



Graphic Novels Grab Kids and Adults

What's New and What's Next

Library Assistant Dave Burbank is the resident expert of the library's burgeoning graphic novel collection, one of the largest among area libraries. Here he reports on his recent foray into the "comics" convention world.

I find it a most excellent aspect of my life that part of my work involves reading and buying comics, or as we call them in the Library biz "Graphic Novels." You may have noticed that over the past few years readership of this format has emerged blinking into the sunlight and begun to receive recognition. Bookstores are finding a place for these books on their shelves, and libraries are no exception, representing about 10% of the market for graphic novels. In this age of electronic visual media, libraries especially appreci-

ate the knack that graphic novels show of stopping kids in their tracks to actually sit in one place and read, read, read. Truth is, even adults (or "obsolete kids" as Dr. Seuss calls us) appreciate the format's ability to pack a great deal of story and concepts into a few pages. After all, if a picture tells a thousand words, what sort of literary density may be contained in a story with words and pictures working together?

So it was that a couple weekends ago I found myself back at the New York Comics Convention. And by "find myself" let me say, at the NYCC that's never an easy thing — in that crowd it's far easier to lose oneself and slip through some wormhole into an alternate reality peopled by Wookies and Batgirls and the like.

About 80,000 comics enthusiasts jammed together in those narrow aisles, about 10,000 of them dressed as a favorite fictional character. But even wookies and supervillains were on their best behavior, good-naturedly seeking autographs from

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Takoma's "One Book?" — *War and Peace!*

A brave and adventurous contingent of the Friends Reading Group is spending the winter reading the new translation of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky.

Published to rave reviews, the *Washington Post* called it "Shimmering... [It] offers an opportunity to see this great classic afresh, to approach it not as a monument but rather as a deeply touching story about our contradictory human hearts." The *Los Angeles Times Book Review* pronounced

it "stunning" and the *New York Review of Books* called it "...an extraordinary achievement... wonderfully fresh and readable."

Thomas Mann compared *War and Peace* to Homer's *Iliad*, and wrote of Tolstoy: "To read him... is to find one's way home...to everything within us that is fundamental and sane."

Discussions continue from February into April. For more information see page 6 and visit the Friends for more information at www.ftpml.org.



Friends of Mike Morrissey Give to the Library

On November 17, organizers of the 7th Annual Mike Morrissey Charity Golf Tournament visited the Library and presented Ellen Robbins, Library staff and Friends of the Library with a check for \$5,650—proceeds from September’s tournament. Mayor Bruce Williams, Council Member Josh Wright and City Manager Barb Matthews attended the reception, held in the Library’s Children’s Room. The Library’s staff (four of whom played in the tournament) was presented with this year’s “Spirit Award.” All tournament proceeds go to the Friends, who fund many library services and resources. Since the tournaments began, more than \$32,000 has been raised for the Library.

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comics scribes and illustrators, crowding around various raffles for show-exclusive booty, or pausing to pose for pictures. I spotted seven Princess Leias chatting with each other, two Dr. Horribles, a nine-foot tall Incredible Hulk (with an internal speaker system to amplify his warning that “Hulk Smash”— when he gets cranky, or loses his balance on those stilts). There was barely room for bemused gawking — such that by the end of the day I was surprised to find that I wasn’t actually wearing someone’s costume, and hadn’t contracted a superpower off anyone. As far as I know.

Highlights included an early Thursday panel open to comics professionals (and library folks like me) with Pulitzer prize-winning comic artist Art Spiegelman who jogged through a couple hundred years of comics history in a talk entitled, “What the @3*% Happened to Comics?” Or as he spells it, “comix” with a nod to the idea that the format tends to co-mix words and art. I sat with his wife, *New Yorker* art editor Francoise Mouly, who is herself publishing a line of comix for early readers. Spiegelman revealed that he learned to read from Batman, trying to puzzle out if he was a good guy or bad guy, knowing that if he could just untangle those squiggles in the bubbles above his head he would actually know what the story meant. Spiegelman asserted that much of what he knows he learned from comix: feminism from Little Lulu, philosophy from Peanuts, politics from Pogo, sex from Archie comics, capitalism from Scrooge McDuck, and everything else from *Mad Magazine*.

Then I spent a few days on the show floor learning about what’s new and what’s next. I had a nice chat with an editor and translator

from Cinebooks, producers of some of the most famous comics in France (you may know the Lucky Luke series, about a cowboy quicker on the draw than his own shadow). We discussed gender differences in the readership of genre comics in Japan and the U.S. markets, and I read a few Franco-Belgian comics (or bande dessinée as they call them: Strip art, or “BD”). The “9th art” has long been respected in France and they have good titles for all ages. (The nine plastic arts being theorized as 1. Architecture; 2. Painting; 3. Sculpture; 4. Engraving; 5. Drawing; 6. Photo; 7. Cinema; 8. Television; 9. Comic books. The 10th I suspect being video games, or web art, or YouTube, or whatever comes after all that).

I picked up a couple of these books, and we’ll order a few more interesting series.

Then I came home and read comics. Our new “Elmo” document camera, purchased by the Friends, got a work-out, as a dozen kids shared snippets of comics they found interesting. I introduced one of the French books, *Melusine*, the story of a young witch struggling to learn magic. Then we dived in-depth into a really good story, reading aloud *Amulet*, by Kaz Kibuishi, projected on the big screen. We had to stop just at the point where Emily and her brother Navin escape a tentacled mollusk by jumping off a cliff and floating away with an umbrella mushroom parachute. We’ll pick up where we left off in another Comics Jam.

We’re still learning the best use of the Elmo camera, but I think this is a good way to start, to share a long adventure, looking at the pictures, listening, reading together, eager to find out what happens next.

For Something Different...

The Takoma Park Film Festival, supported and staffed by the Friends of the Takoma Park Library since its inception, held its seventh-annual screenings in 2009 from Thurs. Feb. 26 through Sun. March 1. For the first time scheduling a late winter screening, the Festival was held in the Takoma Park Community Center Council Chambers.

As Festival Director A. Moon says, "We continue to fulfill our mission of programming work by local and emerging artists and work that is likely to be overlooked by commercial venues. This year's programming featured topical documentaries on consumption, politics, and the aftermath of war in addition to charming animated shorts and elusive, beautiful and confounding experimental film and



video work. For the first time, we had a program entirely devoted to work from Spanish-speaking countries. And our international programming also included work in Dutch, German, Serbian, Korean, Arabic, Hebrew, and Tagalog."

As always, all of the events are free and open to the public. For more details on the Festival, visit www.takomaparkfilmfestival.org.

Walking with Poetry in Takoma Park

By Merrill Leffler

SPRING FOR POETRY IN TAKOMA PARK, the city's unique urban poetry walk, will be back for the third year in April 2009 with vividly-designed poems along Carroll Avenue—from locations in Takoma Junction to Old Town—in most city parks, and at the Community Center and Library.

The Friends of the Library began the project as a collaboration with Montgomery College: working first with Professor Andrea Adams and now Director of the School of Art and Design David Epstein, students in his design class will produce the poem-posters—the 13x19 inch posters will be laminated, fitted into frames by Clair Garman, and attached to poles that the city's Public Works department will "plant," as they have done in past years.

A small committee selected the poems: Takoma Park Poet Laureate Anne Becker; musi-

cian, novelist, and teacher Sydney March; poet Ann Slayton; and the author, who is a member of the FTPML board. The poetry is wide-ranging in themes and styles and includes work by older American and English poets—Emily Dickinson, Sterling Brown, Robert Hayden, D.H. Lawrence, Robert Frost, and William Carlos Williams; by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish and Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai; by contemporary poets, among them, Russell Edson, Joy Harjo, Jana Harris, Ruth Stone (poet laureate of Vermont), Alice Walker, Derek Walcott, and former Poet Laureate of Maryland, the late Roland Flint.

We will be putting the posters and their locations on our website. Let us have your thoughts about poems that you especially care for and the poetry walk itself. Contact us at www.ftpml.org.

Our Special Thanks...

We are particularly honored that some members of our community have chosen to support the Friends at our highest membership levels, and wish to thank them publicly.

Champions (\$250 and up)

Meg Finn and David Michener
Josh Wright and Eliza Leighton

Benefactors (\$100 and up)

Nicholas Hill and Liz Keyes
Dolly Sparkman
David and Annemarie Stroud

Patty LeBlanc
Eric Hauser, Anne Zollner and Owen Hauser
Hank Prenskey, TakomaHomes.com
Jim and Katie Sebastian
Douglas Tursman
Anonymous
Anonymous

Children's Programming

By Karen MacPherson

Variety and Excitement Bring Young People to the Library!

Habla espanol? Parlez-vous francais? Thanks to the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library, we now offer Circle Time programs for our youngest patrons in Spanish, French and, of course, English.

But those programs are just a few of the many gifts that the Friends have given the Library in recent months. With the Friends' support, we've hosted special programs like our Halloween "Scary Stories" told by Candace Wolf, our annual November visit from Tomas Eaglebear and a unique Shadow Puppets show for babies, toddlers and preschoolers in December.

And don't forget our spectacular December program highlighting the 2008 Newbery Medal-winning book, *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!*. Eight young people spent three weeks working with poets Elizabeth Rees and Rosanne Singer before putting on a much-praised performance of the book's monologues and duologues. They will to reprise their performance during the Friends 2009 annual meeting.

In the coming months, support from the Friends will allow us to offer a program on March 16 featuring John Stokes, who, as a Virginia teenager, was part of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case. In addition, we're planning our annual multicultural "Dia" celebration of books and kids in April. Last year, support from the Friends enabled us to give away dozens of free books to the delight of "Dia" participants and their grown-ups, and we hope to repeat that experience.

Overall, the support of the Friends allows us to present an unusual variety of recurring and one-time programs that help attract young patrons and their families.

Spanish Circle Time

Our Spanish Circle Time is led by Senora Maria Garcia-Godos. The program takes place each Thursday from 11-11:30 a.m. and has grown more popular each week. Most Thursdays, you'll find 45 or more kids and grown-ups singing songs, reading books and learning simple phrases in Spanish.

Summer Quest

The Friends' support is crucial to the success of our unique Summer Quest program. We're the only library in the state to offer our own summer reading program, which is created each year by library assistant Dave Burbank. This past year, a record 207 kids signed up for Summer Quest and read a total of 1,051 books.

New! French Circle Time

Now we've added French to the mix of programs for our youngest patrons. One Saturday each month, from 10:30-11 a.m., Marie DeFeche-Mackler leads French-English Circle Time. Madame Marie, a Belgian native, is a long-time U.S. resident who has taught preschool. In our program, she leads the group in French rhymes and songs (playing her guitar!), and also reads simple French stories.



The Friends make T-shirts available to Summer Quest participants. Dave Burbank supplies the art, and color can be applied at the owner's discretion.

For more information about children's library programs and schedules, please visit www.cityoftakomapark.org/library.



The children's programs continue to offer our very popular craft programs, with materials purchased by the Friends.

Banned Books Club

Our Banned Books Club also benefits from Friends' funding. Geared for kids in grades 6 and up, members of the club have read everything from *1984* to *Slaughterhouse-Five*. The Friends provide funds to purchase extra copies of the books.

Tween Writer's Club

For older students, we've just started a Tween Writers Club, led by Susan Katz-Miller, a former *Newsweek* reporter and high school English teacher (and the person who led the effort to save the Piney Branch pool). Sue will meet monthly with 10 young writers on the third Wednesday of the month from 7-8:30 to offer advice and inspiration.

Comics Jam

We now host a monthly Comics Jam, thanks to the Friends' purchase of a special projector called an "ELMO." With ELMO, we can project a graphic novel on a screen so that everyone can read it, making it easy to share comics together.

The Friends of the Library Annual Meeting

**Takoma Park Maryland Library
March 31, Tues. 7:30 P.M.**

Featured entertainment will be a special presentation of *Good Masters, Sweet Ladies*, the 2008 Newbery Award winner, performed by Takoma Park Middle School students.



Circle Time children and parents enjoy songs and stories along with meeting their neighbors.

Thanks Friends!

As you can see, we do a lot at our Library with more than a little help from our Friends! Come in and see some of these great programs in action.

Reading with Friends

By Merrill Leffler

“Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”

—Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Reading a book means a commitment of time—and how much does the average person have left after subtracting the hours for sleep, work, meals, family, television, the internet, iPods and Blackberrys, sports, exercise, or just slacking (not a bad thing in itself). And yet many are driven to set aside some of those precious few hours for reading, not just newspapers and magazines but works of fiction.

While reading is a solitary enterprise, we often want to talk with others who have read the same book—but there are so many books that the chance of speaking with friends about a new work we’ve read is slim to non-existent. This need to chew over and digest good books is behind the enormous growth of book clubs over this last twenty-five years. And it was the catalyst for the Friends Reading Group that we began in 2005. The Friends coordinate the bimonthly meetings and purchase multiple copies of the chosen book for the library.

The group has ranged widely in its reading: from classic novels that many of us always meant to read or to read again—among them, John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*, Robert Penn Warren’s *All the King’s Men*, Chinua Achebe’s path-breaking *Things Fall Apart*—to more contemporary novels, including Edward P. Jones’ *The Known World* that brought us into the world of slave-owning Blacks, Marilynne Robinson’s magical *Housekeeping*, David Malouf’s *Remembering Babylon*, Junot Diaz’s wildly-written *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, set in New York and the Dominican Republic, and most recently

Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*, which explored generational conflicts between Indian immigrant parents and their children who have grown up in an American culture far removed from the inherited traditions and values of their families.

Discussions of these and other works—for instance, James McBride’s homage to his mother, *The Color of Money*, and Frigyes Corinthy’s *Journey Around My Skull*, a memoir about the author’s discovery of a brain tumor, his long denial, and finally the psychological changes he underwent after coming through an operation to remove the tumor—have stretched all of us by sharpening our attentiveness to nuances of point-of-view, of character development, of settings, and of themes that in a solitary reading often pass us by.

The Friends Reading Group is now engaged in our most ambitious “read,” Leo Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, which many consider one of the world’s greatest novels. It is among the longest at 1200+ pages in the new, acclaimed translation by Harvey Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. More than twenty readers are participating!

Because the book is so immense, not just in length, but in themes, in the scores of characters, and in Tolstoy’s intense reflections on history, the group decided to meet four times to better explore the novel’s many riches.

At the first meeting, Cynthia Martin, Professor of Russian Language and Literature at the University of Maryland, spoke about how Tolstoy first came to write *War and Peace*, his views of history, and the narration itself. In the second meeting, discussion ranged over Tolstoy’s development of characters and their families. Join us at the Takoma Park Community Center for discussions on March 12 and April 16. For further information about *War and Peace* visit the Friends Reading Group at www.ftpml.com or call the library at 301-891-7259.

Be a Friend of the Takoma Park Maryland Library

Just fill out the form in this newsletter.

Do a neighbor or friend a favor by
passing a form on to them so
they can also feel great about
supporting the Library’s programming.

Become a Friend...



Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library

To become a Friend for one year please fill out this membership form and send it with your fee to:

FTPML
101 Philadelphia Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Name/s _____ Date _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Please circle (above) where you prefer to be contacted,
and indicate any restrictions on the day or time here: _____

Join e-mail list? Yes No

The e-mail list is for announcements about programs only, and you can unsubscribe at any time.
You will receive approximately 1-2 messages per month.

Please mark the membership category to which you wish to belong.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student/Senior | \$5.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter | \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Champion | \$250.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer | \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | _____ |

Make your payment out to **Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library, Inc.**

FTPML is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your gift is greatly appreciated and fully deductible as a charitable contribution.

If you're interested in donating time and/or expertise, please let us know:

- Book Sales (semi-annual or mini-sales at Farmers' Market)
- Publicity Committee (newsletter, flyers, printing, mailings, list serve liaison, etc.)
- Table Staffing (staffing a table at the Farmers' Market or other event)
- Board of Directors or Committee Chair

May we include your name if we exchange our list of members with other Takoma Park community not-for-profit organizations? Yes No

For more about the Friends or Library activities, visit www.ftpml.org
or cityoftakomapark.org/library.

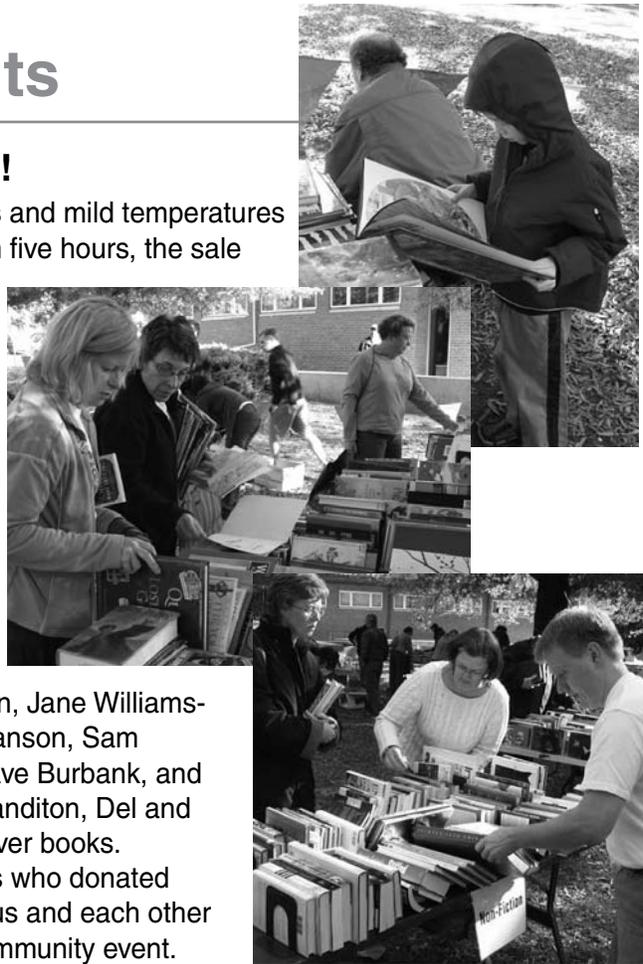
Highlights and Events

Fall Book Sale a Rousing Success!

The weather cooperated, bringing sunny skies and mild temperatures to the Friends Fall book sale on November 1st. In five hours, the sale netted \$2,200. All proceeds go to the Library in the form of gifts – including special programs, books, lanyards for children’s Library cards, the summer reading program and many other endeavors.

We wish to thank the following staff and volunteers whose efforts made the sale a success: Judy Treible, Bob and Mary Ann Annis, Michele Morgan, Dee and Mel Raff, Nancy and Dan Kunkel, Eric Hauser, Karen Fishman, Linda Carlson, Susan Robb, Andrew Wilson, Pam Coffey, Pat Hanrahan, Maurice Belanger, Rebekah Zanditon, Karen Boyer, Nadine Wettstein, Jane Williams-Grube, Douglas Grube, Clair Garman, Alana Natanson, Sam McCollin and his friend Carlos, Willie Hopkins, Dave Burbank, and Book Sale Coordinator Merrill Leffler. Rebekah Zanditon, Del and Mel Raff and Walter Mulbry found homes for leftover books.

Thanks also to the many book sale supporters who donated wonderful books, bought books, and visited with us and each other through the day — helping to make this a true community event.



101 Philadelphia Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

For Library programs and schedules, visit
www.cityoftakomapark.org/library.

For information about the Friends, visit
www.ftpml.org

Friends of the FTPML Board Members

January, 2009

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Favorite Poem Evening Returns

The “Favorite Poem Evening,” sponsored jointly by the Library and the Friends, is now in its 11th year. This year’s celebration of poems will be held in the Library on Thursday April 30 at 7:30 p.m.

Join us by choosing a poem you admire by a published poet (other than you or your friends). Poems written in languages other than English are welcome, if they are accompanied by an English translation. There are plenty of ideas for possible choices in the Library’s poetry collections.

Send the name and author of the poem you have chosen and your own name and generic occupation for inclusion in a printed program to Ellen Robbins at the Takoma Park Maryland Library, or by e-mail to ellenr@takomagov.org. The deadline for submission is Friday April 24th.

Please attend and bring your friends and neighbors!

Refreshments will be provided by the Friends of the Library.