MEETING DATE: Thursday, March 22, 2012

AGENDA ITEM #: 8

ITEM: ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMISSION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Commissioners or Library staff may make announcements regarding the Library Commission and Library or Friends group activities of interest to other Library Commission members.
Contra Costa County Library Summer Reading Festival

PRESENTS

JONATHAN FRANZEN

On Autobiography and Fiction Writing

THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 2012 AT 7:00 PM

Jonathan Franzen

The Discomfort Zone

Freedom

Lesher Center for the Arts

Tickets $7.00
Summer Reading Festival Jun 9th - Aug 18, 2012

Guide Information
Last Updated: Feb 21, 2012
Guide URL: http://guides.cclib.org/erf
RSS: Subscribe to Updates via RSS

Guide Index
Jonathan Franzen: 6-21-2012
Franzen's Favorite Books
Summer Reading...
more Books and Lit

Jonathan Franzen 6-21-2012

$12 Tickets Available Now
Tickets available at the Lesher Center for the Arts: 925-943-7469 or buy online.

Read Jonathan Franzen

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- The Corrections
  Publication Date: 2002
Local Libraries: A Treasure Trove Of Knowledge  - Martinez News-Gazette

By Vivian Roubal, Gazette Columnist

sday January 24, 2012

I am doing the Happy Dance! Jeff and I went to the Martinez Friends of the Library Book Sale on Saturday and I've been perusing my new treasure all afternoon. Which book shall I start tonight? This decision is going to be about as tough as walking into downtown's Le Gateau Elegant and deciding which pastry to start with. Eight dollars for a grocery bag full of books has got to be the best bargain in town.

It's hard to imagine life without a library. Some of my earliest memories find me sitting on the library floor, stressing over which books to take home. I wanted them all - now.

Libraries have been around for a long time. In Ancient Sumer archaeologists found rooms full of clay tablets in cuneiform script. They were mostly commercial transactions and not much fun to read however. Personal libraries with non-fiction and fiction books appeared in Greece during the 5th century BC. Libraries got bigger and better as each Roman Emperor tried to outdo his predecessor. Unfortunately, the time and expense involved in making books assured that only the rich and elite were literate.

Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in the 15th century changed the world. With the quantity of books going up and the cost going down, the world awoke and renewed its interest in classical literature, culture and science. Nationalism inspired nations to in build great libraries.

Andrew Carnegie started public libraries as we know them today. In the United States, from 1900 to 1917, Carnegie built almost 1,700 libraries with the condition that the local community first guarantee tax support of each library built. Today, public libraries exist in most countries around the world and are considered an essential part of having an educated and literate population.

My sisters were teenagers when I was born and I've been told that I was a spoiled child; spoiled with love that is. My sisters would drop whatever they were doing to read to me and I liked being read to. I believe they read every "Little Golden Book" ever printed until I could read on my own. Turnabout is fair play of course, and I spent hours reading to my own children.

My oldest child received her first book as a shower present before she was even born. It was a soft vinyl book of numbers. Totally chewable with bright colors. Marlon devoured that book, literally. To this day, she and my other two children are avid readers.

You've probably heard the argument that now we have the Internet so we don't need libraries. But not everything is on the Internet, and the Internet is not free. Our free public library system is a great equalizer. It's open to everyone no matter how rich or poor you are, or if you own a home or are homeless. When I first started teaching I was amazed to discover how many of my students' families did not own books and their only access to a computer after school hours were at the public library.
Our Martinez library provides an excellent variety of services. Developing early literacy skills and a love of books comes easy with the storytelling sessions for infants, toddlers, preschool children, and after-school programs. Homework help, free lectures and cultural performances, and other community service programs are also offered. Our library has specialty services, such as large print or Braille materials, audio books, books in foreign languages and an adult literacy program.

It's been fun being a part of the Book Discussion Group that meets on the second Tuesday of the month. We've read and enjoyed works of literature that I would not normally have chosen and I've discovered that not everyone has the same perspective on a story! This month the group is reading John Steinbeck's "In Dubious Battle." It's an excellent book so far. Check it out and join us next month, or come to listen and help choose a book for next month.

Several children's programs happen on a regular basis. On Tuesday mornings from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. "Mother Goose Story Time," a program designed for children up to three years of age, is a lighthearted story hour intended to let children learn literacy skills naturally. "Book Buddy" is a drop-in program for kids and preschoolers 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday afternoons where you can come for a story or two told by the wonderful Book Buddy! In February Pajama Time Mondays will begin.

Think libraries are old fashioned? Not so! Our library is totally up to date. Did you receive an eReader over the holidays? On Saturday Feb. 4 you have the chance to learn how to download library eBooks to your new gadget. The Martinez Library is offering a presentation on how to load library eBooks on to your new device starting at 1:00 p.m. They will also have a drop-in session from 2-3 p.m. to help answer questions about your specific electronic gizmo.

Our terrific little library helps us expand our knowledge in many ways, including hands on arts and craft programs and cultural events - duct tape wallets and steam punk journals for teens and learning to crochet for adults. And then celebrate the Chinese New Year with the White Crane Lion Dancers. It's the year of the Dragon! The library says, "These awesome, acrobatic dancers will astonish you, and will bring us all good fortune in the New Year." This program is great for the whole family on Tuesday, Jan. 24 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. I will see you there!

The White Crane Lion Dancers event is sponsored by the Friends of the Martinez Library. The Friends of the Martinez Library do a marvelous job at supporting the Martinez Library. They staff the used book store downstairs, which is open during the week, hold numerous fundraisers during the year, and help out wherever they can. I just joined the group and hope you all will too. When I finish the books I bought at the recent book sale I will donate them right back to the library, and buy more at the next book sale in April! Watch for it, and you too can do the Happy Dance!

The Martinez Library has so much to offer that I can't get it all in here. Go to the library or their website at http://ccclib.org/locations/martinez.html to learn more about upcoming programs. The library is located at 740 Court Street, Martinez, CA 94553.

Our beautifully remodeled library is not just a stuffy old place that stores books. It is the best bargain in town.