

# Friends Trends

A PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF THE JEFFERSON PUBLIC LIBRARY

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April 2015

## Book signings are popular events at JP libraries

by Peg Phelps

What do Patricia Brady, Walter Isaacson, Laura Kelley, Rebecca Spindler, Arthur Hardy, Richard Campanella, Nevada Barr, Christina Vella, Peggy Scott Laborde, Tom Fitzmorris, Errol Laborde, Bryan Batt, Scott Cohen, and Ava Haymon (poet laureate of Louisiana) have in common? They have all been guests of the author sessions sponsored by the Jefferson Parish Library. If you have ever attended a session, you were treated to a discussion about the author's work, such as cooking, biography (Albert Einstein and Martha Washington), gardening, Mardi Gras, and New Orleans history. You were also permitted to meet the author, purchase the author's book, and have the book signed. While these events are currently planned by Chris Smith, the Manager of Adult Programming at the library, selling the author's

book is made possible by the Friends.

In 1998, when the Friends group was ready to open their gift shop at East Bank Regional Library, the Jefferson Parish Council passed an ordinance allowing the Friends to sell items at the library. Because of this, it became possible to invite authors to the library with a promise of book sales.

At first, all books were ordered through the store, with former manager Fay Bilby taking charge. More recently, however, the authors bring their own books to sell. Sales are handled by members of the Friends, most notably Arlene Manguno, Milly Spear, Sandra Blount, Cheryl Ledet, Paulette Mauterer, and store manager Patricia Cox. The Friends earn a 20% commission for their efforts, with the store manager handling all the accounting.

Over the years, authors have become more interested in coming to speak because they can also count on sales of their books. This has resulted in a very busy schedule of speaking engagements, giving the citizens of Jefferson Parish the opportunity to meet many authors and explore a myriad of diverse topics. The Friends are happy to help provide this opportunity to the citizens of the area.

**PLEASE NOTE  
EARLY MEETING TIME!**

The Friends of the  
Jefferson Public Library

### GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 6, 2015 - 10:00 A.M. to Noon  
East Bank Regional Library  
4747 W. Napoleon Ave., Metairie

**Guest Speaker:**  
**ANN ROTH**  
Former President of the N. O. Orchid Society  
"Orchids - Then and Now"

Approval of the Budget  
for the 2015-16 Fiscal Year



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*We find good homes for used books.*

## Friends of the Jefferson Public Library

(a member of United for Libraries: the  
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### Mission

The Friends of the Jefferson Public Library is an independent, nonprofit organization of civic-minded volunteers. We support the Jefferson Parish Library by promoting library awareness, providing needed unbudgeted items for all its branches through fund raising, and participating in literacy programs.

### Address and Phone

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### Web Site

<http://www.friendsofjeffersonlibrary.org/>

### Friends Trends

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Centanni  
Contributing Editor: Peg Phelps

## Friends' Book Reviews

by *Annette Centanni*

Cheryl Ledet's Book Review

*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

One of Cheryl's favorite books is *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. "I've read it three times," says Cheryl. "It's a book for all ages and all times! It's brief, but simple and beautiful. The writing is lovely in its simplicity." Cheryl avers that she appreciates good writing even more than plot, and she thinks that *Of Mice and Men* typifies this good writing. "It is touching, personal, and plays on the reader's emotions, and I highly recommend it to readers of all ages."

Cheryl also recommends three books she has read and enjoyed by British author Ian McEwan: *Atonement*, a novel that deals with love and war, *Black Dogs*, which tells of life in the aftermath of the Nazi era in Europe, and *Saturday*, which tells how an ordinary day in the life of an ordinary man turns into a nightmare. "One more thing," states Cheryl, "I love the short stories of Truman Capote! When you think of Truman Capote, you think of *In Cold Blood*, but he also wrote a number of holiday-themed short stories that are touching and beautifully written. You should check them out! They brought back many wonderful childhood memories for me."

Jackie Kosche's Book Review

*Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier

Jackie states that she has read many books which she has enjoyed thoroughly (mostly historical mysteries), but one of her most favorite is what she terms, "...the unforgettable *Rebecca*" by British author Daphne du Maurier. Jackie continues, "I remember the book and its characters vividly, as it was so well written. I read it many years ago when I was in high school. One of the reasons I read it was because one of the girls in my class, who was not particularly a reader, seemed to be engrossed in a book so much so that she read it while class was in session. I thought to myself, 'That must be a good book!'"

"When I read it," Jackie avers, "it kept my interest. I felt as though I was living the book. The plot was so intense that I couldn't stop reading; I kept needing to experience the

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## Reviews

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next, and then the next event. It was also my first real ‘adult book.’”

The plot is “one of a kind” according to Jackie. Set in the 1930’s, Max De Winter takes his new (unnamed) bride to Manderley, his mansion which seems to have his first wife Rebecca’s ghost residing there. Mrs. Danvers, formerly Rebecca’s servant, who is still obsessed with Rebecca, browbeats and threatens the poor second Mrs. De Winter. Max’s wife believes he is still in love with Rebecca. Little does she know... “The suspense in the book...keeps you reading non-stop until the end!” says Jackie. She also throws around words such as “compulsive liar,” “openly promiscuous,” and “torments” in her descriptions of Rebecca’s behavior.

Jackie thinks that *Rebecca* still has a wide appeal. If you have never read it, you should find a copy. It was a moderate best seller from 1938 to 1965, and has never gone out of print. “Also,” Jackie states “it was made into a great movie!”

### Milly Spear’s Book Review

*The Vixens, The Foxes of Harrow*, and other books by Frank Yerby

“I read *The Vixens* as a young girl of 13,” states Milly. “At that time, I lived in Virginia, and although there are many large estates there, I knew little of plantation life, and virtually nothing about life in Louisiana.”

She was enthralled! She reports, “I cannot remember how or why *The Vixens* became available to me, for reading such a book would not have been proper for a young girl of that age [because it was] so ‘scintillating’.” Milly read all of Yerby’s books that she could get her hands on!

Yerby, whose first book, *The Foxes of Harrow*, was published in 1946, was the first African-American writer to become a millionaire from his pen. *The Foxes*, which sold over a million copies, was also the first book written by a Black author purchased by a Hollywood studio for a film

adaptation. It also became an Oscar-nominated film. “His writings have a distinctive southern flavor,” continues Milly, “and are considered historical fiction. *The Vixens* and others Yerby has written...have continued to intrigue me. His style of writing is amazingly descriptive, his landscapes so beautifully described, his characters so vivid, that often I think I must have seen or known many of them. Yerby [portrays] the Southern Belle’s beauty, her strength, her coy shyness, her cool head, her brilliant ability to win over any man she desires, and her capacity for successfully managing a fully functioning plantation as easily as she prepares a sweet afternoon tea for a rival, or flirts with a handsome man with a shot of bourbon in her dainty little hand.”

“The *Vixens* is about family, tradition, betrayal, romance and intrigue. I could never have imagined when I read this book and others about life in Louisiana, [that] I would ultimately come to live in South Louisiana and actually be in the tourist business where there was constantly an opportunity to learn about life on the early plantations and in the splendid manor houses first hand. I am pretty sure I got a lot of my ideas about the ‘belle’ life from this book.”

Milly further states that she loves books that she can relate to, particularly ones in which she can place herself in the role of a character she admires. Smart Southern women are her favorite characters! She “adores” reading any book that uses the South, particularly New Orleans, as its locale. She also reads non-fiction about famous Louisiana personalities. “The courage, persistence, and the tenacity of the early wealthy plantation owners, their houses, their families, their ability to overcome and to create this fabulous city for us, continues to be my reading focus and joy.”

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## The Shadow Knows (and TELLS) All

Springtime Greetings to all you Faithful Readers!

I love writing this column to let you in on all of the antics I have observed over the past months, proper or “im,” and to see how many of your names I can drop!

Let me begin where I left off in January. It has been good to see **Maureen** and **Judy Howat** and **Ouida Prieur** hard at it again after their brief hiatuses. Good work, ladies! **Judy**, I noticed you persuaded husband **Walter** to join you for the sale. Did you have to promise him anything? Just asking...

As of January 20, 2015, the bounty of holiday treats was still going strong, some as yet with seals intact. **Aileen Janney** forbade **Sue Hellwig** from bringing in yet another King Cake until all of the goodies were eaten, and even cached some to break out at the sale. The ban, however, didn't last long. **The Redhead** vetoed **Aileen's** command and demanded that **Sue** be allowed to bring one in. Calories from King Cakes come only once a year, don't you know?

At a recent board meeting, the subject of new computers for the Amazon group was discussed. As past-president **Chris deVillasana** chatted knowledgeably about his recommendations concerning “parallel ports,” “9.0” vs. “10,” “WiFi,” “wireless,” etc., it was amusing to see **Sue Hellwig's** eyes glaze over as she struggled to take minutes; if the truth be known, however, my own eyes would have done the same if I hadn't been getting such a kick out of her bewilderment. New and refurbished computers were, in fact, installed in March, thanks to the perseverance of **Chris deV.** and **Rick Demers.**

As soon as tax season started, **Mary Ellis Hasseltine**, **Chris deV.**, and **Robert Campos** defected to join the ranks of Block and AARP. The first two seemed to take the work season in their stride, but **Robert** was noticed to be “scattered” on numerous occasions. Once he misplaced his prescription sunglasses, then lost his keys. After the March 4 General Meeting, wife **Anna** took away some snacks to console him in his “stress.” Not knowing she had done so, **Robert** swooped in for his own snacks. Tell me truly, who ate the first batch, **Robert**?

On some of the frigid winter days when the coat rack was full, it occurred to me, the **Shadow**, and some others, how good we have it now in our present location at the Library. Does anybody else remember the days when we had to keep our coats on while working at Riverside, or how we had to cover the computers with plastic because the roof leaked? Sorting environs have been greatly improved.

On March 3, I noticed some people not usually present on a Tuesday. **Debbie Reed** was there, as was **Joan Fontaine**, who had switched days to accommodate her lunch bunch, which had switched its days. **President Sandra Blount** was there, too, all dressed up to have her picture taken giving the Library a \$100,000 check. **Paulette Mauterer** was packing Amazon books that Tuesday, as well, having missed her normal Monday schedule. Sometimes, people's schedules can get so confusing, it's really amusing! **Harris Jenson** always works on Tuesdays; **Will Hunn** only comes on Thursdays; **Cory Kowalski** only comes in on Mondays to help **Paulette**; **Janice Paine** only comes on Wednesdays (except when she comes in early on Mondays or at lunchtime on Tuesdays.); **Wendy Luna**, **Rosemarie Goetz** and **Diane Schleifstein** only come on Wednesdays (except when **Diane**

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# News Notes

## Recent happenings for the Friends of JPL



Lisa Conescu, who has served as the Friends representative on the Jefferson Parish Library Board for many years, was recently elected president of the board. Congratulations, Lisa!



*National Park Ranger Earl Higgins gave a presentation on "Jean Lafitte Historical Park and the Barabaria Preserve" at the March 3, 2015, General meeting.*



*Ted Blohm unloads books from the largest container to ever appear at the Friends Sorting Center. The books were donated by Bayou Segnette State Park.*

### In Memoriam Ellen Windstein 1941-2015



Ellen worked in the Collectibles Area during many book sales. She will be missed!

## We're on FACEBOOK!!!

Check out the "Friends of the Jefferson Public Library" Facebook page!

"Like" us on Facebook to get our reminders and updates on the latest happenings and Friends events!"



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JPL Director Marylyn Haddican, left, receives the \$100,000 presentation check from Sandra Blount, president of the Friends of JPL. (photo by Daniel Gitlin)

works at the store); **Collette Ricaud** comes mostly to pack Raise a Reader packets; we hardly ever see **Cheryl Ledet** or **Joan Demers** except when they are cashiering. When someone leaves for the day, many have gotten into the habit of saying, "I'll see you when I see you!"

It's always an adventure when a new recruit arrives, too; for instance, not knowing what her schedule would be, **Anna C.** pounced on unsuspecting **Beverly Zeller** and commandeered her to work in the Collectibles corner at the book sale. Did you get her, **Anna**?

In addition to the recent \$100,000 the Friends donated to the Library, they approved a \$7,500 gift to the Summer Reading Program. It's a good thing our March 26-29 sale was such a great success, in spite of having fewer books for sale. Customers noticed the difference and wondered why. There were a number of reasons. (1) Our packing boxes are smaller, and we took fewer of them than the usual 1,500 (about 1,000). (2) Donations have been down somewhat. (3) The time period between sales was three weeks shorter than usual. (4) The

sorters have been more meticulous in their book culling practices, recycling more books and sending fewer to be packed. In spite of this, the sale grossed over \$45,600. In fact, on the Monday after the sale, **Peg Phelps** was spotted at the bank, grinning from ear-to-ear as she made the deposits. **Judy Zawislak**, however very pleased, was overheard to remark that the sale "seems to be coming around faster and faster." Who could blame her as she confessed to falling asleep the minute her body hit the sofa after the first day? In spite of all of the wonderful help, these two ladies bear the ultimate responsibility on their slender shoulders.



Photo by Daniel Gitlin

The Collectibles area did better than at the sale last October. Amazon sales, sets, collectibles and auction items contributed to their \$2,400 in sales, \$1,000 more than in October. There was a little unexpected fly in the ointment, however. The area had to be dismantled without the help of coordinator, **Anna Campos**, who had used a TON of heavy packing tape in the setting up! And she wanted every bit of her cardboard back! Just saying... She and **Robert** had flown to New York for a family celebration.

Marvelous help there WAS at the sale! A big Thank You, if you helped in any of the myriads of ways: setting up, cashiering, book

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straightening, dealing with and assisting customers (even obstreperous ones), dismantling and packing up, contributing food and manning the kitchen. You know who you are!

Over 400 customers braved drizzle on Thursday morning, April 26th, to be among the first to storm the aisles. The **Shadow** conducted a little, informal survey of her own to learn where all of those, and other customers had heard about the sale. It seems that ALL of our advertising contributes to attracting customers. Many reported reading about it in the two newspapers and in the local publications such as the *Gambit*. Others cited postcards, posters and bookmarks distributed in local schools, places of business, and at the library branches. Some said they looked online, or heard it on **Susan Larson's** radio broadcast. **Sally-Ann Roberts** and **Peggy Scott Laborde** mentioned it on their TV programs. Others heard it from friends or saw the signs on street corners or on lawns. We are grateful to all those who worked so hard to spread the news. It worked!

For the past couple of weeks since the sale, things have been settling down to normal at sorting. **Maria Tujague** is back to baking goodies, **Mary Anna Lightner** is back to pricing cookbooks, **Mary Lou Spanja** is back to pricing children's books and buying her lunch from Cup and Chaucer, **Rodney T.** is back to checking prices, **Marie Breerwood** is back to being a calming influence, **Diane Pittman** and **Anne Buchel** are back to reaching things shorties can't reach, and **Ted Blohm** and **Diane Davey** are back to unloading bins. **Judy Welcker** is in the process of cajoling people into contributing cookies for the May General Meeting. Business as usual...

The Amazon segment has been enjoying a wealth of packing boxes and materials contributed by people who apparently like doing business with the Amazon mother company: trunkfuls from my daughter-in-law **Liz** in Baton Rouge, and her father, **Casey Stuart** of New Orleans lecture series fame. Thanks, Guys! Keep them coming. Otherwise, the Amazon ladies have been rocking along listing books, filling orders, answering customers' questions, all the while keeping an eye on quality control to maintain their 99% customer satisfaction rating.

Not to be outdone, the Store has been plugging along, as well. According to **Manager Patricia Cox**, Wednesday is no longer men's day, though. **Phil Tiller** is no longer working there. As a result, the Store is on the search for a new Wednesday lineup. New volunteers or substitutes are welcome to apply. The good news is that many customers have decorated their gardens with the colorful spring garden flags that have been for sale. **Patricia** says, "It's an item we will continue to carry since they have done so well." Also, thanks to **Library Director Marylyn Haddican**, **Patricia** will be getting new carpeting in the store! She is overjoyed!

On another note, **Milly Spear** is now bringing Store books to sell at the Library's WW II discussion group once a month. The gentlemen who attend apparently didn't know about the Store, and are delighted with the history books **Milly** is bringing to show them.

The nice thing about the Friends, I think, is that everyone has a place to fit in or a talent to contribute. As we often like to say, "People who like books are generally nice people!"

Until next time,

Your Friendly Shadow