts)	2,109
		Staff Development (ALA & PLA)	341
		Book Club Anniversary Celebration	29
		Ryckman Farewell	102
		Newsletter	55
		Operating/Fundraising Expenses	524
		Total	\$7,462
	Total		
	\$7,111		

## DUNCAN FRIENDS' VOLUNTEERS

The Friends hosted a Volunteer Recognition Reception on June 1<sup>st</sup> at the home of Carolyn and Jim Harris. About 20 intrepid volunteers braved what turned out to be one of the ugliest weather evenings of the year thus far. It was fun to meet and socialize with other volunteers and staff who support Duncan activities, book sales, the newsletter, and officer tasks. An Amazon gift card and farewell card were given to Pat Ryckman. Hardy lily plants were given to past President, Tony Springer, and Vice-President Maureen Schweers with sincere appreciation—"The Duncan Friends thank you for helping us establish our roots."

Welcome to Walt Gross who has agreed to serve as Adult Programs Chair. Walt's BIG event planning is the Film Noir Series. (See more about this in the President's Letter on page 1.)



**If you are interested in becoming a more active Friend, we need a Beautification/Landscaping Chair, Teen Programs Chair, and Social Activities Chair.**

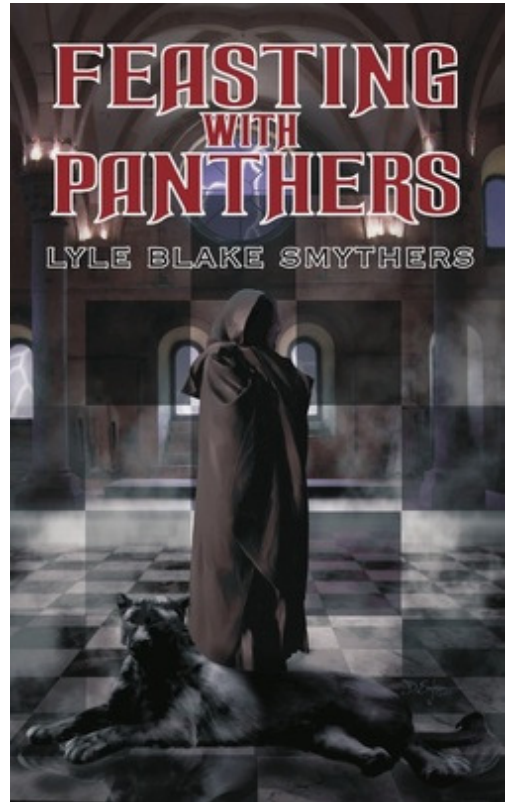
**Please contact [duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com](mailto:duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com).**

## Author Talk by Lyle Blake Smythers: *Feasting with Panthers*

By Leonard Goldstein, Author Talks Committee Chair

Versatile Del Ray-based author, actor, and librarian Lyle Blake Smythers (currently playing the Major General in the Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre's *Pirates of Penzance* **and** cataloguing misfiled or stray books at the Library of Congress, though not at the same time) introduced his first adult novel, *Feasting with Panthers*, at a Duncan Author Talk on June 11, 2012. Sadly, the recent transit of Venus across the face of the sun had left the stars and planets misaligned, with the result that the audience consisted of only three persons, so the Author Talk became an Author Chat. Happily, there was plenty to chat about.

Lyle first fell in love with tales of fantasy and adventure when as a child he came across, and had his parents buy for him, a used book—the extravagantly-illustrated Andrew Lang version of the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. After a couple of teenage attempts at novels and a children's book whose manuscript is currently aging and mellowing in a trunk, Lyle decided to try his hand at the sort of tales of fantasy and magic which abound in the Arabian Nights. After fourteen years of sporadic work on the book he completed it, and finally after a long search for a publisher (agents turned out to be of little use) he found one who decided that his mix of poetry, sorcery, treachery, enchantment, deception and revenge was just what they were looking for.



At this point Lyle read a passage, a stream-of-consciousness tour de force replete with literary references, in which a mysterious one-eyed narrator finds himself in the luxuriously-appointed underground lair of a beautiful, seductive young woman—or sorceress?—whose enchanted apples and intoxicating wine make time seem to pass without being noticed. Fortunately, the dozens of candles illuminating her rumpus room are also enchanted, and neither burn down nor require lighting (that's always bothered me in long candle-lit scenes in movies—who actually goes around replacing the candles during those intense dramatic moments, some self-effacing candle-butler? Good to have it explained). Unfortunately, he inadvertently summons up the maiden's jealous paramour, who even more unfortunately is a huge and bad-tempered genie, or genius, and the passage ends with good and bad news for the narrator: his life has been spared, but he's been turned into a monkey.

As always, an author-inscribed copy of the book has been added to Duncan's collection by the Friends, so it shouldn't be too hard to find how he gets out of that predicament and into the next one.

## How You Can Help Raise Funds for Duncan Library

By Carolyn Harris, Treasurer, Duncan Friends

JUST IMAGINE—**EVERY DUNCAN FRIEND** USING **iGIVE** WITH THEIR ONLINE SHOPPING TO HELP US RAISE FUNDS TO SUPPORT DUNCAN LIBRARY!

iGive is a shopping portal with over 800 national retailers such as Barnes and Noble, Best Buy, eBay, GAP, L.L.Bean, and Nordstrom. Shoppers using iGive have raised over 3 million for selected charity.

Now you can shop for the Friends! Every time you shop online, login to iGive.com first. Then, find your desired store from the iGive site, login to that store's site, and enjoy your shopping knowing that a portion of your purchase will come back to the Friends.

### It's easy to register for a free iGive account:

1. Go to [www.igive.com](http://www.igive.com).
2. In the box for "Your Cause" type Friends of Duncan Library.
3. Click on Find Causes
4. Click on Friends of Duncan Library  
Enter Your Information

Contact Carolyn Harris if you'd like help—[cdharris3@gmail.com](mailto:cdharris3@gmail.com).

**A library is not a luxury  
but one of the  
necessities of life.**

— Henry Ward Beecher

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**We're on the Web!**  
See us at:  
<http://duncanlibraryfriends.intuitwebsites.com>

**Friends of Duncan Library Membership**

*By Gay Hurst, Membership Chair*

TOP 10 REASONS FOR BEING A FRIEND OF DUNCAN LIBRARY

- 10. My contribution is tax-deductible.
- 9. Books, CDs, DVDs, and more are available for loan, saving me more money.
- 8. Special programs like Author Talks, Story Time, and Summer Reading enrich our community.
- 7. I can use the computer there.
- 6. I can make copies.
- 5. The research desk helps me gather information.
- 4. The library staff is friendly and helpful.
- 3. I get to search through the Book Sale before the general public gets in.
- 2. Libraries are necessary for our democracy to flourish. Everyone needs access to information.

AND, MY NUMBER ONE REASON  
**I LOVE LIBRARIES!!**

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