

# FRIENDS NEWS

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Johnson City Public Library

Fall 2009



## Fall Book Sale

The leaves are turning again and our shelves are filling up, which means it's time for our annual Fall Book Sale.

**What: Friends of the Johnson City Public Library Fall Book Festival**

**When: Saturday, October 24th**

**Where: Johnson City Public Library, Jones Meeting rooms**

**Time: 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. for the general public**

**Special Preview: Friday night from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. for FOL members**

Bring your membership card for admittance to the preview. If you can't find your card, we will have a member's list at the door. If your membership has expired, you can renew it at the sale!



## Call for Volunteers

Friends, we need help setting up the book sale. We will be working on Thursday, Oct 22 and Friday, Oct 23 from 9 am – 12 noon. Anyone who wants to lend a hand is welcomed.

## Board of Directors

President: Karol Lynn Johnson  
Vice-President: Betsy Austin  
Treasurer: Linda Gallagher  
Secretary: Susan Burkey

We would like to invite all FOL members to attend the December 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Also, anyone interested in serving on the board is encouraged to come to this meeting. The Friends meet the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm in the Jones Meeting Room at the library.

## Get-2-Know

By Josh Archer

For this edition of the newsletter, we are featuring a new library program along with two of its vital members. The Friendly Visitor program was established in January as a way to allow patrons who are unable to travel to the library to have access to the materials. The Friendly Visitor program pairs up a volunteer with a patron who can no longer travel to the library. Each volunteer visits the patron twice a month to pick up books and deliver new ones. It currently has 14 patrons and 10 volunteers. I spoke with both Dan Johnson, a volunteer, and Libba Killian, the Program Coordinator. Here are their responses:

Can you describe how the program works?

- Dan – So far I have visited with the same person and she reads about ten books per month. We discuss what she liked and didn't like about the books; decide what authors or books I should try to find; and we share a little of our own lives each time. Each visit lasts roughly 20 minutes and with two visits per month, that adds up to about 40 minutes.

- Libba – Each volunteer checks out books and delivers them to the patron, bringing news of what's going on in the library and just having a friendly visit discussing books.

How did you get involved with the Friendly Visitor program?

- Dan – My wife, Karol Lynn, brought home a brochure from an FOL meeting and I read an item in the *Johnson City Press*.
- Libba – I came to the library in September of 2000, working part-time in the reference department. And nearly two years ago, we started getting requests from our



patrons for this type of service. We found that other libraries had similar programs catering to those patrons who have been a long-time library supporter but are unable to come to the library. After visiting with a few of these patrons, I came to understand that for some people the library was a big part of their lives and to be cut off from it was truly a loss.

What would you say is the best aspect of the program?

- Dan - The folks working circulation make the process very easy. And my

client is very appreciative of the service.

- Libba – The volunteers are the golden link between homebound people and the library, giving their valuable time to check out books and deliver them to the patron. So far, all of our matches have turned out to be true friendships.

How is this program impacting the community from your perspective?

- Dan - It's improving the quality of life for folks who have lost something important--their mobility.
- Libba – This program gives the volunteer an opportunity to become more involved in their community and to meet people that they may not have come in contact with otherwise.

What are some of the benefits from being a Friendly Visitor volunteer?

- Dan - It feels good to enable a book addict's habit. I'm getting more familiar with the JCPL collections. And I'm getting to know a new friend. I'll add that, especially in retirement, I am an obsessive reader. I'm 1/3 through a list of the 100 greatest novels, participate in a monthly book discussion group at ETSU, and spend at least half my time in a recliner devouring books and magazines. So I appreciate how upsetting it would be to someone with my obsession to lose access to the library. When I read about the Friendly Visitors Program I thought, "I hope that's available when I need it," and then I realized it would be well worth my time to provide it to others. I would also observe that, as my one client and I share little tidbits of our lives on each visit, I sometimes feel like we're co-authoring a novel--developing a background history, and learning about new characters, new anecdotes, and new concerns. We are gradually becoming friends who share some insight into each other's lives. As a person who has had few close friends throughout my life, I'm a little surprised to

discover that I like that part of the experience.

How can someone who is interested in becoming a volunteer become a volunteer?

- Libba – To become a friendly visitor or to request a visit, a person can just call the library and he/she will be directed to me or to Ruby Elbasha, who is the Volunteer Coordinator. My phone number is 434-4472 and a volunteer can reach Ruby at 434-4474.

## Did You Know?

During the last week in September, libraries all across the country set up displays to honor National Banned Books Week. Our library set their “nifty” banned books display by the



Reference area. This year Banned Books Week was celebrated from September 26<sup>th</sup> through October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The week is meant to encourage and celebrate the freedom to read and the importance of the First Amendment. It was first started in 1982 as a response to a sudden surge in the number of challenges to books in school, bookstores, and libraries. In fact, more than 1000 books have been challenged since then. The American Library Association is a major sponsor of the event. Here is a list of the ten most frequently challenged books. Many of these books have been banned more than once for various reasons. You may be surprised at some that made the list:

- *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald, challenged in 1987 for language and sexual references
- *The Catcher in the Rye*, J. D. Salinger, challenged in 2001 for profanity

- *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck, challenged in 1993 for using the name of God and Jesus in a vain and profane manner along with inappropriate sexual references
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee, challenged in 2004 because of the racial slurs degrading African-Americans
- *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker, challenged in 2002 for profanity and descriptions of drug abuse, sexually explicit conduct, and torture
- *Beloved*, Toni Morrison, challenged in 1998 because of sexual material
- *The Lord of the Flies*, William Golding, challenged in 1992 because of profanity, lurid passages about sex, and statements defamatory to minorities
- *Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck, challenged in 2003 because the book contains racial slurs, profanity, violence, and does not represent traditional values
- *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley, challenged in 2003 for its adult themes – sexuality, drugs, and suicide
- *As I Lay Dying*, William Faulkner, challenged in 1994 because the book uses profanity and questions the existence of God

Source: 2007 Banned Books Resource Guide by Robert P. Doyle.

## Fall Book Recommendations

For this edition of the newsletter, I turned to both staff members and the friends. Below are some of their recommendations:

**Cathy Griffith** (Assistant Director) – *Finger Lickin' Fifteen* by Janet Evanovich – A couple of months ago I picked up #6 in Janet Evanovich's series about Stephanie Plum and immediately fell in love. *Finger Lickin' Fifteen* is number 15 in this series; however, it really does not matter in which order you read them. They are great in any order. In #15 bond enforcement officer Stephanie Plums co-worker Lula watches as celebrity

chef Stanley Chipotle is beheaded by two not-so-smart criminals. What ensues is a laugh-a-minute search for the killers and five elusive bond skips! And as if this is not enough to keep Stephanie busy, she tries to keep Lula from being killed and her granny Mazur from hitting the bottle. Throw in a million dollar reward and you get a million laughs out of this most entertaining novel.

*Return to Sullivan's Island* by Dorothea Benton Frank – The author uses South Carolina's Lowcountry as a backdrop for her novels and *Return to Sullivan's Island* is a coming of age story about Beth Hayes who is "forced" to take a year off from her studies to babysit the family home on Sullivan's Island. Beth struggles to assert herself as a grownup, and to make grownup decisions. Her mother is away in France for a year and her Aunt Maggie, Uncle Grant and stepfather Simon have moved away to California. However, with the help of her new friend Cecily Singleton and some assorted aunts, uncles, cousins and ghosts (yes, ghosts), Beth comes to terms with who she is and where her life is going. Benton Frank also throws in a couple of guys, but don't think that this makes it a love story. In the end, it is the love of family and friends and a magical island that helps Beth find the peace she has been looking for.



**Becky McKnight** (FOL) - *Nine Parts of Desire: the Hidden World of Islamic Women* by Geraldine Brooks. During her six years covering the Middle East for the *Wall St. Journal*, Brooks sought to find out how Muslim women feel about their societies' attitudes toward women. She took on the "hijab" herself, talked with women throughout the Islamic world, reexamined the Koran, and emerged with a deeper understanding of the religion as one that once empowered but now cripples women.

**Charles Moore** (FOL) - *The Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of U.S. Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan* by Doug Stanton. Great book. A look at how a modern war could be conducted and lost. Also, a tragic story of how two American men with exact opposite views could cross paths in a war far away and how that particular incident of fate still lives with you and me.

*Exit Music* by Ian Rankin. DI John Rebus has retired. I generally like the Rebus mysteries. Maybe because I enjoyed my trip to Scotland years ago. Maybe because I know there's more to Scotland and Edinburgh than kilts and booze. But, I didn't like the ending.

*The Blood Spilt* by Asa Larsson. Different telling of a mystery and very well done. New author who follows a trend of the non-detective mystery.

*Simple Art of Murder* by Raymond Chandler. This is a collection of Chandler short mysteries plus his essay on the Art of Murder. Required reading for all wannabe mystery writers.

*The White Cascade* by Gary Krist. About the 1910 avalanche in the Cascade Mountains that despite what Krist says I think accelerated a change in the American railroad industry. If you like tales about weather, this one is for you. Great story of heroes and tragedy.

*In Sheep's Clothing* by Susan May Warren. My first Christian romance/thriller. Good first start for Ms. Warren and an inventive plot. Good dialogue. Set in modern Russia with lots of good detail about life there. A bit too much Gospel for my tastes.

*The Killings of Stanley Ketchel* by James Carlos Blake. Well-written fictional account (as best as I can tell) of the real deal--boxing in the early 1900s. Got to like the ring or this will be super boring. Blake can draw out lots of details from little facts and doesn't seem to go into re-writing the whole history.

**Bob Swanay** (Library Director) - I thought I knew something about *Lolita* but after reading the book I realized I didn't. I only associated the book by the vague pop culture references that stem from it. That's what made reading the actual book so jarring an event. *Lolita* is not really a "sexy" novel. While it has been described as a romantic novel and a love story, I'd say it's more of a novel of obsession and possession. Principally, it's the story of Humbert Humbert, a self-absorbed pedophile who essentially kidnaps Lolita and manipulates her to fulfilling his desires as they travel across the country trying to avoid too much closeness with other people who may discern the true nature of their relationship. Why is it considered to be a classic? It is a tribute to the author's literary skills that amid the bizarre and disturbing storyline is also beautifully written and has plenty of humorous moments and commentary interspersed through the book. It is further astounding that English is not the author's native language. Nabokov employs a commanding control of the English language to a degree few authors can ever aspire to reach. Recommended to readers looking for something humorous, disturbing and well-written.

**Kevin Anderson** (FOL) - *Banquet at Delmonico's: Great Minds, the Gilded Age, and the Triumph of Evolution in America* by Barry Werth. This book is a detailed, informative look at how the scientific theories of Charles Darwin influenced America in the decades following the Civil War. The real-life personalities include men of religion (such as Henry Ward Beecher), industrialization (Andrew Carnegie), politics (Carl Schurz) and science (Darwin and Herbert Spencer).

**Josh Archer** (FOL) - *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer. After having read *Into the Wild* I was immediately interested in his other works, which led me to this one. *Into Thin Air* chronicles Krakauer's journey to the top of Everest. He's there basically to promote business for one of the

premier adventure consultants, Rob Hall. His assignment is to recount the effects of commercialization on the world's highest mountain; however, what he experiences is a life-changing brush with death. Several of the members of the expedition do not make it off the mountain alive, which forces Krakauer to reflect not only on the commercialization of the mountain, but also his inner self. This is a great adventure read that introduces the reader to an eclectic group of climbers whose zest for life leads them to push themselves to the limit.

*Running with Scissors* by Augusten Burroughs. This book, a memoir, gained popularity from Oprah's book club. It follows a young boy as he grows up in an unconventional setting. His mother is delusional and his father is abusive, so Burroughs ends up living with the family's psychiatrist. From here the memoir gets crazier and crazier. Filled with humor juxtaposed with disturbing images, *Running with Scissors* will certainly leave an impression on the reader, likely one that suggests his/her childhood was nothing less than normal.

**Julia Swanson (FOL)** - *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey* by Candice Millard. A gripping story of Teddy Roosevelt's ill-prepared journey down an unexplored tributary of the Amazon known as the River of Doubt. Roosevelt, a life long adventurer, is tested beyond limits along with his fellow explorers. The personal courage of these men is inspiring under conditions that are vividly described by the author. This is a book that will stay with you long after you have placed it back on the bookshelf.



## FOL Fall Book Sale

Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>

9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Special Friends Preview

Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6 - 8 PM



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Friends of the Johnson City Public Library  
100 W. Millard St.  
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