



Duncan Library, 2501 Commonwealth Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301

duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com

2011 Duncan Library Spring Book Sale



Our most successful Book Sale yet!! See details on page 4.

Photos by Thom Downing



2011 Summer Quest at Duncan Library

By Kyle Maier, Duncan Library

Once again, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Friends for all they do to support the Children's Department at the Duncan Library. Without you we would not be such a colorful nor fun-filled department! Everyone loves to see the decorations change with the seasons and the older preschoolers adore making crafts at the end of their story times. This year the Friends bought us some new puppets and I am not sure who enjoys them more, the adults or the kids, when the puppets make an appearance during programs.

Summer Quest (for ages 6-12) and Summer Quest Junior (for ages 0-5) are programs to encourage reading over the summer; children keep track of what they are reading or having read to them. Registration for the reading portion begins June 20 and runs through the beginning of September. Both programs also have entertainment programs geared to their respective age groupings; the Friends fund the entertainers for the older group.

To view specific program information, please see **page 7**.

President's Letter: Summer Fun

Summer is one of the best times to visit our library. As the school year ends we have many activities to keep active children entertained while fostering summer learning. SummerQuest has wonderful activities for kids up to 5 years of age and additional activities for kids ages 6 to 12. Adults continue to enjoy author talks, movies, and the Duncan Library Book Club. Check our on-line calendar to ensure that you don't miss anything.

We enjoy hosting an active group of Friends of Duncan Library who take part in periodic beautification days. You see their work in the beautiful blooms and we always have more bulbs to plant. Please join us as we work to make the outside of the library a show place for our neighborhood.

The Friends Book Sale was a huge success. We raised over \$7,500 and we had a lot of fun. Thank you for all of your donations to the sale. We succeeded because you contributed your time, money, DVDs and books. We are already accepting donations for the fall sale in October.

Local businesses continue to support our work because they too realize the importance of ensuring that we have an active library in our community. Thanks those of you in the background keeping the Friends afloat. We know that you are there and we depend on your support. Each of the Friends plays a vital role and we applaud your contributions and our success.

Tony Springer
President, Friends of Duncan Library

Library News and Notes

By Kyle Maier, Duncan Library

It has been a year of change at Duncan Library: new phone numbers, new hours, and especially new staff. Renee Di Pilato assumed the position of Branch Manager at Central Library, where Sandy Holt will be joining her as Circulation Manager; we are sad to bid them adieu and wish them much success in their new positions. Joining us this year on the Circulation Staff are Amy Hultberg and Angie Stasik; both are welcome additions to the Duncan family.

The staff definitely appreciates all the many things our Friends do to support the library, both inside and out, from equipment that helps us perform our jobs better and more easily to landscaping and everything else.

The Spring Book Sale was a great success and raised record amounts of funds. Holding it on a day with beautiful weather and having many related fun activities certainly aided in the success. Thank you to all the Friends and volunteers who made it happen.

We had a wonderful community reading program with *The Shadow of the Wind*, the selection for All Alexandria Reads 2011. Numerous people participated in various programs including book discussion, movie night, language class, craft activities for both children and adults, as well as a puppet show and storytelling for children.

Alexandria Library has contracted with a collection agency to recover long overdue materials, late fines, processing fees, and the replacement costs for materials. Beginning June 15, all library accounts with a balance of \$25 and higher, for longer than 60 days, will be forwarded to Unique Management Services., Inc. If you are notified by Unique, you can still pay your fines and fees at the library or at www.alexandria.lib.va.us. There is a \$10 non-negotiable service fee.

And, last but not least, good news! Beginning July 11, Duncan Library will be open an additional night until 9 pm. So, in addition to Wednesday evenings, we will also be open on Monday nights.

The Duncan Book Discussion Group Begins Its Fifth Year

By Ruth Hailu, Duncan Library Reference Librarian

Have you read a fascinating book and wished that you would discuss it with friends? The Duncan Book Discussion Group is just the place. Since our start in 2005 we have shared a book every month with a widening group of neighbors.

The monthly selections are selected by members of the group and we have read virtually all genres with the exception of science fiction and graphic novels. Books are recommended by participants and we vote on a series of books for approximately six months to provide readers the time to read future selections when time permits.

We gain interesting perspectives from a group that has very diverse backgrounds, a wide range in ages, and both men and women. Each brings to the group their expertise, memories of other wonderful books, knowledge about authors, and a willingness to read books that they might not yet have considered. We grow by reading and sharing our knowledge.

On one occasion a number of gentlemen came to one of our meetings after having read somewhere that Laura Hildebrand was giving a talk about her book *Seabiscuit*. Although the author was not speaking to our book club we were engaged in a lively discussion of her book and the gentlemen became enthusiastic participants in the evening's activities.

I will resist the temptation to list the numerous advantages to joining book discussion groups, but do check out our reading schedule and you will find some great books. Our group gathers each month to talk, to laugh, to critique books, to praise and put authors on a pedestal or to deny them such honors in their field. Our members look forward to the meetings and so will you. As an added benefit you will be joining just in time to celebrate our 5th anniversary. We look forward to your participations and to the wonderful books that you can recommend for our group.

Other Happenings at Duncan Library

By Phyllis Miller, Duncan Library Reference Librarian

Please join us on July 6 as we continue our popular Film Movement Series with *Alamar*. The films shown are award winners and often have not received the popular attention that they deserve. Most are foreign films and we show them on a large screen where the subtitles are easy to read.

Alamar tells the story of Jorge and his son Nathan, who only have a few weeks together before Nathan must leave to live in Rome with his mother. Jorge spends their time together teaching Nathan about their Mayan heritage, taking him to the pristine Chinchorro reef where he learns the rhythms of a fisherman's life. The bond between father and son grows as Nathan learns to live in harmony with life both above and below the surface of the sea. Other upcoming films are: *Bomber* (Aug 10); *Welcome* (Sept. 7); and *Troubled Water* (Oct. 5).

The Internet brings changes to our collections. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* published its last paper version in 2010 so enjoy the wonderful volumes and share your memories of encyclopedias with your children. Future versions will be available on the Internet in the Duncan Library databases.

The *Pro Football Encyclopedia*, copyrighted in 1997, is leaving our collection but you can access up-to-the-minute information on the Internet. Go to Google and type in "encyclopedia of football" and then the fun begins. Much of the information comes from 24-7 Baseball which published the *ESPN Pro Football Encyclopedia*. Other great sources are available by searching for "sport e-cyclopedia" and "baseball encyclopedia". The Internet provides a vast array of up-to-date sports information, whenever you need it.

CAN YOU CHANGE A BEHAVIOR TO HELP THE FRIENDS OF 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 their selected charity—now you can shop for the Friends.

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

1. Go to 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
5. Enter Your Information

Every time you shop online, login to iGive.com first. Then, find your desired store from the iGive site, login to that's store site,



and enjoy your shopping knowing that a portion of your purchase will come back to the Friends.

Contact Carolyn Harris if you'd like help—cdharris3@gmail.com.

Our Most Successful Book Sale Yet!

Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU to all our Friends and neighbors who shopped at the Friends of Duncan Library Spring Book Sale, volunteered their time & talent, or donated books. It was a great community event under the big tent AND a very successful fundraiser—not only did the Spring Book Sale have record-breaking attendance, but the Del Ray community broke all Friends fundraising records, raising over \$7,500 for our neighborhood library!

Special thanks to Jen Walker, "The Realtor for Del Ray," who sponsored all the children's events. And please support our generous sponsors: The Paxton Companies, Jack Taylor Toyota, Rainbow Rentals, Rita's Water Ice, Rocklands Barbeque & Grilling Company, Vocelli Pizza, Taqueria Poblano, Hard Times Cafe, Mango Mike's, California Tortilla, Sweet Cheeks Facepainting, The Mr. B. Show and The Good Life Theater presents Joe Pipik's BackPack



Puppets. All drawing winners have been notified via email, and prizes can be picked up at the circulation desk.

We'll see you for the next book sale—tentatively scheduled for mid-October!

Author Talk: by Ellen Byerrum*Shot Through Velvet*

By Leonard Goldstein, Chair, Author Talks/ Adult Programs

It was a dark and stormy night...but the faithful group of mystery lovers who showed up at Duncan Library's Author Talk on March 23 were treated to an inside look at the writing of a cozy mystery by an expert at the process, Ellen Byerrum. Ellen, a member of the local group of female mystery writers Sisters in Crime, was at Duncan to introduce her latest book, *Shot Through Velvet*.

Lacey Smithsonian, the heroine of Ellen's Crimes of Fashion series of novels, is supposed to report on fashion for Washington's mythical *Eye Street Observer*, but somehow she keeps running into people who have recently become corpses under mysterious circumstances, or are about to do so. Ellen also got her start as a reporter, but unlike Lacey, her first job in Washington concentrated on industrial news at the Bureau of National Affairs (or as they called it, "Boring, Nonetheless Accurate"). Part of her purview was reporting on OSHA's investigations of industrial safety and she discovered that nearly a century after the publication of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, there were still industrial accidents involving death by meat grinder or, perhaps marginally more pleasant, by chocolate mixer. True to her experience in reporting industrial mayhem, and as can be seen from titles such as *Killer Hair* and *Hostile Makeover*, Ellen's own villains often eschew Washington's traditional drive-by shootings in favor of more imaginative ways of dispatching their victims. It's giving away little to say that in the very first sentence of *Shot Through Velvet* a victim is introduced completely immersed in a vat of dye and consequently looking kind of blue.

Ellen traced the development of one of her typical book, starting with the question she claims is every writer's *bête noir*: Where do you get your ideas? The truth is that they strike at random. She cited an incident when she was working as a marketer at a national hair cutting chain, when a man called in saying he was from the chain's central office and offered \$200 to cut a woman's long hair short, \$500 if he could make a video of the process and keep the hair. She called back to check on his bona fides--most executives didn't have such unusual requests—

but he hung up and was never heard from again. But she started speculating: What if a woman had shown up for that haircut? Her first mystery, *Killer Hair*, grew from that phone call.

Ellen claims that mystery writers are a happy group, because they can kill off their enemies, but it's not always that simple. Characters can take charge; the author's not always an omnipotent puppet master. One character in her first book was so obnoxious that Ellen decided not to kill her off after all, but to keep her around as a regular to torture (metaphorically) rather than eliminate. Changes like that make the writing hard for her and slow down the process, so that she can't produce more than one book a year, although her agent blithely assured her she could turn out twice as many.

Ellen's latest book, *Shot Through Velvet*, was inspired by the news that Virginia's last velvet factory, in Blackstone (which became Black Martin in the book), was closing down in another loss to shrinking markets and foreign competition. In her research, which involved a visit to the factory, she learned that velvet-making requires a lot of handwork with large shears, and that there are blades in the dye tanks. But perhaps I've already said too much...

Membership Update

By Carolyn Harris, Acting Membership Chair

Hurray! The Spring Book Sale helped us bring in 10 more Friends. We now have 139 members who have donated almost \$5,500 since our Membership Campaign started last Fall. Our best promotion for the Duncan Friends is YOU! Please 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.

Author Talk: by Joseph Urban

The Blessed Father of Death

By Leonard Goldstein, Chair, Author Talks/Adult Programs

On May 25th, Joseph J. Urban III opened the door into a world that feels like our own in many ways, but in important areas is very different. He introduced the planet Earth of his science-fiction novel *The Blessed Father of Death* in the year 1877 as it would be if the laws of science—and some bad guesses—as far as they were believed known at that time, had been true in all respects. Does the full moon appear dazzling white? That's because it's actually a world largely of snow and ice, and where the grass and jungle are white too. As for our own planet, even though photography from outer space has now established that Earth actually appears rather blue, in Urban's book it is still the "green planet" of earlier science fiction writers (because of its forests). And earth's greenness sparks the Martian invasion that largely concerns this book.

Is there air between the planets? No one had yet found the contrary in 1877, so we can breathe in outer space as we fly to Mars on our steam-powered spacecraft, to do battle with the Khoraa, the creatures who invaded us first. And if someone slips off the craft between planets, bad luck, because he'll just keep falling down, down, down forever. Rather than interrupt the narrative flow to explain each strange concept as it comes up in the story, Urban has added several appendices replete with the scientific "facts" on which he's based his tale, and eye-catching illustrations of some of the exotic creatures to be found on the moon and Mars.

But Urban didn't just set out to deliver a space opera. In his view, the purpose of writing a book is to present new ideas to people, and science fiction's role is to tell a story in a way that challenges the reader. The first interracial kiss on US TV, he reminds us, was perhaps acceptable to its viewers in 1968 because it took place in the speculative world of Star Trek (between Kirk and Uhura) rather than in "real life." His book contains helpings of philosophy, and even religion,

as well as flashing swords and Martian princesses. Every chapter starts with a relevant epigraph from the observations or musings of one of the characters, xenanthropologist Julius Windsor. Among the questions he, and Joe Urban, wrestle with are the problems of what makes us human, the nature of the soul—can sentient extraterrestrials possess one? —, and our place in the universe among the billions of stars and other planets. Can man ever become a peaceful, unified species, or does our competitive and aggressive nature doom us to unending rivalry, discord, and war?

Among the alien creatures that Malcolm Jefferson, the hero and a former Confederate officer in the Civil War, must deal with in his efforts to overcome the forces of evil and save humanity (and other good guys) are the previously-mentioned Khoraa, or Martians, and two sentient species inhabiting the moon, the brutish Moruks on land and the amphibious, more refined Aloï in the water (yes, the moon's "seas" are really seas). All true space operas need a Princess Leia, and in *The Blessed Father of Death* Jefferson encounters a beautiful Martian princess who is not only psychic but also a spoiled 19-year-old. Well, nobody's perfect.

Oh, and the greenness that caused Mars to invade the earth? Well, it seems that on the red planet Mars the very rare color green is highly valued, and a whole planet that's green must be, literally, heaven. To the Khoraa, from this point it's only a small step to saying, "Let's go there and take it for ourselves." Can Malcolm Jefferson save the world, or will he and it fall to the invaders? Joe Urban gave no direct answer, but did reveal that he's well on the way with a sequel, *Genesis Child*, which seems a pretty fair hint.

Note: 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.

Summer Quest 2011 at Duncan Library

Summer Quest for Ages 6-12 years only (includes kindergarten graduates)

All Programs Begin at 3:30

Wednesday, June 29: Enjoy Magician Joe Romano's show "Books: The Magic is Real".

Wednesday, July 6: Barefoot Puppets presents "Trickster Tales", traditional stories from West Africa.

Monday, July 11: Bill Jenkins' music from around the world. Join in playing music!

Wednesday, July 13: Andrew Wilson of Under The Sea will introduce us to fish and fish facts from around the world.

Monday, July 18: Animal Ambassadors introduce us to Amazing Animals where we explore the diverse habitats of the animal world and adaptations used to survive in them.

Wednesday, July 20: Shazam Magic aims to surprise us with "Magic Around the Globe".

Wednesday, July 27: Blue Sky Puppet Theatre performs *The Three Not-So-Little Pigs*.

Wednesday, August 3: Maryland Science Center presents "What's the Matter? Chemistry with Fizz, Foam and Flash."

Summer Quest Junior Programs for Ages 0-5 years only (some programs are restricted ages, see below)

Programs at 10AM or 11 AM

Tuesday, June 28: KayDee Puppets perform *Rumpelstiltskin* and *Noddaberry Good Day*. For ages 2 to 5 years.

Tuesday, July 5: Classic Tales 'n Tunes tell stories through music. For ages 0 to 5 years.

Tuesday, July 12: Bill Jenkins leads us in hands-on music. For ages 1 to 5 years.
Monday, July 18: Peter McCorry, One Man Band. For ages 0 to 5 years.

Tuesday, July 19: Great Zucchini, magician with tricks and jokes to surprise. For ages 2 to 5 years.

Monday, July 25: Oh Susannah leads us in musical numbers. For ages 0 to 5 years.
Tuesday, July 26: C Shells, musical duo, use their imagination and ours. For ages 0 to 5 years.

Tuesday, August 2: GoodLife Theater presents an updated puppet show, *Little Red Rocket Hood*. For ages 2 to 5 years.



Duncan Library

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**Friends of Duncan
Library Newsletter:**

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Membership and Book Sale Chairs Needed!!

Membership Chair: The Chair leads the Friends of Duncan Library's annual Membership Campaign in the fall, maintains membership records throughout the year and assists the Friends of Duncan Library Board in outreach efforts. Before moving to Palm Springs, our outgoing Membership Chair compiled all the documents from past Membership Campaigns to make jumping into this role a breeze—though we are always open to your new ideas!

Book Sale Chair: The Chair oversees, promotes, and coordinates volunteers for our fall and spring book sales. Book sales are our largest fundraisers -- and are needed more than ever as our library system continues to operate under a slashed budget. This is an excellent way to make a BIG difference in the community—our last sale raised over \$7,500 for our neighborhood library—money that will be used to fund children's activities, library events, purchase library materials and more! Our next book sale is tentatively scheduled for mid-October.

If you're a detail-oriented and organized, serving as a committee chair is a GREAT way to become more involved in your neighborhood library!

For more information on either position, please email duncanlibraryfriends@gmail.com. Thank you!

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