



AMONG FRIENDS

a newsletter for the members of the Friends of the Duke University Libraries

Plan a Gift to the Library

Director of Development Tom Hadzor was pleasantly surprised recently when he learned that the Library was the beneficiary of a \$500,000 bequest from the Estate of William H. McGraw. Mr. McGraw, a resident of New York City, attended Duke in the mid-1940s but did not graduate from the University. Clearly, he had fond memories of the time he spent on campus! A bequest like Mr. McGraw's is one of several ways of making what is described as a "planned" gift.

Planned giving enables donors to make more significant gifts than they might imagine possible. Benefits to the donor of a properly planned gift may include a lifetime income, reduction or elimination of capital gains taxes and/or gift and estate taxes, and a charitable income tax deduction. In addition to bequests, planned gifts may be made as life income gifts, charitable lead trusts, and outright gifts.

Each of these methods of making a planned gift is described in detail on the Office of Gift Planning website at <http://www.giftplanning.duke.edu/index.cfm>.

If you would like to know more about planned giving to the Duke University Libraries, contact Tom Hadzor at 919.660.5940 or t.hadzor@duke.edu.

Perkins Renovation Project Reaches another Milestone

In October 2005, when the new Bostock Library and the von der Heyden Pavilion opened, the first floor of Perkins closed for a complete renovation. Now, the drilling and pounding have stopped and the finishing touches are being applied to a space that is elegant, light-filled, and technology-ready.

When the first floor of Perkins reopens in the latter part of August, departments including circulation and reference will be back from their temporary locations at Bostock, making the new Perkins information commons the center of the Library's public services and instructional activities.

In the information commons, Library users will find computer workstations complementing those now available at Bostock. The computers will be loaded with productivity software that extends the machines' capabilities beyond search and retrieval, making it possible for a user to complete a range of assignments and projects at a single workstation. Library staff will offer research support along with instruction and guidance in the integrated use of print and digital resources.

The next stage of the Perkins Project will begin at the end of July. This work, which includes renovation of the lower two floors of Perkins and conversion of the first floor Deryl Hart Reading Room into a suite of offices, will conclude in 2007. The Deryl Hart offices will house the Library's administrators until Old Law is renovated and will then be used by the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library.

The Last Word on the 2006 NC Festival of the Book

Wow! What a festival! During the 2006 NC Festival of the Book's seven-day run in Durham and on the Duke campus, there were over forty programs featuring more than eighty participants and drawing more than 10,000 attendees. By every measure the event was an enormous success. We at the Duke Libraries share the credit for that success with our 175 volunteers; our festival partners, North Carolina Central University and the libraries at North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and our institutional, foundation, community and corporate sponsors.

The broad and generous support we received gave Festival director Aaron Greenwald the freedom to develop rich, and in many instances unique, programming that left an indelible impression on the audience. Complimentary articles and letters to the editor continued to appear in the local papers for several weeks following the Festival, and many participants, attendees and volunteers wrote or called Aaron to offer congratulations and appreciation.

It was thrilling to have the 2006 NC Festival of the Book at Duke and an honor to host such a superb collection of writers, filmmakers, musicians, editors, and producers, who—as author Kaye Gibbons wrote in a memorable note to Aaron just prior to the Festival—"celebrate and honor language."

Mysterious Mechanicals in the Library? Ask the Answer Person

For more than two decades the "Suggestion Book" has been one of the most popular titles in the Perkins Library collection. Shelved on a dictionary stand in the Perkins lobby, the book attracts a steady flow of questions about life, the collegiate experience, and the Library. There is even something of a cult following for the Answer Person (known to admirers as AP), who responds to every question. The following query led AP to University Archives and former university librarian Elvin Strowd for an answer:

In the old stacks in Perkins there is a piping system that seems to run to all of the floors. The engraving [sic] on the metal reads "the Lawson [sic] Company." What was the purpose of this system? Does it date back to when the library had a closed stack system?

Answer Person responds:

Some people think that these pipes are used for surreptitious communication with AP, but this isn't true.

The Lamson Company manufactured such pneumatic tube message/cash delivery systems for department stores and office buildings. Ours were installed when the 1948 stacks (the current Perkins levels) were built, to aid in retrieving materials from the then-new 1948 stacks and the adjacent 1928 stacks (now used by Special Collections). The stacks were closed to most undergraduates until around 1970, a little after the opening of the "1968" Perkins building in 1969. Before 1969, the circulation desk was outside the Gothic Reading Room.

Undergraduates (faculty, graduate students, and some honors seniors had stacks access) gave their book requests, written on slips of paper ("call" slips), to staff at the circulation desk. Staff checked the call number on the slip, placed the slip in a canister, put the canister in the tube going to the appropriate stack level, and then activated the compressed air to send the canister on its way. A buzzer or bell sounded in the stack level to alert the staff assistant, or "page," that a request was coming.

The problem was that the system required a page to be waiting on the other end, and, due to lack of staff, each page usually had to handle at least a couple of levels. If the page didn't hear the buzzer or was on another level, there were delays. The fact that the patron and circulation staff couldn't communicate with the page was also inconvenient (if questions arose, etc.). The process in practice was just too slow and cumbersome. The library found it more efficient just to keep pages on duty at the circulation desk and send them to the stacks as necessary. The pneumatic tube system faded from use by the late 50s or early 60s, well before the stacks were opened to undergraduates.

Lamson manufactured not only pneumatic tube systems, but also wire systems whereby the cash or messages would ride in a little gondola that hung from the wire. This webpage shows some "terminal heads" that look similar to those in the 1948 stacks at Perkins: <http://www.brassregisters.com/lam/lambooks/lampneu/LamPneuPart3.htm>.

New Members of the Friends Executive Committee

The Friends held an abbreviated business meeting on 27 April during their annual gathering, which this year was a reception before Barbara Kingsolver's keynote address for the Festival of the Book at the Duke Chapel. During the business meeting, Gideon Weinerth, Pratt '07 was introduced as the winner of the Lionel Stevenson Essay Contest, co-sponsored biennially by the Friends and the Gothic Bookshop. In other business, nine members of the Friends and a student were elected to serve on the group's Executive Committee.

Elected to three-year terms were Bob Bliwise, Barbara Branson, Rachel Davies, Elizabeth Dunn, Barbara Fish, Pela Gereffi, John Richards, Wendy Rowe, and Karin Shapiro. Sora Ely, just finishing her first year at Duke, was elected to a two-year student term. Ann Wilder and Phil Leinbach will serve additional one-year terms as chair and vice-chair, respectively.

Recommended by a Friend...

A Perfect Stranger and Other Stories

Roxana Robinson
New York: Random House, 2005

I was not sure I wanted to read short stories. It was summer, and I had time to get into a novel. But, while looking for another book, I came across this collection by Roxana Robinson. Alice Munro had a recommending blurb on the front cover: "Start in on any sentence and I'm absolutely sure you'll read to the end of the story, and of the book, and you'll come out of it feeling grateful, deeply stirred, and SERIOUSLY happy." I decided to try it, and I'm so glad I did.

In clear, fine prose, the thirteen stories in Robinson's third collection explore many truths of our lives, our loves, and our leavings. Her characters wrestle with grief, lost love, terminal illness, aging, renewed friendship, and maturing love. You will read each story and plunge right into the next. You will be "deeply stirred" and will want a best friend to read these so you can share them.

—Liz Roland

The Namesake

Jhumpa Lahiri
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003

In this novel of the immigrant experience in America, Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli, after an arranged marriage in Calcutta, move to the United States. The couple settles in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Ashoke completes his graduate studies and Ashima works to overcome her homesickness by developing ties with the Bengali population in the Boston area. The book opens with the birth of their son Gogol, named for a favorite author of his father's. The reader follows Gogol through his undergraduate days at Yale and graduate school in architecture at Columbia to a career in New York City. Along the way, Gogol struggles in relationships with women as he attempts to blend in as an American. With humor and sympathy, author Lahiri portrays the tension between Gogol's desire to fit in and his loyalty to his family's Bengali traditions.

—Ann Wilder

Pearl

Mary Gordon
New York: Pantheon, 2005

In a disturbing call on Christmas night from the U.S. State Department, Mary Meyers learns that her daughter Pearl has chained herself to a flagpole in front of the embassy in Dublin after fasting for six weeks and refusing anything to drink for six days. A perplexing note explains that Pearl has chosen to die in witness to the death of friend, in support of the IRA peace agreement, and "to mark the human will to harm." Thus begins a complex story of a mother's search for understanding of a child she thought she knew and her daughter's search for answers to the novel's ultimate question: Is there anything worth dying for, and if not, what is worth living for? In this quest, Gordon explores themes of religion, politics, art and beauty, guilt and regret, through the thoughts and actions of a cast of interesting and diverse characters.

—Dale Gaddis

Voltaire Almighty; a Life in Pursuit of Freedom

Roger Pearson
New York: Bloomsbury, 2005

The subtitle sums up this eighteenth-century French philosopher, historian, poet, dramatist, essayist, and champion of human rights. Voltaire was always fighting for freedom (his own and others)—from religion, from autocracy, from narrow thinking, from unjust treatment. This new biography explores the life, writings, and times of Voltaire (1694-1778), best known, perhaps, for the philosophical novel *Candide*, but whose collected works fill fifty-two volumes. However, Voltaire constantly disowned his writings or published abroad and anonymously those works with ideas that were anathema to the monarchy,

nobility and the Church because he craved their acceptance and recognition. But everyone soon recognized what came from his pen. He was jailed twice in the Bastille, exiled from Paris several times, fled London under suspicion of chicanery, and was forced to live in Switzerland and Prussia at various times. Pearson's chronological account of Voltaire is vivid and witty (as was Voltaire), yet erudite and authoritative. Read it for a picture of French life and thought in the eighteenth century as much as for the life of Voltaire.

—Phil Leinbach

Saturday

Ian McEwan
New York: Doubleday, 2005

Occasionally, I seek out a book that might reveal something about the mysterious working of the male psyche. *Saturday* proved to be an excellent choice. McEwan's protagonist Henry Perowne, a successful London neurosurgeon, resembles the commanding figures striding the halls of the Duke University Medical Center. However, the determination and competitiveness that have served Perowne so well professionally constitute character flaws in the wrong situation. During the twenty-four hours in which the plot unfolds, these qualities precipitate a series of events that endanger Perowne and those he most loves. Ian McEwan, author of a number of books, including the Man Booker Award-winning *Amsterdam* and the best-selling *Atonement*, is a brilliant storyteller. His vivid writing evokes compelling, complex characters, establishes a strong sense of place, and creates a heightening sense of impending danger.

—Elizabeth Dunn

The Bright Forever

Lee Martin
New York: Shaye Areheart Books, 2005

One summer evening in a small Indiana town, teenaged Gilley rats out his kid sister at the dinner table for overdue library books. A tired father, the town's leading businessman, loses his temper, and nine-year-old Katie dashes barefoot from the house, throws her books into her bike basket, and pedals off. Hours later father and son discover the bike, sans books, leaning against a parking meter in front of the J.C. Penney store.

This skillfully crafted work weaves through various character viewpoints, sometimes in the first person and sometimes in the third, unveiling interrelated layers of fact, opinion, and incongruity to create a lightning fast tempo, while at the same time painting a complex, textured portrait of people caught in the consequences of ill-considered choices and the all-to-human desire to slough off responsibility. *The Bright Forever* is a "must" read.

—Mark Kearney

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