



## The Cornwall Library Newsletter • August 2010

### **Art at the Library**

Sara Wight's "Formations", photographs of snow, will continue through August 21. Beginning August 24 Robert Cronin will exhibit his recent abstract paintings.

### **John Leich on Harry Graf Kessler; Peter Del Tredici on Wild Urban Plants**

On Saturday, August 14 at 4 pm John Leich, Cornwall's famed linguist, will be talking about and signing copies of his new translation of sections of the diary of Harry Graf Kessler, the notable anti-Nazi patron of the arts who introduced the French impressionists to Germany, advised Kaisers, choreographed ballets for Richard Strauss, and befriended the creative and influential from Bismarck to Josephine Baker.

And a week later, on August 21 also at 4 pm, Peter Del Tredici, Senior Researcher at Harvard's Arnold Arboretum with family connections in Cornwall, will present a slide lecture drawn from his work on *Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast: A Field Guide*. His talk will explore the natural and cultural history of the plants that grow spontaneously in our cities.

### **The Nook Has Arrived at the Library**

Cornwall Library patrons will now be able to borrow a Barnes & Noble Nook for 7 days. It will be loaded with at least 10 books. The staff will gladly download one a patron wants to read, but eBooks may not be downloaded to the Nook when out on loan. There will be no

charge to borrow the Nook, but borrowers will need to be 21 years or older and have a VISA or MasterCard to take it out on loan. If the Nook is lost or damaged, the card will be charged. Overdue fees of \$5/day will be collected with no maximum limits. Patrons will be given a lesson in using and caring for the Nook. It is particularly good for readers with visual challenges as the type and font sizes can be modified to suit the reader. If you happen to own a Sony Reader or a Nook, do come down and we will show you how to download free eBooks from the Library's OverDrive eBook list. Call us to arrange a private lesson on using OverDrive Downloadable Audio books. Bring your MP3 or WMA player or iPod.

### **Surveys, Focus Groups and Interviews: What Has Become of Them All?**

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Library's Needs Assessment. You met with Susan Clemow, our consultant, attended one of three Focus Groups or completed patron surveys. As the Library staff and board looked to the future, they needed to review the current state of the Library as perceived by its community. Your input was most helpful as a guide for our next phase of planning and action. The overwhelming response was that the Library is seen as "an important part of the town". To underscore its importance to Cornwall, three "banners" will lead the strategic charge: 1) Ensuring the long-term financial security of the Library; 2) Enhancing

the relationship between the Library and CCS/Housy: the various ways K-12 Cornwall students use the Library; 3) Expanding the functions of the Library for more social gathering and networking. The Trustees and consultant will be meeting in early August; follow-up meetings with our community-based Steering Committee in September will lay out an implementation plan.

### **Caregiver Support Group to Start at the Library**

There is much talk these days about the "sandwich generation". Many of us in our late 40's, 50's and 60's with children still at home or soon to be launched are now struggling to cope with not only our children but our aging parent(s). This also coincides with a time in our lives when we are looking toward the empty nest and retirement. The daily stresses of parenting and work are exacerbated by concerns over the safety, physical and financial well-being and mental health of Mom and Dad. Our own emotional health can be taxed to the limit. Doing it alone, even with a supportive partner, may not be enough. Three of us who tend to meet at the Library, Ruthellen Griffin, Margaret Hare and Amy Cady, know we are not the only folks in Cornwall experiencing this sandwiching effect. We thought organizing a support group might help more people, so we set Thursday, August 5 from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm as the first get-together. We will find out what works for everyone: frequency, speaker, facilitator or an open forum. There will be some light fare so if you are coming straight from work you won't starve before you get home. Please give Amy a call at 860-672-6874 if you plan to attend.

### **Beginning Arabic Classes**

Interested in learning Arabic from a native speaker? Give Amy C a call. If enough people want to learn, classes will begin in September.

### **Notes from the Book Selection Committee**

The Book Selection Committee has been pondering the word *readable*. The immediate cause was Nick Hornby's blurb for David Nicholls' novel *One Day*, which Hornby calls "big, absorbing, smart, fantastically readable."

*Readable*? If you're talking about a book, isn't it a no-brainer to call it *readable*? Isn't it like calling air breathable or food edible? Aren't books written to be *read*? (Don't split hairs: include listening to audio books as reading.) Isn't *readability* their very essence?

Well, no, unless you mean the bare act of examining and grasping the meaning. In that sense, the instructions for operating your vacuum cleaner are readable, but no blurbs are written in their praise. In order to feel the full force of *readable* (or breathable or edible), try thinking of their opposites. "This pot roast is inedible!" evokes an indignant, spluttering diner. Unwearable clothes are a ridiculous but regular haute couture occurrence; as for unbreathable air, the evidence grows ever more tragic.

Unreadable books are stubborn and uncommunicative, perhaps not absolutely but certainly in your perception of them. They *won't* be friends, no matter how hard you try. Your list and mine won't be the same, though we might agree on Bulwer-Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii*. We just know that, as the current saying goes, these books "don't work for us."

Ah, but *readable* books? At the very least, the experience is benign; at its most intense, readability demands that you drop everything and revise your plans, so that you can gulp that book for hours on end. Yes, readable books are addictive, but as controlled substances go, they're not lethal.

What of the aforementioned *One Day*, the novel that sent Nick Hornby into blurb-raptures? Well, the Book Selection Committee can authentically confirm that it

is “fantastically readable”: a quirky romance that includes some wry social history. Here are some other books, new to the Library, that you can test on your read-o-meter.

## FICTION

Jennifer Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad*

Stieg Larsson, *The Girl who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*

Stephen McCauley, *Insignificant Others*

David Mitchell, *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet*

Gary Shteyngart, *Super Sad True Love Story*

Miguel Syjuco, *Ilustrado*

Note: John Grisham's *Theodore Boone, Kid Lawyer* was not written for adults but may find many fans over the age of twelve.

## NON-FICTION

Ayan Hirsi Ali, *Nomad* (a sequel to Hirsi Ali's memoir *Infidel*)

Bill Clegg, *Portrait of the Addict as a Young Man* (HVRHS alum, big-time literary agent, memoir of addiction)

Sloane Crosley, *How Did You Get This Number* (humorous personal essays)

Josh Kilmer-Purcell, *The Bucolic Plague* (two gentleman-farmers discover the meaning of life)

Christopher Hitchens, *Hitch-22* (a memoir by the scrappy, ever-readable man of contrary opinions)

Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky* (the best way to fight poverty and extremism is to educate and empower women and girls)

## EXHIBIT, PROGRAM & EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

### Beginning Russian Classes

The eight-session series will continue on Thursday evenings at 6:30, August 5 through 26. Matt Collins, Instructor.

### Summer Reading Program

Wednesday, August 4 will be the last evening

of the Summer Reading Program featuring a potluck picnic dinner and water games.

### Meeting Schedule

The Board of Trustees will meet Friday, August 6 at 11:00 am.