



# Walk with Poetry

By Merrill Leffler

“If winter’s here, can spring be far behind,” wrote the English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley. And when those warm days do break through our wintry snows, Carroll Avenue and the city’s parks will be abloom with flowers *and* colorful poetry posters.

For when spring is here, so too is “Spring for Poetry in Takoma Park,” a unique poetry walk conceived and supported by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library in collaboration with the School of Art and Design at Montgomery College.

Walk along Carroll Avenue from Takoma Junction to Old Town, visit children’s parks, the library, and the community center, and you will find bright poems such as Pablo Neruda’s “Ode to a Pair of Socks,” Emily Dickinson’s “Snake,” Phyllis McGinley’s “Portrait of a Girl with Comic Book,” and Naomi Shihab Nye’s “My Grandmother in the Stars.”

This year’s poetry selection committee – Takoma Park Laureate Anne Becker, Rosanne Singer, Sidney March, Ann Slayton, and the author — went far afield in bringing together an array of poems by U.S., British, Latin American, South African, and Polish poets.

Some like Walt Whitman’s “A Noiseless Patient Spider,” Cesar Vallejo’s “Black Stone on Top of a White Stone,” and Galway Kinnell’s “Memories of My Father” are sober and meditative, while others such as Etheridge Knight’s “It Was a Funky Deal” and Philip Schultz’s “Laughter” can be wild, if not raucous.



— Jim Kuhn

*Beginning in April, poetry can be found on the streets of Takoma Park thanks to the Friends of the Library.*

Others such as in the opening lines of “In Praise of My Sister” by Polish Nobel Prize winning poet Witslawa Szymborska are whimsically reflective:

My sister doesn’t write poems,  
and it’s unlikely that she’ll suddenly start writing poems.  
She takes after her mother, who didn’t write poems,  
and also her father, who likewise didn’t write poems.  
I feel safe beneath my sister’s roof:  
my sister’s husband would rather die than write poems.  
And even though this is starting to sound as repetitive as  
Peter Piper,  
the truth is, none of my relatives write poems.

*Continued on page 2*

**All community members and friends are invited to  
The Friends of the Library Annual Meeting**

Featuring a presentaton by Michael Dirda, *Washington Post Book World* columnist, author and Pulitzer Prize winner for Distinguished Criticism.

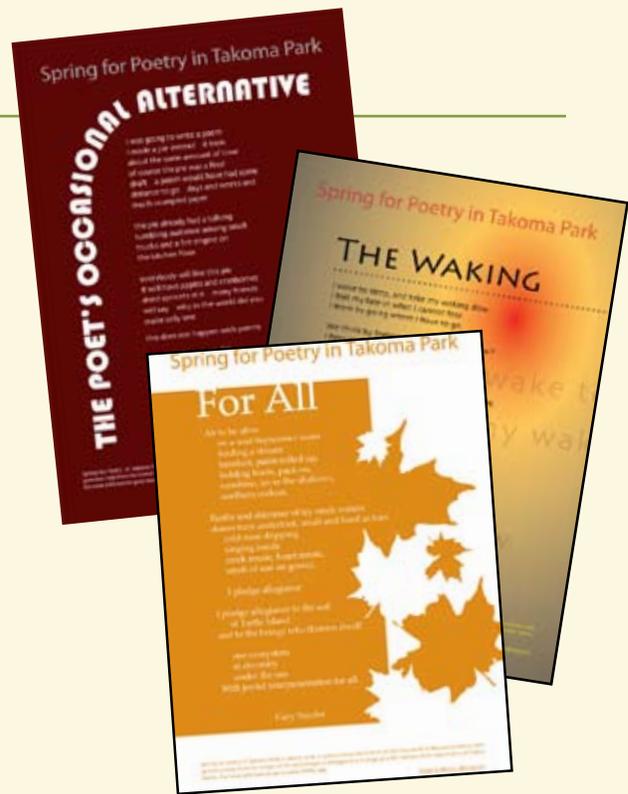
**March 23, Tues.  
7:30 P.M.**

**Takoma Park  
Maryland Library**  
more info at [www.ftpml.org](http://www.ftpml.org)

As in the past three years, the poetry posters are being designed by students in Professor Andrea Adam's Typography Design class. At a meeting with the class, Friends Board member and graphic designer Michele Morgan spoke with students about what they will need to consider in choosing type fonts, colors, and graphic elements. "What qualities will make a passerby want to stop and look at the poem?" Morgan asked.

"The students were responsive and seemed genuinely excited," says Morgan. "After all, it's a great project for young designers — this is a real-world project where their designs will be out on the street for so many to see."

The poems and their locations will be on the Friends website — [www.ftplml.org](http://www.ftplml.org)—in April. Contact us at the website about poems on the poetry walk you especially like. . . and perhaps don't. We look forward to hearing from you.



## Here

Here I am in the garden laughing  
an old woman with heavy breasts  
and a nicely mapped face  
how did this happen  
well that's who I wanted to be  
at last a woman  
in the old style sitting  
stout thighs apart under  
a big skirt grandchild sliding  
on off my lap a pleasant  
summer perspiration  
that's my old man across the yard  
he's talking to the meter reader  
he's telling him the world's sad story  
how electricity is oil or uranium  
and so forth I tell my grandson  
run over to your grandpa ask him  
to sit beside me for a minute I  
am suddenly exhausted by my desire  
to kiss his sweet explaining lips.

— Grace Paley (1922-2007)

## Our Newest Program

### Friends Collaborate on Outreach

At a recent Board meeting, Library Friends voted to direct efforts and support toward helping the Library extend services into areas of Takoma Park, including the New Hampshire corridor, where children can't easily get to the Library.

Board representatives, including Rebekah Zanditon, Michele Morgan and Karen Boyer, and Ellen Robbins and Karen MacPherson of the Library staff have since met with John Webster and Sandra Boone, who supervise activities at the Recreation Department's New Hampshire Avenue Center. The resulting collaboration promises to be a rewarding one.

The Library staff and Friends will provide books and a special new book display cart for children in the Center's After School program. Library Assistant Dave Burbank has devised imaginative interactive book-oriented programs that he will bring to children at the Center. Supervisor John Webster will bring children on 'field trips' to the Library, and encourage them to get Library cards and borrow books.

All programs and materials will be funded by the Friends of the Library. Everyone involved is excited about this new addition to Friends activities, scheduled to begin in February and March.

# Friends Book Groups — Growing!

By Merrill Leffler

**“A good heavy book holds you down,” novelist Roy Blount once wrote: “It’s an anchor that keeps you from getting up and having another gin and tonic.”**

Well, maybe! By “heavy,” Blount didn’t mean the book’s number of pages but the power of a good book to pull us deep into its world where for a time we live with its characters. “Why didn’t A leave him — why was she so blind?” a reader asks. “What was B thinking?” asks another. “How can X be turning into her mother — doesn’t she understand what she’s doing?” As though fictional characters had wills of their own.

And yet, that’s the novelist’s job: to make us believe in a world of their creation. “If I succeed, wrote Joseph Conrad, “you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm — all you demand and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask.”

## Friends Reading Group

For nearly five years, participants in the Friends Reading Group have been meeting every two months to discuss books wide-ranging in subject and theme, historical novels such as Lily Tuck’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *The News from Paraguay*, set during the middle of the 19th century; Nigerian Chinua Achebe’s masterful *Things Fall Apart* about the cultural conflict between tribal life and colonialism; classic American novels, among them, Robert Penn Warren’s *All the Kings Men*, based in part on the political life of Huey Long, John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*,

and John Updike’s *Rabbit, Run*, about a working class anti-hero, the first of four Rabbit novels.

## Great Big Book Club

Numbers of these novels are “heavy,” though not heavy enough for many: this past spring, a group of 25 enthusiastically took on Leo Tolstoy’s 1000+-page *War and Peace*. Opening with an introduction to the novel by Cynthia Martin, University of Maryland Professor of Russian Language and Literature, we decided to meet three more times because of the novel’s great breadth. The enthusiasm didn’t flag and in response, the Friends are now supporting the twice-a-year Great Big Book Club.

This fall, we chose George Eliot’s 19th century 800-page English novel *Middlemarch* — Catholic University English Professor Rebecca Rainof Mas led an opening night discussion on the novel and again we met more three times.

This spring, the group chose Herman Melville’s epic novel *Moby Dick* — Robert Levine, Professor of English Literature at the University of Maryland, will start us off on March 25.

Many have paced the reading of these lengthy novels over the two-month period that we meet. Join us! You can learn more about *Moby Dick* and even link to an audio version on the Friends website, [www.ftpml.org](http://www.ftpml.org).

Everyone is welcome to join us at one or both book groups. Friends of the Library provide copies of the current book selections at the Library. To get on the email list of upcoming choices, contact us through the Friends of the Library website [www.ftpml.org](http://www.ftpml.org), call the library at 301-891-3729 or write Ellen Robbins at [ellenr@takomagov.org](mailto:ellenr@takomagov.org).

## Thanks Friends

As you can see by the Library activities described in this newsletter, the Friends support library activities for all ages. Your membership dollars, our semi-annual book sale, and the Morrissey friends’ contribution make these programs possible. Please check the red expiration date on your address label for your renewal date and invite your friends to join too!

# Children's Programming

By Karen MacPherson

## Buenos Dias! Bonjour!

Thanks to our Friends, the Takoma Park Library now offers two programs to help our youngest patrons learn (or keep up) a second language. As far as we can tell, we are the only library in the area offering a weekly Spanish-immersion program for children; we also are the only library with a children's program in French.

Each Thursday morning from 10:30-11 a.m., Senora Geiza leads a rollicking group of 50 or more babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their

grown-ups in songs, rhymes and stories at our "Spanish Circle Time." This program attracts lots of Spanish-speaking parents and caregivers. But there also are a number of folks who don't know much Spanish but want to learn some basics along with their child in a fun setting.

For French-speakers (or wanna-be French speakers), Madame Marie leads our Saturday "Petites Chansons" program. The program began in January 2009 as a once-monthly event; thanks to funding from the Friends we now can

*"Petites Chansons" with Madame Marie singing, guitar playing, and as seen below dancing with participants, charms kids and parents alike.*



offer "Petites Chansons" twice a month — on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays, from 10:30-11 a.m. It's an entertaining way to pick up some simple French vocabulary, as well as some memorable children's tunes!

## Comics Jam

In addition to the start-up of the "Petites Chansons" program last year, we also began offering our unique "Comics Jam" program each month. At each "Comics Jam", we use our ELMO (a special document camera purchased by the Friends) to project comics onto a screen so they can be seen and enjoyed by an audience. We also encourage kids to read aloud with Library Assistant Dave Burbank, our Library's graphic novel guru who created the program.

## For the Youngest Set

The Friends also purchased special items — egg shakers, toys and multiple copies of books — last year for our rotating set of programs for the youngest patrons. These programs include: “Lapsit” for little ones up through 12 months; “Wonderful Ones” for toddlers from 12-24 months; and “Twosies” for children 24-36 months old. The programs are offered on Wednesday mornings from 11-11:30 a.m., with each month targeted to a different age group.

## Banned Books Club

For middle-schoolers, we offer our Banned Books Club, which meets monthly to discuss books challenged in other libraries around the country. Multiple copies of the books are purchased with funds from the Friends.

In July, Alanna Natanson, the middle schooler who started the club and I traveled to the American Library Association conference in Chicago to accept the John Phillip Immroth

Memorial Award. We had been nominated for this award, which celebrates intellectual freedom, by Friends’ Treasurer Jim Kuhn.

## Crafts, Native Americans, Storytelling, and Reading Fun

And there’s more that our Friends have done — and continue to do — for us. In 2009, the Friends sponsored several very successful craft-making activities, a couple of “Shadow Puppet” programs and a passel of annual favorites: Halloween Storytelling by Candace Wolf; Eaglebear’s November visit; a summer storytelling program featuring Arianna Ross; and, of course, our hugely-popular Summer Quest reading program. We’re the only library in the state to offer our own summer reading program. Last summer 207 kids signed up for Summer Quest and read over 1,000 books.

*For more information about children’s library programs and schedules, please visit [www.cityoftakomapark.org/library](http://www.cityoftakomapark.org/library).*

## Twisted Tales

The performance in December of 2009 showcased the poetry created by elementary school students in their “Twisted Tales: Nursery Rhymes for Big Kids” workshop. The four-week workshop, led by poets Elizabeth Rees and Rosanne Singer, was sponsored by the Friends. Nine students participated in the workshop, and had a great time coming up with their own versions of nursery rhymes.



*Art for the stage set and a bit of costuming added to the performance.*

# Morrissey Room Dedicated

## Friends Honor Mike Morrissey

On February first, friends of Mike Morrissey joined Friends of the Library, Library staff and City Manager Barb Matthews for a celebratory luncheon and presentation of a plaque naming the children's room after book lover and former Library patron Michael Morrissey.



*Ellen Arnold-Robbins, Director of the Takoma Park Library, hangs the plaque at the entrance of the children's room.*

*Participants gathered at the Library for the dedication of the Mike Morrissey Room.*



*The plaque commemorates Mike Morrissey, and recognizes his friends' support of the Library.*

Steve DuBos, Stan Barouh, and other friends of Morrissey presented Library staff and Friends with a check for \$3,250, representing proceeds from the most recent charity golf tournament held on September 21, 2009.

The annual golf tournaments and auctions in memory of Morrissey have raised more than \$35,000 for the Library since they began in 2002. Funds have been used to underwrite the purchase of books, craft materials, and a variety of special Library programs — including children's programs in French and Spanish.

Mike's friends, the staff of Rumors Restaurant in Bethesda, and relatives from as far away as Texas are already at work planning next year's tournament. As soon as the next date is determined, it will be announced at [www.rumorsgolf.com](http://www.rumorsgolf.com). For more about the tournament, visit [www.ftpml.org](http://www.ftpml.org).

*Dedicated to the memory of Mike Morrissey,  
a lover of books and libraries,  
and in recognition of the contributions of his family and friends,  
whose extraordinary efforts in support of  
the Takoma Park Maryland Library  
have greatly strengthened our programs and services.*

# 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 (set up, cashier, take down)
- 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](http://www.ftpml.org)  
or [cityoftakomapark.org/library](http://cityoftakomapark.org/library).

# Highlights and Events

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## Favorite Poem Evening

This year's celebration of poems, "Favorite Poem Evening," will be held in the Library on Thursday, April 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Join us with a poem you admire by a published poet (other than you or your friends). Poems written in languages other than English are welcome accompanied by an English translation.

Send the name and author of the poem you have chosen and your 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](mailto:ellenr@takomagov.org). The deadline for submission is Monday April 26th.

Bring your friends and neighbors whether to read or only to listen!



*Anne Becker, Takoma Parks' Poet Laureate, read "Begin Again" by Grace Paley and a poem by Muriel Rukeyser at the 2009 Favorite Poem Evening.*

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## The Friends Book Sale

**Saturday, May 15**  
10am-3pm

Quality used books  
in a wide range of subjects  
at bargain prices!

All proceeds go to support  
the activities of the  
Takoma Park Library.

For more information contact the Takoma Park Library at 301-891-7259. Please call the library to arrange donating gently used, quality books.



**Your Friends Need You**  
Volunteers are needed to set-up  
and cashier at the book sale.

Call Ellen at 301-891-7258  
to volunteer.

Community service hours are  
available for high school students.



101 Philadelphia Avenue  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Visit the library at [www.cityoftakomapark.org/library](http://www.cityoftakomapark.org/library). The Friends are at [www.ftpl.org](http://www.ftpl.org).