



Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library

A New View of the Library

By Emily van Loon

I have lived in Takoma Park for 27 years. When we moved to TKPK, Mark's Kitchen was the Electric Maid, the Co-op was Evan's Electric, the post office was on Maple and "Doc" Fishbein used to rule Park Pharmacy with an iron hand. A lot has changed — but the library...well the library is still the same library. Or is it?

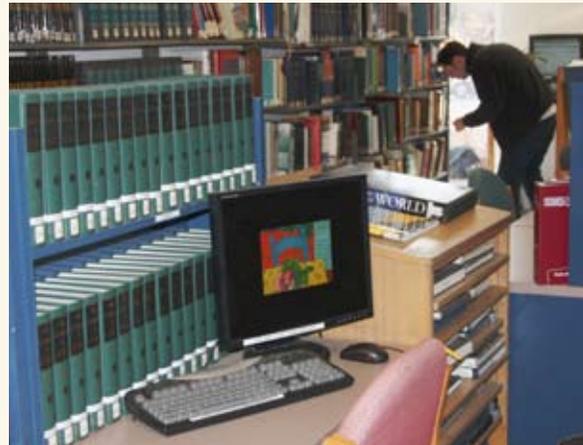
When my kids were growing up, we practically lived at the Takoma Park Library. It is where I perfected the art of "shushing" them and where they learned that sitting on the floor to read in public actually can be acceptable. Before canvas bags became the "in" thing to carry around to save the planet, we used to walk to the library and leave with a stack of kids' books in our bag that probably busted the City's budget. The kids went straight to the library after school, science fair projects were hatched in the children's section, librarians worked to keep order, while multiple fines were paid for books forever lost in the disasters of my sons' rooms. And yes — summer reading programs melted together as the years sped by.

In my world, the library was never my library — it belonged to the kids. But recently, because of a connection with Ellen Robbins, I began to actually view it as a resource for me. Imagine that. My tax dollars going to something for me and not my kids. A novel thought (excuse the pun please).

All are welcome March 20th The Friends Annual Meeting

Guest speaker **Richard Harris**, award-winning NPR science reporter, will talk of his experiences and challenges.

For more information: www.ftpml.org



Discover unique Library services for adults — from magazines to computers and CDs.

So here is the scoop on the library from a 50 something's perspective.

It's a great place to check out magazines that we had stopped purchasing in an effort to save the planet (again). For us, magazines cluttered the house and made the recycling bin too heavy to cart out to the street, especially when the magazines got wet. We figured out that the blue shelves holding the magazines lift up, revealing previous issues that can be checked out. Perfect METRO reading on those days the Red Line gets

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Fifty Online Reference Tools

By Rebecca Brown

Thanks to the Friends, we are expanding our online reference tools by purchasing a group of 50 standard reference works published by Gale, Scribner and Macmillan. Most of these are the most current editions of multi-volume sets.

This selection includes adult titles, student titles, and many that can be used by either group. It includes titles such as *The American Writers Collection*, *The Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, and *The Gale Encyclopedia of Senior Health*.

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A New View of the Library

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stuck on the tracks. And yes, I do check out old issues of *People Magazine*.

The library has solved my chronic fine problem. They now send an email once a week reminding me what I have checked out. And in the off chance I still forget and owe the fine, I happily pay it. They need the money and my kids are not around to see me breaking the rule I used to give them a hard time about. It's perfect!

I figured out there is a music CD collection. I know — we all have IPHONES, but my car has a CD player and sometimes it's just fun to check out something I never would buy and try it out.

I am getting into country music and found an old Chicago CD that brought tears to my eyes.

And yes I have a Kindle, but I also read real books. I especially love the non-fiction books. Kindles don't do them justice. Non-fiction comes with pictures on how to fix that pesky toilet or a wonderful photograph of Rosa Parks. So — do I still walk to the library? Yes I do. Do I still carry a canvas bag with me? Yes I do. Do I check out Newbery Medal books — sometimes I do. Do I have my children with me — no, I do not and I am smiling all the way to the library. It's my turn.

[Emily van Loon's great uncle was Hendrik Willem Van Loon, who was awarded the very first Newbery Medal in 1922 for *The Story of Mankind*.]

Fifty Online Reference Tools

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Anyone with a Takoma Park Maryland Library card can access the books online, download articles in pdf format, bring up translations in any of a number of languages, listen while reading, even download the audio versions as mp3 files. No check-outs needed. Up to 50 articles can be downloaded in a single session.

Unlike our subscription reference resources, we will own these books. This means the only ongoing annual fee is a rather small one for web hosting. However we will need to discard titles when they become outdated or replace them

with new editions, just as with the print equivalents. (Subscription reference content, on the other hand, is always current, automatically updated and continually enhanced.)

This new framework also works for non-fiction and reference works from other publishers. For example, digital versions of children's DK Eyewitness books can be purchased and added to the same web hosting service. Going to visit the dinosaur bones downtown? If we add the Eyewitness book on fossils, you can download sections to your mobile device and access them as you walk around the exhibits.

Reference books can be fun!

Friends Honor Mike Morrissey

Steve DuBos, organizer of the annual charity golf tournament in honor of Library patron Mike Morrissey, visited the Library on December 19 for an informal lunch and gathering with the Library Friends, City Manager Barb Matthews, and Library staff. He presented Library Director Ellen Robbins and the Friends with a check for \$4,124, proceeds from last September's tournament and silent auction. This is the 10th year that relatives and friends of Mike have held the tournament. Proceeds for the Takoma Park Library have approached \$50,000, and have funded numerous children's programs, Spanish and French Circle Time, on-line reference tools and other electronic resources.



Yarn Bombing at the Library

The Library grounds were adorned by colorful knitted "tree sweaters" in December — an anonymous gift by a resident — who perhaps was inspired by a book in our library, *Yarn Bombing: the Art of Crochet and Knit Graffiti* by Mandy Moore and Leanne Prain.

Catch-22 — An Intergenerational Discussion

By Alanna Natanson

They were over the age of twenty, with reading glasses and dog-eared paperback copies of a classic — a book that has stood the test of time, in this case measured in decades, not centuries. We were teenagers, an age group with a reputation for being indifferent to good literature. But our two worlds collided — and blended — as we discussed Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22*.

The Banned Books group has its traditions: bringing juice and snacks to the meetings, reading aloud the American Library Association’s list of challenges brought against our chosen novel, and groaning after the fifty-seventh claim that the novel is, as many challengers so precisely put it, “without value.”

The adult book group brought something interesting and new to our discussion: reflections on eras we never experienced and background

about the author and creation of the novel. I, for one, enjoyed watching another book group in action. The adult book group also offered us a glimpse of where we would be in years to come.

Both groups appreciated Heller’s witty satire on Army bureaucracy and the disconnected, circular flow of the story. Everybody enjoyed Heller’s memorable characters. We even shared the tendency to go off on tangents about Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games*.

We started our first joint meeting not knowing what to expect. The adult book group members seemed excited to hear our opinions, and we were excited to hear theirs.

The award-winning (from American Library Association) Banned Book Club was started by Karen MacPherson and Alanna Nathanson and other teens when they were in middle school.



Among the participants were (left) Barbara Natanson, Alanna Natanson, Nate Chappelle Jr., Tim Rahn, and Shereilyn Ernst.

(Below) Abraham Joyner-Meyers, Arjuna Subramanian, Karen MacPherson, and Jessica Miller.



Thanks Friends!

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

The *Catch-22* intergenerational discussion was filmed by Bienvenido Mertinez and Robyn Ratcliff of Takoma Park City TV. Watch for future announcements of short videos of literary events.

Children's Programming

By Karen MacPherson

Thanks to the Friends

With the help of our Friends, the Takoma Park Maryland Library offers both special and recurring programs for all ages and stages.

There's our weekly **Spanish Circle Time** program on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m., our monthly **French Circle Time** on Saturdays and our monthly **Comics Jam**, which takes place at 4 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month. In addition, the Friends purchase multiple copies of books for our two book clubs: the **Banned Books Club** for pre-teens and teens; and the **Junior Banned Books Club** for kids in grades 3-5.

Caldecott Club

This fall, for the second year in a row, we also offered another book club. In the **Caldecott Club**, we looked at possibilities for the 2012 Caldecott Medal. In four monthly meetings, we read the books together on a big screen in the Children's Room via a document camera purchased by the Friends. We came close to choosing the actual 2012 Caldecott Medal winner, *A Ball for Daisy* by Chris Raschka, which was announced by the American Library Association in late January. We'll gear up the Caldecott Club again next fall.

Fall Learning and Fun

But that's not all! Among the special, one-time Friends-funded programs in the fall of 2011 was our second annual "**Community Read-Out**," which spotlighted children's books that people in other places have tried to ban from their school or public libraries. State Senator Jamie Raskin (who read from *The Phantom Tollbooth*) was among those who participated in the fun and educational event, which concluded with a pizza party sponsored by the Friends.

Our fall schedule also included three other annual Friends-funded events: storyteller **Candace Wolf's Halloween stories** program; the yearly harvest visit by **Tomas "Eaglebear" Shash**; and our eagerly-anticipated **Winter Solstice** celebration with drummer Bill Jenkins and the Foggy Bottom Morris Men.

Winter Successes

In December, the Friends also held their first-ever **pre-holiday sale devoted solely to children's books**. Dozens of people swarmed the lobby of the Community Center for the sale, which netted the Friends close to \$1,200. The money will be used for Library programs.

We're already in full swing with our winter/spring special programs funded by the Friends. Our **Valentine-making** program, held on a Saturday in February, was a rousing success with several dozen children pouring their creativity into making beautiful cards for their family and friends. The Friends provided all of the materials — from heart-shaped doilies to hundreds of stickers.



State Senator Jamie Raskin (above) and Dave Burbank (left) were among the adults joining the children reading examples of challenged books at this year's "ReadOut!"

Fun to Come

Looking ahead, we'll present our 5th annual "Dia"—**Dia de los Ninos/Dia de los Libros** (Children's Day/Book Day)—on Saturday, April 28 from 10:30-noon. "Dia" celebrates the connection between kids and books, as well as our multi-cultural community. As usual, we'll have a program of international songs and stories, followed by a craft-making session, thanks to the Friends' support.

In early May, we offer our **Mother's Day** gift-making workshop, where kids make handmade gifts and cards for the special women in their lives.

A big thank you to our Friends for allowing us to offer such an exceptional array of programs that help make our Library so distinctive and welcoming for kids of all ages.

— from the Library Staff



Summer Quest

Soon it will be time for one of the Library's premier Friends-funded programs: our unique **Summer Quest** reading program. We're the only library in the state to create our own reading program each summer.

Fueled by the creativity of Library Assistant Dave Burbank, our Summer Quest program is a "read to play" game. Each year, Dave selects a different theme, and kids begin by picking a character from our gallery of possibilities (or they can create their own). They color the character, give it a name, and then return it to us (keeping a smaller copy of their character for themselves). As kids read the books in the categories matched to each of the 10 Summer Quest challenges, they report back to the

Library and we move their characters along our giant game board in the Children's Room above the picture book section.

Our Summer Quest program requires a big commitment of time and effort from the Library staff. But we all agree that the rewards are well worth it! Last year, kids read more than 1,900 books—400 more than 2010. Seven Summer Quest participants read at least 50 books. Our top two finishers were Camden Roberts, who read 95 books, and Kierra Norris, who read 76 books. Our two youngest participants were two-year-olds who each read eight books (with some help, we assume!).

Last year, [Summer Quest] kids read more than 1,900 books....

More Kids Reading!

The Friends continue to encourage reading for children in the New Hampshire Recreation Center afterschool program. Shown below presenting books are Dave Burbank who brings Friends-funded Comics Jam sessions to the Center, Karen MacPherson who selects the books, Recreation Supervisor John Webster, and Ms Sandra Boone who is the inspiring administrator of the afterschool program.



Who's Who at the Library...

Gene Miller

By Ellen Robbins

Knowledgeable and Enthusiastic

Library Assistant Gene Miller is most enthusiastic about the part of his job that helps people find information. He is a practiced researcher whose intuitive tact, patience and habit of inquiry has made him popular with Library patrons. "The Library is a kind of sanctuary," he observes, "People should feel welcome and understood when they come here." True to his word, he invests his interactions with patrons with commitment and the curiosity of a scholar.

Gene began his Takoma Park Library career in 2001. Prior to that he worked in printing and publishing, at a time when typesetting was being replaced by computer-generated text. For several years, he provided administrative support for the World Bank.

Many Talents

When he became a "stay-at-home" dad, Gene began to cultivate some of his many talents. His writing skills led to a stint as a freelancer for *The Voice of the Hill* and several articles published in *The Washingtonian* magazine,

ranging from a profile of a local opera singer to points of interest en route to Rehoboth Beach. His book, *Taking Root in Strange Soil* (2002), a history of the Hyattsville Mennonite Church, is in the Library.



Gene regularly prepared meals for his family, honing his culinary skills, perhaps influenced by a father and uncle who worked as cooks and a nephew who attended the Culinary Institute of America. No surprise, then, that his son Jake aspired to be a chef early in life. Jake is completing a two-year course at the Culinary Institute, and will undertake his studies in restaurant management at Cornell University.

The Library staff, meanwhile, continues to benefit from Gene's skills at the Reference Desk, his patient persistence in resolving database issues — and the delicious variety of soups, roasts and other gourmet dishes he contributes to our holiday parties!

Les Miserables

The Great Big Book for Spring 2012

Before *Les Miserables* lit up musical stages across the world — beginning in Paris in 1980 and arriving on Broadway in 1987 for a remarkable run — Victor Hugo's novel had long been considered one of 19th century's great literary achievements. Set in the years 1815 to 1832 (published in 1862), the novel is outsized in its breadth and length only by Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Its now-famous protagonists — Jean Valjean, an ex-convict imprisoned for 19 years who escapes to start a new life, and Javert, a police inspector who pursues him relentlessly — are only two of a dozen major characters and a score of minor ones caught up in struggle and revolution.

GW Professor to Speak

Masha Benkey, Professor of French Literature at George Washington University, will give an introductory talk about *Les Miserables* on March 14

Friends Reading Groups

and will discuss how Victor Hugo came to write the novel, its major themes, and its relation to other classics the Big Book Group has discussed: *War and Peace*, *Middlemarch*, *Moby Dick*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Bleak House*, and *Daniel Martin* by John Fowles.

Discussions will continue at three more meetings: March 28, April 11, and May 16. The Friends welcome everyone to join in. Want to learn more? Call the library at 301-891-7259.

The Leopard

By Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa

Set in Sicily between 1860 and 1910, *The Leopard* (1950) dramatizes the decline of a ruling family as it is forced to contend with revolutionary social change. It is considered one of the most important novels in modern Italian literature. The Friends Reading Group will discuss *The Leopard* April 4th at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Center.

John Fowles, the Friends Big Book Group, and Me

By Kelly Cresap

In its first years the Takoma Park Big Book Group tackled the 19th century classics, one each in Spring and Fall: time-honored novels by Tolstoy, George Eliot, Dostoevsky, Melville, and Dickens. Then last fall it forged into more modern territory with the 1977 John Fowles novel *Daniel Martin*. The driving force behind this rash departure from protocol was, well, moi.

My enjoyment of *Daniel Martin* goes back several decades, and I've been blogging about it since 2007. The more I got to know the Takoma group, the more it felt like the right place to share *Daniel Martin*. Not without risks, however. Between the selection last spring and the first discussion last October, I had pause to wonder: Will Fowles's novel work in this setting? As discussion leader, will my "20,000-fathoms-deep" connection with this novel intimidate first-time readers, or send them dog-paddling to shore?

Come to think of it, *Daniel Martin* may take some initial dog-paddling regardless. Its scope and ambition are suggested in an audacious opening line — "Whole sight; or all the rest is desolation." Where might one begin, or end, in a quest for whole sight? This issue has continued opening new inquiries for me as *Daniel Martin* has yielded up its secrets over the many years I've pondered and re-read it. What began for me primarily as a love story, when I first read it at age 23, has expanded to become many other things — a portrait of a generation, an examination of the 20th century, and a prism through which to look at history and civilization writ large. In a scholarly essay coming out later this year I'm advocating for *Daniel Martin*

as embodying an enhanced cosmological view of the world.

Holy Jupiter, Pluto, and Neptune! With a facilitator thinking in such lofty terms, what's a book group to do? Nobody mutinied (to my knowledge), and yet there was some lifting to do on both sides. A first-time reading might be likened to standing close to an impressionist painting: the colors are beautiful, and each part makes sense by itself, yet the full effect requires some distance. This isn't a criticism of Fowles or of first-time readers — just a recognition of the demands involved in aspiring to "whole sight" as this novel conceives it.

As it turned out, each of our discussions was absorbing in its own way, and often led in serendipitous directions I didn't anticipate. Two members reported having dreams about the novel, which I found intriguing. Others suggested links with works by Margaret Atwood and T. S. Eliot. One person noted how

Fowles managed one or more navigational turns in a single sentence.

As with any book group, favorable views were interspersed with more demurring or skeptical ones. We reached the end of our fourth session with much left to discuss, and so expanded to a fifth. This meeting turned out to be a wonderful, festive occasion — and not only because it coincided with my birthday. Several readers said that *Daniel Martin* had grown on them, left them much to ponder, and may draw them back for a re-reading someday.

[Learn more at Kelly's Blog: www.fowlesbooks.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=8079]



As discussion leader, will my "20,000-fathoms-deep" connection with this novel intimidate first-time readers, or send them dog-paddling to shore?

Your Friends Need You

Volunteers are needed to join in the set-up and to cashier at the May 19th book sale. It's fun to help!

To volunteer call Ellen Arnold-Robbins at 301-891-7258.

Community service hours are available for high school students.

Highlights and Events

Favorite Poem Evening Returns by Popular Demand!

The “Favorite Poem Evening”, sponsored jointly by the Takoma Park Maryland Library and the Friends of the Library, is now in its 13th year. Last year’s event drew a record number of readers and poetry enthusiasts.

This year’s celebration of poems will be held in the Library on Tuesday April 10, at 7:30 p.m. and will be hosted by Takoma Park Poet Laureate Merrill Leffler.

If you would like to participate, choose a poem you have read and admired 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 Wednesday April 4th.

Originally conceived as a national event by poet laureate Robert Pinsky, the Favorite Poem Evening in Takoma Park has been a lovely, warm and community building event for the past dozen years. All ages are welcome. Please attend and bring your friends and neighbors! Refreshments will be provided by the Friends of the Library.

Poetry Walk to Bloom in April

Poster-size poems will again sprout from Takoma Junction to Old Town. Andrea Adams’ Montgomery College typography students are designing the posters for what has become an annual event thanks to the enthusiastic support of the community and funding for materials by the Friends of the Library.

Late in April, copies of the poems with their current locations can be found at www.ftpml.org

Friends Book Sale

May 19, 2012
Saturday, 10am-3pm

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

Proceeds 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.



101 Philadelphia Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

For Library programs and schedules, visit
www.cityoftakomapark.org/library
Visit the Friends at www.ftpml.org

Friends of the FTPML Board Members

as of January, 2012

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