



## A Library Like No Other in Maryland

*The only independent municipal library in our state,  
the Takoma Park library is at the soul center of the city.*

By Ellen Arnold-Robbins

Within walking distance of five schools, it is a gathering place not only for young children, but for our youth, adults, and senior citizens.

You may come to read or borrow books and periodicals, to work on computers or consult on school projects with librarians, to participate in any of a number of widely diverse programs—from Spanish and French Circle Times for pre-schoolers, to the Summer Quest reading program for youth, to book clubs for middle and high school students and adults. What may be surprising is that our small city library provides so much for so many.



*Registration for Summer Quest brought over 200 students to the summer reading program at the Library.*

*Friends of the Library volunteers install outdoor posters of poems for Takoma Park's Poetry Walk which has proven to be a community favorite.*



*Circulation rose by more than 28%.  
Attendance at programs increased 14%.*

Even in difficult economic times, the library has thrived, in large part because of the Friends of the Library, through its many fund-raising activities. The creative use of donated funds by the Friends and Library staff have enabled us to nurture a love of reading with truly innovative programs that have brought increased use, as well as national recognition.

Statistics alone cannot explain the library's full value, though they give us a lens. Circulation in 2010, for example, rose by more than 28% over 2009, which had risen nearly that much over 2008. Attendance at all library programs increased by 14% in 2010, following a 17% rise in 2009.

*Continued on page 2*

## A Library Like No Other

Continued from page 1

Here are some of the more imaginative ways that the Friends have brought readers of all ages into the orbit of its own and the Library's activities:

- ★ The Spring for Poetry Walk in Takoma Park features artistically designed poems on posters throughout the City, through a collaboration of the Friends with the Montgomery College Department of Art and Design, poets, and educators.
- ★ The "Banned Books Club" for high school and middle school students discusses books banned or challenged in schools or libraries across the country. It won the 2009 Immroth Award from the Intellectual Freedom Round Table of the American Library Association. The Friends fund books for participants and for the Junior Banned Books Club.
- ★ The Friends' two adult reading groups examine lengthy classics such as *War and Peace* as well as shorter works. Twenty to 30 avid readers attend the discussions.



*The College Bound series was well attended by parents as well as students.*

- ★ The Favorite Poem Evening, originally begun by U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, has continued at our Library as an annual event, with support from the Friends.
- ★ The Summer Quest reading program for kids has its own art and read-to-play interactive adventure story. In 2010, ours was the only area library with a summer reading program—as those in surrounding county libraries had

---

## Friends Receive Funds from Takoma to Texas

The Friends' main fundraising sources are our semi-annual book sales, the Mike Morrissey Memorial Golf Tournament, and membership dues and donations.

Our book sales are held in the spring and fall every year. Timing for the sales has not changed over the years and neither have our prices. We are committed to keeping our prices low so that our books are accessible to all. Quality books at low low prices attract passersby as well as buyers from all over the region. Book lovers of all stripes—from book resellers to babes in tow—stand in line for our "opening bell." One year our coordinator was even knocked to ground by the swell of enthusiastic buyers! Books are donated to the library by city residents, culled by library staff, and displayed and sold by Friends and volunteers. Proceeds from the sales vary, often depending on the weather, but the book sales remain our longest standing and most consistent source of major funds.

In 2002 the family and friends of Mike Morrissey, a lover of books and a Takoma Park Maryland Library patron, established a charity golf tournament in his memory and began the wonderful tradition of donating the proceeds to the Library. Participants in the golf tournament have included Mike's friends, his relatives from as far away as Texas, patrons and staff of Rumors Restaurant, and even library staff members. Over the years the tournament events have generated approximately \$40,000. In February 2010, the Library's children's room was named the Michael Morrissey Children's Reading Room in honor of Mike and in appreciation of his friends who have provided us with our largest single source of funds.

Finally, we raise money through our membership fees and from donations. As government budgets are being cut at all levels and as our city debates its own cuts, a strong membership

*Continued on page 8*

been eliminated through budget reductions. It attracted over 200 participants.

- ★ The Library holds pre-school programs in Spanish and French, funded by the Friends. These increasingly popular programs appeal to a diverse audience, and attract 30 to 80 children and care-givers to each program.
- ★ In our College Bound Speakers' Series experts discuss college choice, funding options, and other topics with high school students and their parents, funded by the Friends.
- ★ Resume-building workshops are held several times a year, and participants receive individual critiques by a professional consultant. There is always a waiting list for registration at these programs.
- ★ The Friends provide a wide range of special programs by nationally known storytellers, journalists, poets and performers, such as award-winning books critic Michael Dirda in 2010 and story teller Arianna Ross.
- ★ Friends fund Library outreach efforts to children at a Takoma Park community center located some distance from the Library.

★ The Friends' gift of a digital projector has enabled the Library to highlight its collection of graphic novels in programs for elementary school children, to leverage their interest in books and to improve reading skills.

★ In some years the Friends have helped to augment the Library collections of works for both children and adults. We have a growing collection of books in Spanish for adults and children, and books in French for kids. We also have audio books, magazines, and the best fiction and non-fiction for all ages — including burgeoning collections of young adult novels and graphic novels.

These highlights are just that: they represent only a few of the Friends' efforts on behalf of the Library and the Takoma Park community.

---

*The Friends have helped make a small public library very large in its ability to reach a diverse population, promote reading and literacy, and enrich the lives of its citizens.*

---

## Reading Great Books — Great Big Books

By Merrill Leffler

In our speeded-up age of Google and Wikipedia, tweets, blogs, and other attention-sucking demands, the immensely-paged novels of the 19th century may seem like dinosaurs. Who has time to contend with them? And Why?

I'll take a swing at the second question first. D. H. Lawrence wrote that the novel is not simply a pastime or recreation—"it possesses a passionate, implicit morality...it changes the blood first and then the mind follows later, in its wake." More understated, George Eliot wrote that the novels she loved "enlarge our sensibilities." These are immense claims for the seemingly make-believe—but as Picasso observed, "art is a lie that makes us see the Truth."

Still who has time in the 21st century to read a two-pound book? The answer is some 25 readers in Takoma Park who have been coming together since 2009 to read such mastodons

as Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Started by the Friends as a complement to the Bimonthly Book Group (see [www.ftpml.org](http://www.ftpml.org) for the books we've read so far), the Great Big Book Club has been taking on two major novels a year.

Why such an enthusiastic turnout?

"The Great Big Book Club gives me the chance to read books I've always been meaning to but never got around to reading," says Wally Malakoff, a "regular" at the bi-monthly book group. "Meeting four to five times in two-week intervals is ideal. It lets you catch up on reading if you get behind." Amy Gotwals, a mother of two with a full-time job says, "I relish the idea of reading books I never got to in college or on my own—it pulls me out of my comfort zone."

*Continued on page 6*

# From the Children's Room

---

By Karen MacPherson

## It seems like a paradox, but adults are a key audience for the Library's children's programs.

How does that work? Simply put, while kids are obviously the main focus of our various children's programs, we also want to help parents and caregivers join in the fun and carry the learning back home.

For some programs, like our hugely-popular **Circle Time** program on Tuesday mornings, adults are directly encouraged to learn the rhymes, fingerplays and songs so they can develop a repertoire to use at home. All of the activities we do at Circle Time are designed to help young children develop important pre-literacy skills that lay the groundwork for learning to read; all of the activities also are easy for adults to learn and to use at home.

Some of our other children's activities promote family reading time. For example, many families use our unique **Summer Quest** reading program as a way to find books to share together, as reading aloud counts as a summer reading activity. Our local public schools encourage parents to participate in our Summer Quest program to keep their kids reading during the summer; last summer, ours was the only summer reading program offered in Montgomery County.

---

*Ours was the only  
summer reading program  
offered in Montgomery County.*

We also find that parents of our **Banned Books Club** and **Junior Banned Books Club** members read along with their children and discuss the books at home. We carried the Banned Books theme further last fall when the Library was one of seven nationwide to receive one of the first-ever Judith Krug Awards from the American Library Association. We sponsored a "**Read Out**" of picture books and children's chapter books that have been challenged in school and public libraries in other parts of the country. We used our grant to purchase challenged books to



*Karen MacPherson and Dave Burbank help promote "Read Out" which was attended by over 100 residents.*

hand out to those who attended. Our two-hour "Read-Out" featured two dozen adult and child readers, attracted more than 100 listeners, and ended with a pizza party, funded by our Friends.

One of our newest endeavors, the **Caldecott Club**, has brought together parents and children to read great picture books—using our Friends-purchased ELMO projector—and then discuss their merits and flaws. Families had a wonderful time trying to choose which book would win the 2011 Caldecott Medal; the winner, *A Sick Day for Amos McGee*, was one of our top choices.

Adults are an integral part of **Spanish Circle Time**, led each Thursday morning by Senora Geiza, and **French Circle Time**, offered on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month by Madame Marie. Both of these Friends-funded programs are unique in the area and have become increasingly popular, especially among adults who want to share their native language with their children or who want to have fun with their children as they learn a second language.

Our Library serves as a fundamental resource for parents who are looking for the right book for their young reader. In recent months, I've answered an increasing number of queries from parents who need help in finding a book for children just beginning to read and that will challenge—but not overwhelm—them. In addition, we help parents explore our parenting book

---

*Our Library serves as a fundamental resource for parents....*

collection, and frequently provide advice and book suggestions to parents on ways to get reluctant youngsters interested in reading.

Adults—with and without kids! —also are enthusiastic participants at our special programs, all funded by the Friends. These programs, many of which we offer each year, include: **Halloween Storytelling** by Candace Wolf; a look at American Indian dance and song with **Eaglebear** and his family; a celebration of the **Winter Solstice**; and our **Holiday Sing-a-Long**. Our five annual Friends-funded **craft programs** also give adults a chance to spend creative time with their children.

As we look towards the rest of 2011, we're excited about continuing this theme of adult participation in our children's programs, with the funding help from our Friends. For example, our three-session Caldecott Club was so popular as an adult-child reading activity that we've decided to offer it four-five times during this year. Library Assistant Dave Burbank, who creates the story and art for our Friends-funded Summer Quest program, already is cooking up ideas for this summer's program to entice both parents and kids. Watch for further developments!

---

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

## Computer Center Usage Remains High

By Phil Shapiro

### Stop by the Takoma Park Computer Center any day of the week and you'll find people waiting for the center to open.

Community members come in to search for jobs, apply for jobs, book their airlines flights and print immigration forms.

An increasing number of our youth use the center to do their homework. One of our elementary youth types at 70 words per minute—hard to believe, but true. People receive friendly assistance even if they have never used a computer before. A Takoma Park resident, Dwayne Redmond, who works as a DC police officer, prepared a book of 85 poems in our computer center. This book, *A Revelation*, is available on Amazon.

You'll hear French and Amharic spoken in the computer rooms. Weekday staff person Phil Shapiro speaks French, and Altaywork Zeleke, our Saturday staff person, is fluent in Amharic—as well as in English.

When your Internet goes out at your home, chances are good you'll be able to access wifi at our library, computer center, or anywhere in the community center. Wifi in our community center is available 24-hours a day. Reassuring to know.

---

*The Library manages the Computer Center which is currently open 2-8 pm weekdays and 12-6 pm on Saturday. FTPML has provided funds through the Friends of Mike Morrissey.*

## ♥ Thanks for Being a Friend of the Library ♥

Your membership, donations, support of our book sales, and the Morrissey friends' contribution make many of the Library programs possible. Check the red expiration date on your address label for your membership renewal date and invite your friends to join too!

For each novel, the Friends have invited a university lecturer to give an introductory talk, among them, Catholic University English Professor Rebecca Mas on George Eliot, University of Maryland Professors Cynthia Martin and Marianna Landa of the Russian Department on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, and from the English Department, Robert Levine on Melville. These talks have been an important draw. “They provide context and perspective,” Kelly Cresap says. “Retired Montgomery Blair teacher Margaret Hansen agrees: “The introductions give us all a common frame of reference and a starting point.” “They are of tremendous value,” says Gotwals. “They help us with valuable background information. And since I’m also looking for intellectual stimulation, I am learning new things from engaging professors.”

If these comments sound like a promotion for discussing great classics, well they are! “The group is willing to tackle tough books that demand a lot of the reader. Nobody wants to waste their time reading trivial stuff,” says Hansen. It’s the level of discussions that have kept Amy Gotwals coming back. “I find them stimulating and thoughtful. I also appreciate that those in the book club are my wonderful Takoma Park neighbors—too often, book clubs form among friends,” she says, “and I think that automatically limits the range of discussion. I like being among people outside my age and/or demographic group and getting to meet people I wouldn’t otherwise get to engage with, especially over literature.”

Cresap, who has a Ph.D. in literature from the University of Virginia, says the atmosphere is markedly different from the English Lit seminars

---

*“I’ve been in various book clubs over the years, but I haven’t been so invested in one prior to this. I like that we are not deferential to each other—most have strong personalities, yet there is a balancing sensitivity.”*

– Kelly Cresap

he attended: “They’re more frank and unpretentious, though maybe less aesthetically subtle and informed.” But it’s a tradeoff, he says: “The positive side is that in the discussion of *Moby Dick*, for example, a book I have a long-standing allegiance to, I was challenged to explain that allegiance in layman’s terms, with chapter and verse at the ready.”

“Most book clubs I know are all women,” says Margaret Hansen. “This one has different ages and occupations—the participants contribute so many interesting ideas. No one person dominates or insists on his or her own interpretation,” she says. “There’s a willingness to listen to all comments and make sure that everyone has a chance to speak.” Her comments are echoed by Wally Malakoff: “What I find really good is the group stays focused—I think people who come just to chat get the message quickly that that is not what this book group is about.”

So what’s ahead? *Bleak House* this spring, with a talk by University of Maryland Professor William Cohen on March 31. And in fall, 2011, the Great Big Book Club will be stepping into the 20th century with a discussion of John Fowles’ *Daniel Martin* (1977), a novel that its champion Kelly Cresap says, “has the physical and intellectual scale of Tolstoy’s epic, *War and Peace*, with the interior nuances of Marcel Proust. At the same time,” he says, “it qualifies as postmodern.”

That’s it! Come—join us.

*University of Maryland Professor Marianna Landa of the Russian Department and Merrill Leffler of the Friends begin the series of discussions of the *The Brothers Karamozov*.*



# Become a Friend...



**Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library**  
[www.ftpml.org](http://www.ftpml.org)

To become a Friend for one year please fill out this membership form and send it with your member contribution 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. \_\_\_\_\_

Join e-mail list?  Yes  No

The e-mail list is for announcements only, and you can unsubscribe at any time.

You will receive no more than 1-2 messages per month.

Please mark the category to which you wish to belong.

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

To find out more about the Friends please visit us at [www.ftpml.org](http://www.ftpml.org).

## “More than a Library...”

---

By Karen Boyer

My house was dark. It was very cold. We'd been charmed by candlelight for several hours after the snowstorm of January 25 and 26 dumped 5-10 inches of heavy snow and ice on our region. But it was no longer enough. I decided to head down to the library for some warmth and good reading

I did not get far inside before realizing that there were many others with the same idea. The library was packed! Every seat was taken. Folks were sitting on the floor, laptops and cell chargers plugged into every available outlet. There were lines for the computers. The seats in the Children's Room were filled, many with adults. The library was quiet (it is a library after all!). Still, there was a mood of conviviality and “let's stick together and make the most of it” in the air, that made the cold and the dark easier to bear.

Many of us at the library that night could have gone elsewhere; the mall; friend's houses; hotels; yet we made our way to our library where we experienced a sense of community. We love to read and we love to learn. But our library represents more than that. Through its books and periodicals; its programs; its services for the community such as the computer center, the helpful and friendly staff, the library is truly a community resource. And all of those things made the library a “to go to” place that night for many people.

So, my recommendation to you for the next power outage is to head to the library. I hope that won't be soon, but if it happens to you in the storms of spring or summer, you now know where the “in” place is to go. Take it from me!

---

### Friends Recieve Funds

*Continued from page 2*

roll reflects community support for the Library. For the first time in many years, the Friends sent out a fundraising letter this year and were gratified by the response of new memberships and donations. Remember that no membership level or donation is too small—or too large—to help us purchase equipment and supplies for the Library or fund programs for all ages.

Thank you to all who help us raise money through membership fees, donations, purchase of books at our sales and/or participation in the Mike Morrissey Golf Tournament. Your support is greatly appreciated and critical to ensuring continuance of the high quality library programs and services Takoma Park has come to rely on.

## The Friends Spring Book Sale

**Saturday, May 21, 10am-3pm**

All proceeds support the Takoma Park Library.

For more information or to arrange to donate gently used, quality books contact the Takoma Park Library at 301-891-7259.

### Your Friends Need You

**Volunteers are needed to help at the book sale.**

Call Ellen at 301-891-7258 to volunteer.

Community service hours are available for high school students.

### Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library

101 Philadelphia Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912

Visit the Friends at [www.ftpml.org](http://www.ftpml.org)