

Little Free Libraries

Take a book anytime, leave a book if you can.

By Walter Mulbry

...that's the idea behind the installation of little free libraries (LFL) in communities around the world. According to littlefree-library.org, there are more than 20,000 free libraries in over 70 countries. On average, each little library is visited about five times a day (1800 visits per year!). The Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library has coordinated the building and installation of eleven libraries with two more in process that will have locations this coming summer.

(From upper right)

Neighbors built their own library on Sherman Avenue with colorful bottle caps for siding.

The Friends have sponsored thirteen libraries, including the taller one of this pair on Sycamore. It inspired an independently built library to sprout for shorter folks.

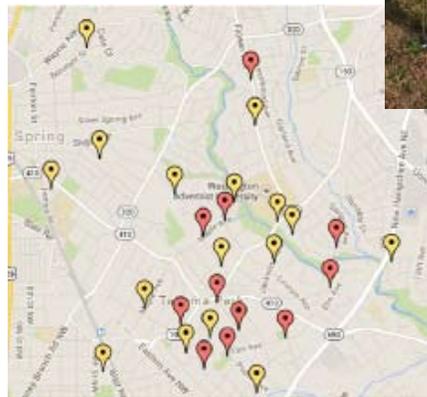
A map with addresses of all little libraries in the Takoma Park area can be found on the Friends website.



— Michele Morgan



— Rachel Mulbry



— Sterling Mulbry

A frequently asked question is whether it is okay to take a book without leaving one. The answer is YES! Of course if everyone took a book without leaving one, the library wouldn't be sustainable, but there

are patrons who contribute more books than they take, so the flow of books evens out.

Journey in search of great books from the multitude of little free libraries in your neighborhood. Bring a book to share if you can. A map of the 28 libraries in and around Takoma Park is on the Friends website at www.ftpml.org.

How LFLs began on page 2

Apps & Kids

By Karen MacPherson

Apps for kids are exploding in popularity. How can parents choose the best ones for their children? Increasingly, librarians are becoming the “go-to” source of information, helping parents navigate this still-new terrain.

Librarians can develop enough expertise (or know where to find it) to recommend the best apps for kids, just as we recommend the best of books, music, and magazines. To

help parents choose wisely, librarians rely on some reviews of apps by other librarians and children’s development experts. These reviews focus on educational content as well as the fun quotient of an app.

Relying on such well-curated resources is one way for parents to counter the heavy commercialism associated with apps for kids. It’s important to remember that just

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Spring for Poetry in Takoma Park 2015

By Merrill Leffler

Let us hear from you — which poems do you especially like and what poems would you like to see as posters?

April's on the horizon — and soon, along with crocuses and daffodils breaking through the cold ground, new poetry posters will once more brighten Carroll Avenue, from the Junction to Old Town, the city parks, the Library, and Community Center.

The Spring for Poetry posters first appeared on the streets of Takoma Park in 2007 and have continued to sprout anew each year, thanks to Professor Andrea Adams's second-year design students at Montgomery College and the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library, which initiated the project and supports it financially. Each year, a committee of poets selects poems —

then Professor Adams's students take over, each designing two posters. The poetry selection committee this year: Sydney March, Michael LeBlanc, Hailey Leithausser, Ann Slayton, and Merrill Leffler.

To see poster poems from past years, visit the Friends website. They're all there! The 2015 poems will be posted with their locations on the website by late April.



Frogs

The storm broke, and it rained,
And water rose in the pool,
And frogs hopped into the gutter,
With their skins of yellow and green,
And just their eyes shining above the surface
Of the warm solution of slime.

At night, when fire flies trace
Light-lines between the trees and flowers
Exhaling perfume,

The frogs speak to each other
In rhythm. The sound is monstrous,
But their voices are filled with satisfaction.

In the city I pine for the country;
In the country I long for conversation—
Our happy croaking.

— Louis Simpson (1923-2012)

The Beginning of Little Free Libraries (LFLs)

LFLs were born in Wisconsin when Tod Bol constructed a small replica of a one-room schoolhouse and filled it with books for public use. He was inspired by Andrew Carnegie who launched public libraries, by librarians who in the late 1800's traveled throughout Wisconsin making books available to readers in isolated places, and by grassroots empowerment movements.

The idea was contagious. When others learned about Mr. Bol's effort to put books into readers' hands, they started

erecting LFLs in their home towns. This was in 2009. By 2011, there were nearly 400 LFLs in the U.S. The movement has grown far beyond Wisconsin or even the United States. The Little Free Library program born of this groundswell estimated that there would be 10,000 to 12,000 LFLs around the world by the end of 2014 —instead, there are over 20,000! Read more about their efforts and see examples of creative LFLs the world over at www.littlefreelibrary.org.

The Friends Annual Meeting

By Tim Rahn

All are welcome to join the Friends to hear our special guest speaker Jeffrey Bartholet Tues. March 24, 7:30pm at the Takoma Park Maryland Library.

Our Annual Meeting will feature a talk by journalist and Takoma Park resident Jeffrey Bartholet.

Mr. Bartholet will speak about his experiences as a foreign correspondent, more specifically his experience traveling to the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. Previously, he served as the Washington editor for *Newsweek*. He has reported widely from the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

In 2004, Mr. Bartholet was responsible for directing foreign news coverage for *Newsweek* when the weekly won the National Magazine Award for general excellence. The award specifically cited *Newsweek's* reporting on the Iraq war.

Since leaving *Newsweek*, Mr. Bartholet has written articles on topics as diverse as the Taj Mahal for *Smithsonian Magazine*, in-vitro meat for *Scientific American*, and self-immolation protests against Chinese rule by Tibetan citizens for the *New Yorker*.

Mr. Bartholet currently edits for *Politico Magazine*.



Jeffery Bartholet has worked for three decades as a reporter, editor, and served as bureau chief or correspondent in Washington, Tokyo, Jerusalem, Nairobi, and Cairo. He has covered elections and uprisings, wars and famines, assassinations and diplomacy. He has also written about elephant communication, brain trauma, baseball, and climate change.

Election for Friends Board

A brief election for Treasurer and several Members-at-Large for the Friends Board will be held after Jeffery Bartholet speaks, followed by socializing and refreshments.

All are invited to attend this event, and members of the Friends whose dues are current may vote in the Board election. Anyone wishing to be a candidate for a Board position should contact Ellen Robbins at the Library ellenr@takomaparkmd.gov or 301-891-7258. Only current Board members may serve as treasurer.

Library Design Update

By Ellen Robbins

On February 9, Greg Lukmire of The Lukmire Partnership presented his final report on design options for the Library to the City Council.

He reviewed the scope of work undertaken by their firm, the data gathering process, and the preferred re-design options — one for renovating the existing building and two for possible expansion. He also discussed their analysis of the existing building, and the constraints posed by the Americans for Disability Act regulations.

Cost estimates for a renovated or expanded Library, including construction costs and other project costs range from \$2,100,168 for renovation alone, to \$3,190,481 for a 3,838 sq ft expansion, or \$3,488,227 for a \$4,465 sq ft expansion. The project, which would entail relocated Library services during construction, and storage of the bulk of the collections, will be considered by the Council during the coming budget season.

An expanded Library would provide a dedicated program room, space for young adult collections, group study space and more lounge seating for family reading. It would retain the breadth and depth of the existing book collections, which residents have said they value, and which help to characterize it as a neighborhood library, distinct from larger libraries in the area.

The existing Library is 60 years old. The options for a fully renovated and expanded facility represent an unprecedented and exciting opportunity for the community. Final decisions will depend upon the recommendation of the City Manager, and adoption by the City Council during their budget deliberations in April.

A link to the full report by The Lukmire Partnership may be found on the city website at www.takomaparkmd.gov.

Apps & Kids

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...remember that just because an app is popular and is the subject of lots of advertising doesn't mean it's actually a worthwhile way for kids to spend time....

because an app is popular and is the subject of lots of advertising doesn't mean it's actually a worthwhile way for kids to spend time (and, in many cases, for parents to spend money, as not all apps are free).

There is a vigorous debate over whether any apps at all are good for young children. The American Academy of Pediatrics, for example, recommends no "screen time" at all for children under two years old, and less than two hours per day for kids older than that. The AAP and others note that there still is little research on the effects of digital media, including apps, on the development of young children.

Wise Use Is Important

The Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood (CCFC), a leading opponent of the over-use of digital devices for young children, recently developed a new campaign, "Healthy Kids in a Digital World: Remember to Unplug" to spotlight the importance of face-to-face connection between adults and kids. Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment, contend that too much of the media aimed at children, including apps, reinforces stereotypes and stifles kids' creative play.

Yet there is no denying that most children are exposed to digital devices and apps, even as babies. For some parents,

Learn More about Kids & Apps March 16, 7:30pm

Apps and digital devices are part of the world of most children today. Information on them has become part of the world of public librarians.

At the Takoma Park Maryland Library, we're offering an "Apps & Kids" program for parents on March 16, 7:30 pm. Participants will receive brochures on interactive ways of using apps with kids and where to find out about the best apps. We'll also provide information about the importance of spending non-digital time with kids.

Join us for this program, and for future programs at which we highlight how to choose apps for kids. And please don't hesitate to ask us for help on this issue — finding information for patrons is the core of our job!

letting a child play with an app on a digital device is a way to get through a long grocery line or a lengthy wait at the doctor's office or even to gain a bit of parental down time. Other parents are concerned about ensuring that their children become digital natives as early as possible so they are better prepared for school and, eventually, the workforce.

The "Three Cs"

When using apps with kids, experts like those at the Erikson Institute Technology in Early Childhood Center emphasize the "three Cs": content; context; and child. For content, parents should think about how an app helps children to "engage, express, imagine or explore."

Context refers to how an app complements — or doesn't — children's natural play. In addition, experts note another aspect of "context": the best apps are those that encourage interaction between children and adults. Finally, parents need to think of their own child as they choose which apps to use, focusing on their child's personality, learning style and developmental stage.

David Corn to Speak

Tuesday April 7

7:30 pm at the Library

Takoma Park resident David Corn is a political journalist and author and the chief of the Washington bureau for *Mother Jones*. He has been Washington editor for *The Nation* and appeared regularly on MSNBC, National Public Radio, and BloggingHeads.tv.

He reported the "47 percent" remarks that Mitt Romney made to donors during the 2012 presidential campaign. Among his best-selling books is *Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War*.

Friends Reading Groups

By Merrill Leffler

Next up for the Great Big Book Group: Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*

The Reading Group discussion in January of *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante was engrossing with Merrill Leffler leading the discussion and participants including Shereyn Ernst and library director Ellen Arnold-Robbins shown below.



— photographs by Maurice Belanger



Friends Reading Groups Going Strong!

Nearly ten years ago, a small group of readers met in the Takoma Park Community Center to discuss James McBride's *The Color of Water*, a compelling narrative of the author's search to uncover the story of his mother's ethnicity, her marriages to two African-American men, and her steering twelve children through higher education. Organized by the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library, the group decided to meet every two months to discuss a novel that they all agreed on. Since then, the bi-monthly Friends Reading Group has attracted more readers and discussed nearly fifty-five books, from now-masterpieces such as Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, and Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* to best sellers, among them, Yann Martel's *The Life of Pi*, Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, and Alan Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country*. Check out the Friends website for all that we've read and information about the upcoming selection at www.ftpml.org.

In 2009, one of the group said in passing, we should read some classic novels, the two-pounders that couldn't possibly be discussed in an evening. That casual suggestion led to the Great Big Book

Group, also supported by the Friends. Since then we've taken on world novels such as Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, Hugo's *Les Miserables*, and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The Friends have been inviting university professors to lead off the first evening's discussion of each new big book — we then meet three or four more times, every two weeks.

"This is the first book group I've gone to where everyone actually talks about the book," said one reader a few years back! And he's remained. This past fall, 40 people gathered to hear Professor Bruno Damiani of Catholic University give an exciting, fact-filled introduction to Miguel de Cervantes' great comic novel, *Don Quixote of La Mancha*, one of the most influential books of world literature.

Upcoming this spring? Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Dr. Cynthia Martin, University of Maryland Professor of Russian Literature, who got us started on *War and Peace* in 2009, returns on Wednesday, March 11, at 7:30, to give the presentation that will open the discussion series. We'll meet for this talk at Historic Takoma, 7328 Carroll Ave. We then return to the Community Center for continuing discussions on March 25, April 8, and April 22.

So join us! Everyone is welcome. To get on the book group mailing list, email Ellen Robbins at ellenr@takomaparkmd.gov.

Spring Book Sale

Saturday May 16

10am-3pm

Volunteers are needed as cashiers and to set up the sale.

It's fun!

To volunteer contact
Ellen Arnold-Robbins at
ellenr@takomaparkmd.gov.

Community service hours are available for high school students.

Upcoming Children's and Teen Programs

By Karen MacPherson

Specific program dates are on our website, www.takomapark.info/library; click on "Programs" on the left-hand side of the page.

You also can check our Facebook page (Takoma Park Library) or our Twitter (@takoma).



Our popular Valentine's Day crafts program took place on February 8th.



A color version of this newsletter can be viewed and printed at www.ftpml.org/newsletters/spring2015.pdf

The Library calendar is chock-full of great programs for kids and families, including author events, craft and LEGO programs, our Spanish and French Circle Times, and much more. A number of these programs are generously sponsored by the Friends of the Library, while others are due to our partnership with Politics & Prose bookstore.

Authors Speak for Kids!

Author events loom large in our spring line-up. Children's novelist **Pam Munoz Ryan**, who will talk about her newest book, *Echo* on Thurs., March 12 at 7:30 p.m. In April, we have four author events (all at 7:30 p.m.): Thurs., April 9, graphic novelists **Nadja Spiegelman** and **Sergio Garcia Sanchez** talk about their new kids' book, *Lost in NYC: A Subway Adventure*; Mon., April 20, **Andy Griffiths**, previews his new book, *The 39-Story Treehouse*; Mon., April 27, Newbery Honor author **Gail Carson Levine** talking about *Stolen Magic*, the sequel to *A Tale of Two Castles*; and Thurs., April 30, graphic novelist **Jay Hosler** discusses his unique mix of science and comics in *Last of the Sandwalkers*.

May author events start off with a bang as nationally-known humorist **Dave Barry** will talk about his new kids book, *The Worst Class Trip Ever*, on Wed., May 6 at 7:30, in the Takoma Park Community Center auditorium. The following Wed., May 13 at 7 p.m., author **Michelle Knudsen** and illustrator **Matt Phelan** debut their new picture book, *Marilyn's Monster*. On Monday, May 18 at 7:30 p.m., graphic novelist **Jorge Aguirre** presents *Dragons Beware!*, a sequel to *Giants Beware!*.

All of our author events take place in the Library's Children's Room, unless otherwise noted. **Politics & Prose** will sell books at each program, but no purchase is required to attend these free events, which offer kids a unique opportunity to meet great authors.

Superheros, Summer Quest, and Night-time Comics Jam

We've also got some other special children's programs coming up this spring and summer. On Tues., May 5 at 7 p.m., for example, kids are invited to come in their superheros costumes for a special edition of our monthly **Bedtime Stories and a Craft** program.

On June 8 at 7 p.m., we'll kick off **Summer Quest 2015**, our unique-in-Maryland summer reading program created by library assistant Dave Burbank and funded by the Friends of the Library. The following month, Monday, July 20 at 7:30 p.m., kids are invited to come to our annual Summer Quest "campfire" to make a craft and hear

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Nick Bruel, the author/illustrator of the "Bad Kitty" books, spoke at the library in January.



Rapt attention is the usual response to our Friends-sponsored programs!



— photographs by Maurice Belanger

Circle Time: It's for Parents and Caretakers, Too!

By Sylvie Shaffer

Circle Times are Tuesdays at 10am and 11am.

Spanish Circle Time is on Thursdays at 10:30am.

Petites Chansons (Circle Time in French) takes place one Saturday a month at 10:30am from Sept through June. We ask people to register so we can let them know the date via email each month. To register, go to www.tinyurl.com/tplibraryevents or call us at 301-891-7259.

The Library was one of the first places I took my newborn son. In the early weeks of my maternity leave, when days and nights blurred together, I looked forward to our weekly outings to Circle Time, where I learned (or remembered) simple rhymes, songs, and fingerplays. My son, often the youngest baby in the room, wasn't even awake for some of those early visits, but I relished the opportunity to connect with other parents and caretakers during those sleepy, sometimes lonely days. Yes, there are numerous studies that show that singing and reading with children from birth have measurable positive impacts, but Circle Time in those early days felt like more a treat for me than for him.

When I went back to work, and my son went to daycare, I missed those Circle Time outings, although Leo, now almost two, is no stranger to the children's room. In late December, I had the chance to bring him to Circle Time once more.

With daycare and preschools closed for winter vacation, the room was full, but from the sounds of the opening chime, Children's Librarian Karen MacPherson (assisted by Circle Time alumna Alanna Natanson, home from college) held the attention of every baby, toddler and preschooler in the room as we greeted each other in a dozen languages, sang a variety of holiday tunes celebrating Christmas, Chanukah, and Kwanza, and stretched our bodies and voices through a number of rhymes.

I took great joy in watching my son follow simple directions to touch his toes and clap his hands, and loved seeing his face light up when he recognized songs. I smiled at parents attending with babies barely starting to crawl, remembering how a routine outing lends shape to the week, and watched the parents of preschoolers older than my toddler with great interest, trying to glean what's yet to come.

I'm so glad the Friends supports Circle Time, and I encourage parents and caretakers to attend Circle Time with even the youngest of babies—it can be as much for you as it is for them!



Musician Marsha Goodman-Wood (left) and children's librarian Karen McPherson (below, right), lead Circle Time. Photos are of January 13th Circle Time.



— photographs by Maurice Belanger

Highlights and Events

Favorite Poem Evening Returns by Popular Demand!

By Ellen Robbins

This celebration of poems will be in the Library on Tuesday April 28, at 7:30 pm and will be hosted by Takoma Park Poet Laureate Merrill Leffler with refreshments provided for by the Friends of the Library.

The *Favorite Poem Evening*, sponsored jointly by the Takoma Park Maryland Library and the Friends of the Library, is in its 15th year. Last year's event drew a record number of readers and poetry enthusiasts.

If you would like to participate, choose a poem you have 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 possible choices in the Library's collections.

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@takomaparkmd.gov. **The deadline for submission is Tuesday April 21.**

The *Favorite Poem Evening* has been a lovely, warm, community event in Takoma Park. All ages are welcome. Please attend and bring your friends and neighbors!

Upcoming Programs

Continued from page 6

some stories. On Mon., Aug 10, 7 p.m. we'll have a special **Night-time Comics Jam** for all the comics enthusiasts out there.

Weekly Programs

All of these special programs are complemented by our program "staples." These include weekly programs like **Scribbler's Cabal** (4 p.m. most Fridays). We also offer a number of monthly programs. **Lego Club** is offered one Sunday a month, 1:30-3 p.m., for ages 5-12. (registration required), while **Sunday Crafts** take place another Sunday each month from 2-3 p.m.

Other monthly programs include the **Caldecott Club**, our family book club, which meets at 7 p.m. to read possible contenders for the Caldecott Medal via the big screen.

In addition, check out: **Comics Jam**, our comics book club, which meets the second Tuesday each month at 4 p.m. and **Bedtime Stories** which takes place the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.



The Caldecott Club met on January 12, and our Mock Caldecott event (for adults) took place on January 24. Kids and parents got to vote for their favorite of the nominees.

— photographs by Maurice Belanger



1011 Massachusetts Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912

www.cityoftakomapark.org/library.

Visit the Friends at www.ftpml.org

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as of January, 2014

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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.