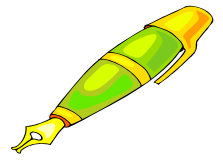




# Friends of the Kankakee Public Library

From the pen of

Linda Bishop  
President of the Friends



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**A**s we head into the winter months I hope you will attend the exciting programs planned for November, January, and February. For more details please see Program Chair Mary Jo Johnston's articles in this newsletter.

Also, the nationally distributed *Book Page* publication will be available to library readers at the Library



compliments of the Friends. One hundred copies will be available at the library front desk on a first-come, first-serve basis. There will also be a desk copy available throughout the month. *Book Page* is a general interest book review publication that covers the best in new releases. It is published monthly. *Book Page* typically reviews up to one hundred of each month's new fiction, nonfiction, business, children's, spoken word audio, and how-

to books. Be sure to browse through a copy of *Book Page* each month and think about joining Friends. Once you become familiar with the quality programming offered by Friends and realize what a fascinating group we Friends are, you will wonder why you haven't gotten involved much earlier. Also, a gift membership for a friend or family member will truly be a gift that goes on giving.



**J**oin Friends for what is sure to be a unique program:

**Thursday, November 30, 2006 (fifth Thursday) 7:00 p.m. – "Comic Books and Graphic Novels – An Evolving Form of Art and Literature,"** on the first floor @the library.

Don Kramer, local graphic artist, will talk about his work with Dell and Marvel Comics and discuss this fascinating literary genre and how he got started as an artist in this field. This is a program for kids, not for adults,

you say? Not so, since the art of comic books and graphic novels is generating much excitement among kids, yes, but also with educators and readers in general.



Indeed, USA TODAY reports that this genre is helping kids-- especially boys-- to read and show excitement while doing so. Comics have also found their way into the classroom both for recreational and instructional read-

ing. USA TODAY goes on to say that artists, teachers and scholars have produced study guides and lesson plans, including "An Aesthetic History of Comics." As many of us can probably remember: there was literature and history in them, there comic books with pictures or graphics to boot. And now tales of superheroes and anime. Like little movies on the page.

**Please see page 3 for more information on program speaker, Don Kramer.**

## When Susan Met Stuart

A Conversation between Mary Jo and Susan

*Mary Jo: Could you fill me in a bit on how you came to know **Stuart Dybek**? I have gotten lots of great information about him from the Chicago Public Library, but I think our readers and guests would be interested in the series of events that led us to land an author of his stature.*

*Susan (a.k.a. Toby): Let's see! How did I meet Stuart at Loyola University on the north side of Chicago? I know it was probably in September or October of 1960. I really don't remember the details of how we became acquainted because we weren't in any classes together. I think it may have been in the student union where I played a lot of pinochle instead of going to class. We talked and sometimes rode the el train and bus to go home. Stuart worked at the Highlander Ice Cream factory around 5000 South Western Avenue. I lived one block west of Western on the 6400 block of South Artesian. He was a writer even then, and I sometimes did some proofreading for him, not much, just once or twice. Anyway, our acquaintance was short. At the end of the semester in January 1961, I was on scholastic probation and not interested in college. I went to work and got married the following December. Stuart went on to finish and add graduate degrees and become a famous writer. You made me write to him, and the rest is, as they say, history.*

*Mary Jo: Thank you, Susan, although I guess we can go back to calling you Toby again, since Stuart now knows your alter-identity.*



### Friends of the Kankakee Public Library

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*BOOKMARKS* Editor. . . . Mary Costanza

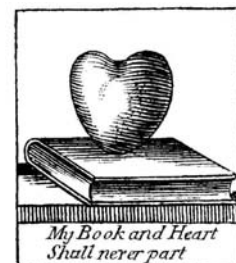
## 2006 Finalists NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS

### FICTION

Mark Z. Danielewski, Only Revolutions (Pantheon)  
Ken Kalfus, A Disorder Peculiar to the Country (Ecco/HarperCollins)  
Richard Powers, The Echo Maker (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)  
Dana Spiotta, Eat the Document (Scribner/Simon & Schuster)  
Jess Walter, The Zero (Judith Regan Books/HarperCollins)

### NONFICTION

Taylor Branch, At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68 (Simon & Schuster)  
Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone (Alfred A. Knopf)  
Timothy Egan, The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl (Houghton Mifflin)  
Peter Hessler, Oracle Bones: A Journey Between China's Past and Present (HarperCollins)  
Lawrence Wright, The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11 (Alfred A. Knopf)



Watch for the winners.

*BOOKMARKS* would like to hear from Friends. Please consider submitting something—a book review, a favorite poem or quote in writing to the editor for the next issue of *BOOKMARKS*. Perhaps you would like to share how you became a life-long reader. Email me at [bookswoman@yahoo.com](mailto:bookswoman@yahoo.com).  
- the Editor

## v u ! WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Since our last newsletter, the following friends have become members of Friends:

- ! L. Lynn & Trudi Grandt
- ! Chris Crego
- ! Gayle Magnusen
- ! Eric and Sherry Merry
- ! Linda Mitchell
- ! Janice Simms



## UPCOMING FRIENDS WINTER PROAMS

### Thursday, November 30, 7:00 p.m., "Comic Books and Graphic Novels – An Evolving Form of Literature."

This is not our regular meeting date since that occurs on Thanksgiving this year, and we don't usually meet in December, so the fifth Thursday of November seems to be perfect for a program for the holiday season. Acclaimed local comic-book artist, Don Kramer, will discuss his work in this evolving superhero genre. This program will appeal to all fans, young and old, who have loved the colorful crime fighters populating the panels of American comics for the past 80 years. Don, who lives in Bourbonnais, was born in Chebanse. He attended Clifton Central High School and honed his drawing skills in the fine arts program at Illinois Wesleyan University. When I mentioned some of the books Don had listed in a telephone conversation to my grandsons, they were suitably impressed and promptly displayed some of their favorites, many of which would be welcomed as holiday gifts by other young fans. If you want to read more about the history of comics over the past 80 years, look for a new book edited by Chicago-based cartoonist, Ivan Brunetti, *An Anthology of Graphic Fiction, Cartoons, & True Stories*.

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### Thursday, January 18, 7:00 p.m., "Meet the Author Mayor Daley's 2004 Choice for "One Book, One Chicago."

Also not a regular meeting night, but we told highly acclaimed author, Stuart Dybek that we would take him whenever we could get him. A friend of Toby Olszewski, we have been trying to catch up with him since we learned that she knew him. Burma Mathews and I came close in April 2004 when Stuart's book, *The Coast of Chicago*, was named by Mayor Richard J. Daley as his selection for the citywide book club, "One Book, One Chicago." Burma and I attended a book reading and interview with Stuart, by the *Chicago Tribune* on the last night of National Library Week at the Harold Washington Library Center. After waiting in line for close to two hours to tell him we were friends of Toby (Susan), we knew if we wanted to get home before dawn we had to leave without uttering one of her name. Under considerable pressure, she wrote to him, wondering if he remembered her, and he most certainly did. This summer Toby, Mary Costanza, and I had the opportunity to meet him "up close and personal" at the Printer's Row Book Fair. It turned out to be perfect timing. He had just accepted a visiting professorship at Northwestern, and he promised to get to Kankakee to speak at our library. Our negotiations began in earnest about a month ago when he settled into his schedule, and since he would return to Western Michigan University for second semester, mid-January was our best option.

Stuart was raised in Chicago's Little Village and Pilsen neighborhoods in the 1950s and the early '60s when Poles, Czechs and Hispanics lived in the area. His first book was a collection of poetry, *Brass Knuckles* (1979). A collection of short stories, *Childhood and Other Neighborhoods*, followed in 1980, and then came *The Coast of Chicago* (1990). *I Sailed with Magellan* (2003) portrays the Chicago escapades of Perry Katzek in eleven stories. It has been adapted for the stage by Claudia Allen, and its World Premiere will be June 18, 2007, at the new Victory Gardens Theater now located at the restored Biograph Theater (road trip, anyone?). His most recent publication is a collection of poems, *Streets in Their Own Ink* (2004). In an interview at the Chicago

Public Library, Stuart talked of his love for his Polish grandmother who was a major influence in his life. He said, "Loving her was inseparable from loving her foreignness and that translated into not just a love for our particular ethnicity, but for the expression of ethnicity in general. . . . Ethnicity is a subject I write about, an aspect of the United States that I regard as critically important to how we define our national cultural identity."

Stuart's characters are the product of his love for the expression of ethnicity in general. DO NOT MISS THIS PROGRAM! We are honored to have an author like Stuart Dybek visit our library. And Toby, our friend – we owe ya! (To learn more about how Stuart and Toby met, please see page 2).

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### Thursday, February 22, 2007, 7:00 p.m., "Meet the Author – Elizabeth Berg, A Retrospective."

Elizabeth Berg, popular writer of 17 works of fiction, including several *New York Times* bestsellers and an Oprah's Book Club selection (*Open House*) in 2000, will read from her most recent work and also from selections requested by local book club members. In particular, they include *Talk Before Sleep*, *The Art of Mending*, and *The Year of Pleasures*. Her latest, *The Handmaid and the Carpenter*, a Christmas Story, is out in November. She also has a new novel due in May of 2007, *Dream When You're Feeling Blue*. Her work of non-fiction, *The Art of Writing True* (1999), still is popular with aspiring writers and includes 30 pages of writing "homework." Elizabeth says that she did not go to writing school or take writing classes, so her book tells her readers, "This is how I did it. Here are some ideas for you. Here are some exercises for you." She even includes recipes. Elizabeth was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her father was a military man, and the family moved frequently. She attended the University of Minnesota where she majored in English. She held a series of jobs ranging from hotel clerk to rock singer to actress to waitress. She returned to school and with a degree in nursing, she worked as an intensive care nurse until 1985 when, at the urging of friends, she began submitting short stories and essays to major magazines. She publishes almost a book a year and has received two American Library Association Best Book of the Year awards, a short listing for the American Bookseller's Book of the Year, an AMC Cancer Research Center Illuminator award, a New England Booksellers Association Award, and honors from the Boston and Chicago Public Libraries. She now makes her home in Oak Park and travels all over the country promoting her latest novels. Different women narrate all of her novels. "I write about people that I wish I were like, but it's always me talking," she says. "It's always the same motivation, whatever theme it takes. For me, there will always be life-affirming stuff." Library staff member Vickie Stankewicz made the initial contact with Elizabeth, after which I worked with her on arrangements. Even though we communicated via e-mail, I felt the whole time as if I were talking to a friend. She loves to speak at libraries, so it's very easy to say that it will be like having a visit from an old friend, one we've gotten to know well from reading her books. We look forward to her new ones as much as we anticipate with pleasure her visit to our library and our city.

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writing "homework." Elizabeth says that she did not go to writing



## OUR READERS WRITE

### Rules for Old Men Waiting – A Book Review

One day out at Barnes and Noble when Roger Griffith and I were talking about books (as usual) he told me about a book that I had to read, and then he took me over to the “new in paperback” table and said, “There it is; you must read it.” First of all, I fell in love with the title, *Rules for Old Men Waiting*. When I turned to the back cover, I read a blurb by a reviewer in *USA Today* who said that its author, **Peter Pouncey**, reminds him of Norman Maclean (*A River Runs Through It*) and Wallace Stegner (*Angle of Repose*).

That did it! Roger was right – I must read it. Norman Maclean and Wallace Stegner are two of my all-time favorite authors, and I have read *A River Runs Through It* many times. Some of you will remember that Norman Maclean visited the old Kankakee Library more than twenty years ago, and his reading of parts of that incredible story moved many of us to tears.

Peter Pouncey was educated at Oxford, is a former dean of Columbia College, and president emeritus of Amherst. He began writing the novel in the early fall of 1981 and continued over the next 23 years as an escape into his imagination from the heavy demands of his career in academia. It was published in 2005 when Pouncey reached the age of 67. *Rules for Old Men Waiting* is a list of “Rules for Winter Watch,” developed by retired college professor Robert McIver, as he tries to come to terms with the death of his wife and his own terminal illness. After descending to the depths of despair and rage, the rules he develops form a plan to “take back his life, until he could give it away on an acceptable basis” and includes such items as “keep personally clean,” “eat regularly,” “play music and read,” and, the underlying structure of this book, “work every morning. Nap in afternoon as needed.”

Work, according to McIver’s rule, means writing a story, which becomes a novel within a novel, set in the trenches of World War I. While he is writing it, he describes his writing process, including the characters he chooses and their personal traits that define their place in the story. We also learn about McIver’s own life – his father who dies in World War I, McIver’s own military service in World War II and how it shapes his teaching career, and his son, David, who serves in Vietnam. Overriding all is his relationship with his wife Margaret, one of the “real women who gentle our condition,” says McIver. Theirs is a love story that rivals many of the great ones, and a marriage that grows stronger as they live their lives together, until it is tested by a tragedy almost too great for it to bear. A book like this can make its readers consider how life’s challenges can defeat us or how they can give us the strength to live as fully as possible, right up to our final breath. It is a real little gem; don’t overlook it.

-submitted by Mary Johnston

## A POET FRIEND

### Pity Me Not

(A sonnet)

Pity me not because the  
light of day  
At close of day no longer  
walks the sky;  
Pity me not for beauties passed away  
From field and thicket as the year goes by;  
Pity me not the waning of the moon,  
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,  
Nor that a man’s desire is hushed so soon,  
And you no longer look with love on me.



This have I known always: love is no more  
Than the wide blossom which the wind as-  
sails,  
Than the great tide that treads the shift-  
ing shore,  
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the  
gales.  
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn  
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

Edna St. Vincent Millay  
(1892-1950)

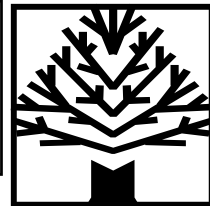
### QUOTES in the news

“Libraries in Levy County, Fla., are on the verge of collapse thanks to a new policy requiring drug testing of elderly volunteers. The library system usually has 55 volunteers between the ages of 60 and 85 checking out and reshelving books, but thanks to a new requirement that all county workers must be tested for drugs, only two volunteers are left. “It’s not like we are a high-risk group for coming in drunk or high or stoned or whatever,” said one former volunteer. “Why are we spending tax money to test 75-year-old grandmothers for marijuana?”

-submitted by Mary Schatz

# DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

*Cynthia Fuerst, Director*



**P**sst... I have a secret. Actually as a Friend of the Library and a frequent library user, you probably already know this secret. But apparently our local CBS 2 News station did not. They aired a special investigative report entitled, "Library Confidential." The report cited incidents of library behavior when, in their view, police should have been called. In a nutshell, they discovered that public libraries are indeed public places.

As public buildings and American institutions, we believe that you are innocent until proven guilty. We believe that you, as a tax payer, have a right to be in the library. We believe that your intentions are honorable until your actions indicate otherwise. We don't require you to sign-in, to go through a metal detector, or to have a back ground check before allowing you through the front doors of our buildings.

While we expect everyone to act appropriately, not everyone does. Your safety is of the foremost importance to us. We don't tolerate inappropriate behavior. However; we also try to keep things in perspective. A group of teens talking loudly isn't a threat, but if the

staff asks them once to settle down and the behavior continues, they will be asked to leave the Library, if they don't leave, the police are called and they risk being banned from our building for an extended period of time. I hate to tell you how many times I was kicked out of my neighborhood public library when I was a teen - I thought it was a great place to catch up with my friends. Back then it was no big deal - unless your parents found out. I guess in our post 9/11, 24-hours-a-day Cable News, Reality TV world this would now be sensationalized into a newsworthy event.

CBS 2 News knows that we like our news in glossy little snippets. Not bothering with the details and using numbers out of context made for a much more enthralling report. If anyone is interested in the truth, the vast majority of people using their public libraries do know how to act appropriately. According to the American Library Association, Americans made 1.3 billion library visits in 2004, yet less than a handful of those visits resulted in a newsworthy event. Public libraries are indeed public places. I guess that's not much of a story.

Happy Reading! -Cindy

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## ***News from a Friend . . .***

**L**uis Alberto Urrea still is the most talked about author ever to visit our library, and we follow his travels and writing with great interest. His blog, [www.luisurrea.com](http://www.luisurrea.com), includes regular reports on his whereabouts and doings. His biggest news of late is that Hummingbird's Daughter is San Francisco's choice for their "all-city book club," and it's #1 on their best-seller list. Devil's Highway is the "Salt Lake City Reads" choice, as it was in Austin this summer. (Check out "The Doggie Ate His Homework" on Luis' blog for details of the controversy generated by Highway in Salt Lake.) On Sunday, October 29, The New York Times Op Ed page once again featured Luis and his three writer partners in the fourth installment of "Life in America." (For any of you who have not heard, this is the same series in which Luis wrote, "Kankakee Gets Its Groove Back.") This installment is called, "A Windy Wal-Mart" (Chicago gets a big-box store unlike any other). He talks about the standoff with Mayor Daley and how this store on the west side is neighborhood friendly and "offers a small shot at catching a part of the American dream." When I e-mailed him to tell him I'd read it, he responded immediately and said that he would have preferred a follow-up in the Times to the Kankakee story, but he has spoken about Kankakee and "our amazing spirit" all over the country. In fact, he said, I "told the mayor of Salt Lake City all about it, then gave a short form of the NYT story to the human rights panel I was on when they asked if there was any reason to hope. Sure there is," he added, "Look at Kankakee!"

Luis then went on to tell more about his time on the road but concluded with the assurance that he is stopping the "big promo machine" or at least slowing it down. "Time to stop playing famous guy and write some books." Please do, Luis. We look forward to Hummingbird II, and we are grateful for all you have done for our library and our city. We miss you, Luis; come back and see us soon.

-Mary Jo Johnston



**BOOKMARKS  
NEWSLETTER  
OF THE FRIENDS**

**FRIENDS OF THE  
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LIBRARY**

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**FRIENDS CALENDAR OF EVENTS : !  
*Winter 2006/2007***

**NOVEMBER**

- !-Thursday, November 30, 2006(fifth Thursday) 7:00 p.m. – “Comic Books and Graphic Novels – An Evolving Form of Art and Literature,” on the first floor @ the library. Don Kramer, local graphic artist.

**DECEMBER**

**Friends will not meet  
in December.**

**JANUARY**

**2007**

- !-24 Wednesday, Friends Board Meeting: 5:00pm, Small Conference Room on the 1st floor @ the library
- !-Thursday January 18, 7:00 p.m.: “Meet the Author–Stuart Dybek, *Coast of Chicago*, Mayor Daley’s 2004 Choice for One Book, One Chicago,” on the 1st floor of the Library.

**FEBRUARY**

- !-22 Thursday, 7:00 p.m., “Meet the Author – Elizabeth Berg, *A Retrospective*,” on the 1st floor of the Library. This popular author will visit our library and discuss her books-old and new.

