



FRIENDS OF THE LARCHMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2009



COURTNEY'S CORNER

A library's circulation statistics are not the *only* measures of how well a library is serving its community, but they are the most accessible and provide the most empirical data. Those of you who enjoy numbers, keep reading!

In the past fiscal year (June 1, 2008—May 31, 2009) we circulated 198,207 books, plus another 20,096 audio books and 4,887 magazines. (The great majority of our audio books are unabridged, and serve both the visually-impaired and those who are driving, exercising or otherwise engaged in activities that don't permit reading but allow "readers" to hear every one of the authors' words.) This grand total of 223,184 conclusively demonstrates that this well-educated and literate community still reads and still values books, authors and ideas.

LPL also circulated 107,555 DVDs and videos—a respectable number indeed. Unlike the growing number of libraries in Westchester where circulation of media outpaced books, here books held sway. Even when the number of music CDs circulated -- 64,514 -- is added to the movie count, books are still the clear favorites.

Circulation to adults has always outstripped children's materials, but something amazing happened this year. Although the Children's Room was closed for renovation for 11 months of the year, and although most of the children's books were hibernating in inaccessible off-premises storage, and although those books we had were split among the three floors of the main library, the number of children's books circulated was within 5% of the previous year's numbers. We circulated 68,446 children's books this year, versus 72,134 books the previous year, when the room was open. Attendance at children's programs increased 33%: the actual number of children's programs increased 22%.

The bottom line is that there was a 7% increase in circulation over the previous year, and 64% of our community has active library cards.

Reading—and the book—are not dead, at least, not here at the Larchmont Public Library.

NEW PRESIDENT OF FRIENDS URGES PARTICIPATION ON MANY FRONTS

Many of you are quite familiar with the Friends of the Larchmont Public Library and all that this organization has accomplished since its inception 37 years ago. Others may be avid users of the library and appreciative of the vital role it plays in our community, but unaware, as was I until recently, of the essential contributions made by the Friends. As a long-time resident who has raised three children in Larchmont, I have many fond memories of our library – in particular, the Children's Room and those display cases for which everyone would impatiently wait their turn to fill with one or another collection. I would also borrow CDs, books on tape and DVDs, and attend the library-sponsored programs on Sundays. But I was unaware, until last year, that many of the things we all value about the library are made possible only by the hard work and fundraising done by the Friends.

My eyes were opened to the Friends when I was asked to join the Board and, subsequently, succeed Stan Futterman as president. My initial reaction was that Stan should remain as president for life, since he seemed ideally suited to the job, but I soon learned that the Friends rotate this position every two years and his term was up. So I accepted the presidency of this worthy organization in the spirit of reaching out to those of you who, like me, treasure all that the library brings to Larchmont, but are unaware of the important contributions that the Friends make to the library's well-being.

How do we contribute? Most recognizable are the Sunday afternoon programs which bring notable authors, musicians, performers and other speakers to Larchmont. A schedule of the fall 2009 programs can be found in this Newsletter and on the Friends website at www.larchmontlibrary.org. All performances are free. In addition, the Friends have funded numerous pilot projects which have now become established parts of the library's operating budget, including DVDs, Express Books and wireless connectivity for the public. The Friends also sponsor many magazine subscriptions, and a book rack at the Larchmont train station.

So how can you help? We welcome volunteers because all of our activities do require a degree of volunteer person-power: the Sunday programs; the Membership program; the Poetry Read In; administering periodical sponsorships; publicity; financial management; the Newsletter! We're considering an FOL-sponsored book sale and are seeking someone to spearhead that.

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FALL PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS

In these uncertain times—the subject of our first program this fall—we can count on one thing, at least: when the leaves start changing, the Friends of the Larchmont Library spring into action. The festivities began on September 13 with a standing-room-only program featuring Larchmont's Nassim Taleb, essayist, former trader, and ardent critic of the current economic and regulatory establishment. One among many nuggets of advice from the author of two best sellers, *The Black Swan* and *Foiled By Randomness*: listen to your grandma and keep most of your money under the mattress. Only invest what you are willing to lose!

On Sunday, October 4 at 4 pm at Larchmont Temple, Alice Eve Cohen, a performing artist, playwright, and professor at The New School, will read from her memoir, *What I Thought I Knew*, an account of her odyssey through a broken medical system. When she was 44 Alice discovered that she was six months pregnant and not, as several doctors had claimed, afflicted with an abdominal tumor. With its “witty, unsentimental, and utterly human voice,” says Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Donald Margulies, *What I Thought I Knew* is “ultimately a love story.”

Don't miss this fall's M&M production of Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor* on October 18 at 4 pm, also at Larchmont Temple. The play is a parody of the life and works of Anton Chekhov -- replete with conniving con artists, sly seducers, and ridiculous slapstick. The stories are droll, the portraits affectionate, and the humor heartwarming.

On Sunday, November 8 at 4 pm at Larchmont Temple *New Yorker* writer Alec Wilkinson will discuss his new book, *The Protest Singer*, a biography of Pete Seeger. When Wilkinson approached the legendary singer about the project, Seeger said he wanted a book that could be read in one sitting. And according to the review in the New York Times, Alec Wilkinson “met that challenge, producing a slim, laser-sharp portrait of an artist and activist who has changed the lives of Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, and millions of people who have lifted their voices to join him in song.”

We are in the process of firming up additional programs for early winter, including Jimmy Roberts, sports commentator for NBC TV and author of the recently-published book *“Breaking the Slump: How Great Players Survived Their Darkest Moments in Golf and What You Can Learn From Them.”* Musical treats will be in store for the Holiday season, with an encore performance by the talented violinists, brothers Kensho and Kisho Watanabe.

Please join the Friends for all these and many other events over the next several months. The programs are free and open to the public. Come early for refreshments, which are served at 3:30. Larchmont Temple is on the corner of Larchmont and Willow Avenues. Please enter on Willow.

by Jackie Paré, Program Chair

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *(Continued)*

Please contact me if you would like to help or if you have ideas for programs or services for 2010. Perhaps you would like to serve on the Board? The Nominating Committee meets in the spring and is always looking for interested persons.

Clearly, the Friends cannot sustain themselves without your generous contributions. The difficult economic times in which we find ourselves have prompted greater use of the library as more residents rely on its newspapers and magazines to replace their own cancelled subscriptions or use its computers to search for jobs. Contribution forms are at the library and our web site www.larchmontlibrary.org/friends and copies will be available at our upcoming performances.

I hope to see you soon at our next program or at the library!

David Kettig: dkettig@gmail.com

Library Exhibits

October

Landscapes: Ireland, Martha's Vineyard & Larchmont

oils, acrylics and pastels

by Valentine Estabrook and Michele Wenzler

Inspirational Photography

by Gerald Friedman

November

Cut and Paste: Recycling Media

collages by Laurence Néron-Bancel

Celebrating New York City: The Statue of Liberty

fiber art by Nadine Jalem

Sculpture

by Joel Trieger

December

Winter Season

oils and pastels

by Andrew Dyson

Paws to Enjoy

digital art & photography

by Barbara Gebala

Library Programs

Guilty Conscience Book Discussion

Meets the first Thursday of each month at 7 pm; the group selects the book to discuss for the next meeting. Copies of the book are available for participants at the library

A Reading of Dickens' classic "A Christmas Carol"

by Frank Connelly, Thursday, December 10, 2009 at 7 pm

Programs for Children are listed on Page 3

AWARD WINNING MATERIAL

In this issue of “Courtney’s Corner” Diane emphatically establishes that Larchmont is a community that *loves* to read – the good stuff as well as the beach material. In terms of quality reading, everybody knows about certain annual awards that recognize “best in class,” like the Nobel Prize (for bodies of work in Literature, Chemistry, Medicine, Economics and Peace) and the slew of Pulitzers (for History, Biography or Autobiography, Poetry and General Nonfiction). But do you know about the Man Booker Prize, or the Costa Award, or the CWA Duncan Lawrie Dagger Award or the Orange Prize? And since when do they give awards for cookbooks? What’s going on here? It turns out that there a lot of groups and organizations that ferret out the best of the best each year, sometimes with very public internecine disagreements so explosive that they make the news!

Most readers have seen the “Recommended Reading” section on the online catalog’s first screen, but do you know what the “Agatha Award,” the “CWA Duncan Lawrie Dagger Award” and the “Edgar Award” actually are?

The Agatha Awards are sponsored by Malice Domestic, a “fun fan” group saluting the traditional mystery, as exemplified by the works of — you guessed it — Agatha Christie. As the fans put it, although not limited in this regard, “this genre is loosely defined as mysteries which contain no explicit sex or excessive gore or violence; and usually featuring an amateur detective, a confined setting, and characters who know each other.” In other words, these are the cozy mysteries we know and love.

The cookbook awards are the work of the James Beard Foundation and the International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP), a global group of food and beverage professionals. The James Beard Foundation says its mission is “to celebrate, preserve, and nurture America’s culinary heritage and diversity in order to elevate the appreciation of our culinary excellence.” While the two groups serve different audiences, you’ll see that some books have won awards from both. Sorry, but to the best of our knowledge, neither is looking for volunteers.

The Crime Writers’ Association’s prime objectives are “to promote the crime genre and to support professional writers.” Based in Great Britain, this group awards the Gold Dagger (sponsored by the Duncan Lawrie Bank since 2006) for the best “crime fiction in its broadest definition.” Other Daggers include the John Creasey (New Blood, no pun intended) for first novels, the Ian Fleming Steel Dagger for thrillers, the International Dagger for translated works, the Ellis Peters Award for historical mysteries, a Gold Dagger for non-fiction, the Dagger in the Library (representing the library readers’ choice) and the Short Story Dagger.

The Mystery Writers of America (MWA) is the organization behind the Edgar Awards which, we are told, are “widely acknowledged to be the most prestigious awards in the genre.” Those are their words, not ours. We invite you to have a look.

The Man Booker Prizes, sponsored by the Man Group Plc of Great Britain since 2002, designates the best work of fiction in English each year. The Costa Book Awards, formerly the Whitbread, “recognizes some of the most enjoyable books of the year written by writers based in the UK and Ireland.”

Alas, The Hugo Awards for Science Fiction are not included in the Library System’s listings, but internet searching is always a possibility. While it’s very specialized, there is also the David Herbert Donald Prize for “Excellence in Lincoln Studies,” named for the honored Lincoln scholar and first recipient, Mr. Donald.

And then there are the many awards for children’s books – but that’s a tale for another time. It will be interesting to learn whether you agree with the award choices or whether you have other choices of books that you think *really* should have won. In any event, I wish you happy reading!

by Frank Connelly, Reference Librarian

Programs for Children

For more complete descriptions of any programs, you can get the bi-monthly calendar available at the circulation desk at the library or consult the web site www.larchmontlibrary.org.

Stories and Tales for ages 2½ - 4 at 10:30 am. Tuesdays, October 6, 13, 20 & 27 and/or Thursdays, October 8, 15, 22 and 29. No sign up; just come. Free.

Roald Dahl Day for ages 6 & up. Monday, October 19 at 3:30 pm. Registration is not required. Free.

Spooky Mask Parade for ages 5 & up. Monday, October 26 at 3:30 pm. Registration is required. Please call 834-2281. Free.

Trick or Treat at the Library Saturday, October 31 from 9 am to 4:30 pm Free.

Rhythm and Rhyme for ages 1½ -2½ at 10 am. Tuesdays, November 3, 17, 24, or Fridays, November 6, 20, 27. A parent or caregiver must attend. Sign up is required and is limited to Larchmont Library card holders. Register by phone, 834-2281, in person or on the web. Sign up begins October 15. Free.

Rhythm and Rhyme babies to age 1½ at 10:45 am . Tuesdays, November 3, 17, 24, or Fridays, November 6, 20, 27. A parent or caregiver must attend. Sign up is required and is limited to Larchmont Library card holders. Register by phone, 834-2281, in person or on the web. Sign up begins October 15. Free.

Stories and Tales for ages 2½ - 4. Tuesdays, November 3, 10, 17 & 24 at 2:15 pm and/or Thursdays, November 5, 12 & 19 at 10:30 am. No sign up; just come. Free.

Special Events

Chess Nuts with Alan Abrams. Thursdays, November 5, 12 & 19 at 4 pm for ages 5-18 & caregivers. Register for the November session by phoning the library beginning October 15. Sponsored by the Friends of the Larchmont Library. Free.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days Delight. Monday, November 16 at 3:30 pm for ages 8-11. Activities will be planned after the book has been released, so check our web site for more details after October 15, when registration will begin. Free.

Larchmont Library Hours

Mon & Thurs 9 to 9
Tues & Wed 9 to 6
Fri & Sat 9 to 5
Sunday 12 to 5

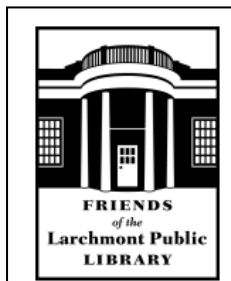
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Newsletter of the Friends of the Larchmont Public Library **Board of Directors**

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