April is National Poetry Month; Bainbridge poets to share work

Bainbridge poets and friends of poetry will gather April 16 to celebrate National Poetry Month.

Beginning at 4 p.m., in the library’s large meeting room, they’ll share their poetry, which has been called “An Island’s Stored Magic.” Community members and students from elementary through high school ages will also read favorite poems.

Linda Biersd, Bainbridge Island’s own Guggenheim Fellowship and MacArthur Foundation grant winner, will make a rare public appearance. Biersd is head of the University of Washington’s creative writing program and the author of several volumes of historical poetry, including “The Profile Makers.”

Joining Biersd at the library event will be John Willson, recipient of the Pushcart Prize and awards from the Academy of American Poets, the Pacific Northwest Writers Conference, and the King County Arts Commission; Kristen Henshaw, who teaches Japanese, English, and creative writing at Bainbridge High School; and Sue Hylen, who is a published poet as well as a well-known Island photographer.

Also participating will be Ellen Wright, Hyla School teacher; Janet Knox, Nancy Retoke, Pat Loken, Margi Berger, Joan Piper, and Ed Sampson, among others.

Student poets invited to participate include Emily Johnson, Brett Zimmerman, Dustin Acton, Laurie Seaborn, Ned Thomas, Ragna Hegland, Erica Dewitt, Cooper Rocks, Tristan Peter-Contesse, Madeline Munth, and Ryan Mann.

Mary Dwight Sutton will read a poem, and Jo Vander Steep will read from Shel Silverstein’s “Where the Sidewalk Ends.”

The April 16 event is “a chance for poets to get together and let all Islanders hear what a rich poetry heritage we have here,” said Cindy Harrison, Bainbridge branch manager.

Throughout the month of April, special displays of poetry will be visible throughout the library, she added, and books by local authors are available at the library. Among them: “The Profile Makers” by Biersd, “The Son We Had” by Willson, and “Sifting Through Stones” by Henshaw.

Admission to the April 16 event is free. In his book “How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love With Poetry” Edward Hirsch writes: “Perhaps poetry exists because it carries necessary human information that cannot be communicated in any other way… it is a secret that can no longer be kept secret.”

Poet Linda Biersd: She’ll read at Library celebration of poetry

Library benefit

Book collecting series begins April 19

So you want to be a book collector. Perhaps you already are.

But there’s so much to learn about the subject: what to buy, evaluating books, building and managing a collection.

Beginning April 19, a four-week course on the Basics of Book Collecting will answer many of your questions while raising funds for the Bainbridge Public Library.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Library, the series will feature Bob Fornter, local book collector and co-owner of Fortner Books. Former, a

Also in this issue:

For children: Read-aloud books, new story hours

New books and cassettes – a wide variety

Two local artists’ work on display at library

...Continued on back page
Opinion

We do it ourselves

By STEVE OLSEN
President, Bainbridge Library Board

If you're a newcomer to Bainbridge Island, and even if you're not, you may suppose that the existence and day-to-day operation of our beautiful and functional Bainbridge Public Library results from a strong property tax base and a favored position in the municipal or county-wide governmental structure. These are major factors in the way most public libraries function, as libraries are usually owned and operated by local governments. But in library matters, as in some others, we do things a bit differently on Bainbridge Island. It is true that Bainbridge Public Library is a branch of the Kitsap Regional Library (KRL) system, which is primarily tax-supported. The books, staff, and computers that form the core of the library's direct service to its patrons are supplied by and through the regional library system. But there's more to it than that. We are fortunate indeed to be part of this award-winning library system, and to be able to draw upon its wide and ever-increasing array of resources. And we do so, as shown by circulation and usage figures that continue to grow at the Bainbridge branch, bucking trends seen at some other libraries. We are also fortunate to have an outstanding staff of professional librarians and assistants, some of whom we see on a fairly regular basis and some who rotate among several of the KRL branch libraries.

However, if you thought that the Bainbridge library is just like other libraries you've had occasion to use, you'd probably be wrong. When it comes to operating, maintaining, improving, or (in recent memory) enlarging the physical facilities of the library, Bainbridge Public Library is completely autonomous and user-supported. A volunteer board of directors works in close harmony with a dedicated Friends of the Library group, the Friday Tidy garden maintenance team, and countless other volunteers who want to help us keep our library open, solvent, and running smoothly. And believe me, the operative verb in the preceding sentence is indeed work. Days, evenings, weekends, and holidays, our volunteers are very much in evidence around the library. Many more are working behind the scenes on such activities as planning events and producing the Library News.

Mary Ann Campbell, who served so effectively on the board of directors for six years—most recently as president—made a point in her retirement remarks to the library board this January that I think bears repeating: "Libraries are for the people who use them. They develop an accounting system based on new software. All three retiring board members will be honored with permanent named shelves. Three new members were elected at the annual meeting.

Three board members retire after long years of service

At the Bainbridge Library Board's annual meeting in January, three members retired—after serving a combined total of 16 years on the volunteer board.

Mary Ann Campbell, the outgoing president, had served for six years; she'd been active in the recent building campaign, served as board secretary, and was elected president a year ago, taking over from Tom Olsen.

Peter Harris, a key member of the major gifts committee during the building fundraising, also served for six years. Once the expanded building was up and running, Harris joined the library communications committee and helped launch the Library News. Both Campbell and Harris served two three-year terms on the board.

Don Yockey, who signed on originally for one term, served as board treasurer and stayed on to attend a new annual day to help develop an accounting system.

Three retiring board members will be honored with permanent named shelves. Three new members were elected at the annual meeting.

Dick Hassell, already an active library volunteer as president of the Visually Impaired Persons (VIP) group, takes on new duties as a board member. One of his first assignments: organizing a large steering committee for Laps for the Library 2000 (tentatively scheduled for early fall).

Levine, Theobald, and Mire, the other new members, will be quietly drafted to join Jane Brand and Judy Kaer in planning the first Bainbridge Library Gala of the 21st century. That date will be announced later this spring.

Forum to feature five speakers

The Bainbridge Library Speakers Forum will include five lectures next year. The series has been so popular in its first two years that a fifth speaker has been added by popular request, said Susan Bray, chairperson.

Series ticket holders will hear Dr. Thomas Cronin, president of Whitman College and a renowned specialist on the office of the presidency of the United States. He will appear two days before the November presidential election.

Also on the 2000-2001 agenda are: Dr. Richard Baker, a specialist in wellness and the mind-body connection; Aaron Elkins, Bainbridge Island resident, award-winning mystery writer, and physical anthropologist; Sharon Ott, executive director of the Seattle Repertory Theatre; and a fifth speaker to be announced.

Prices for the series will remain at a low $35 for regular subscribers and $50 for patrons, and announcements of ticket sales will go out later this spring to current subscribers. Others who would like advance copies of the series for new subscribers will be invited to call at the library information desk. Book returns and other school services have sold out, and demand is expected to increase this year.

All profits from the series will be put to use in the library.

For more about the Library Speakers Forum, inquire at the library reference desk.

News briefs

A NEW Rack of books and magazines has been installed on the library's lower floor, next to the elevator, by Friends of the Library. Topics include relationships, pregnancy, health, food, parenting, self-help and education, and children's books.

TICKET TO TOMORROW is the theme for Kitsap Regional Library's summer reading program for children. Sign-up will begin June 15; children of all ages sign up, read for 10 hours, and receive a free paperback.

WITH GRADUATIONS and Father's Day coming up, library users may want to consider making special gifts to the library in the name of family members. One way is to name a shelf for a special person; a $250 gift to the library is all that's required. For more information, inquire at the reference desk.

THE FRIDAYS TIDES welcome volunteers to train as garden docents; interested persons are invited to turn out any Friday at 9:30 at the library. Ann Lovejoy directs the volunteer gardeners.

ERIK and REEVE LINDBERGH will speak at the library Thursday, May 18, at 7 pm, on behalf of the non-profit Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation (which strives to further a balance between technological advancement and environmental preservation). Reeve will discuss her book "Under a Wing: A Memoir."
Volunteers provide a variety of services

It takes a large staff of dedicated volunteers to keep the Bainbridge Public Library working at peak efficiency. While Kitsap Regional Library funds the basic staff of librarians and assistants, many of the special services library users value just wouldn’t exist without the volunteers.

Arnold and Carolyn Peterson are among the most dedicated.

For years they’ve come two or three times a week to help the Friends of the Library prepare for the monthly library book sales. (Carolyn also serves as secretary of the local Friends group.) The books, which are donated by library users, are processed through staff members upstairs, before traveling down to the Friends sorting and sales room on the lower level. Arnold checks over each donated book, determining whether it is already in the library system and whether it should be added to the local collection for circulation or passed on to the Friends for their sale.

Carolyn works at the Friends’ sales, but she also plays another important role at the library — as a clipper keeping the library’s files up to date.

She’s been running this one-woman clipping service “for 10 or 12 years, since the previous clipper retired,” she says. Clipping articles that appear in the Bainbridge Review, the Bremerton Sun, Seattle newspapers, Wall Street Journal, and other publications.

Anything of interest to Bainbridge Islanders is appropriate for her files: fires, schools, wildlife, obituaries, hospitals, things the kids are doing, you name it.

Everything that has to do with Bainbridge Island, she says, “I also clip selected things about Kitsap County — libraries, water, sewage, schools, and so forth — and a few selected things of general interest about Washington State.”

The files are invaluable for staff members, who refer to them to answer readers’ questions, and for Islanders researching various projects.

The Petersons have been enthusiastic library users since moving here from the East Coast in 1979 after their retirement from busy careers, he as an engineer and she as a library clerk.

Younger volunteers are also important in keeping the library’s services running.

Jesse Weigert, 17, a junior at Bainbridge High School, is one of them.

Weigert spends his Saturdays teaching Islanders of all ages how to use the library computers — to send and receive e-mail, search the web, use the library’s on-line catalogue. He works by appointment, and anyone wanting coaching in the use of the computers should sign up at the reference desk.

Weigert enjoys his work, and says most people find the use of the computers easier than they expected.

“Mostly they just need somebody with them as they get up to speed,” he says.

Weigert himself has been getting up to speed since he first became interested in computers in the third grade. He’s mostly self-taught, he admits, and is “playing around with software now.”

He’s thinking seriously about continuing his studies in computer sciences at the University of Washington.

Meanwhile, he’s taking a web development class and is in charge of websites for the whole Bainbridge school district.

Weigert, his parents Gary and Kathy, and younger brother Ian have lived on Bainbridge for 11 years, and the library is an important part of their lives.

And his volunteer services are appreciated by library staff and users alike. “It’s a lot to juggle, a lot of responsibility,” says branch manager Cindy Harrison.

Pauline Deschamps was loyal friend of the library

Pauline Deschamps, who died unexpectedly early this year, was known throughout the state as a successful businesswoman and civic leader.

She had been grand marshal of Bainbridge Island’s Fourth of July parade and president of the Bainbridge Chamber of Commerce, and instrumental in bringing many Island activities. And she built a thriving real estate business while devoting considerable energy to homemaking and raising a family.

The local library was always an important part of her life.

When I first met Pauline, in the mid 1960s, she was president of the small local chamber of commerce. With Jack Gordon, Charlie Eickler, Eddie Rollins and a few other enthusiasts, she conducted chamber business in the meeting room of the original small Bainbridge library (where the children’s meeting room is today).

Pauline was an innovator and an activist. Funding early chamber activities was a problem; the business community was small, and dues didn’t bring in much money. She pushed to develop another source of funding, selling license tabs as an agency of the state, for a small fee, of course. Islanders liked the convenience, the tab raised needed money, and the system remains in place today.

She worked hard in Olympia for bigger and better ferries here, and helped organize a major shipboard celebration to inaugurate service on the first of the new super ferries.

And she was determined that State Route 305 would remain a limited access highway, free of billboards, no matter what. Without Pauline’s efforts, 305 today might look like Poulsbo’s Viking Way.

Pauline and her husband, Robert, have given generously to many Bainbridge causes. But I’ll remember her especially for the gracious way she agreed to contribute a major gift to the recent building campaign:

“Of course we’ll give. We love that library, and Bob uses it often for research. The staff is so helpful.”

Their gifts continued after the building was completed, in the form of tickets to library events and other ways.

And the Deschamps gift was among the first of the regular advertisers in the new Library News.

Recent gifts

The Bainbridge Public Library depends on donations from civic-minded Islanders for maintenance and operation as well as special collections and services. During late 1999 and early 2000 gifts were received from:


- Funds were given for shelf plaques honoring William H. Kuhlmeyer, Jr. and The Hamack Family (the latter given by Frances Hamack).


- James Kondak contributed funds for the growing CD and classics collections.

- Major gifts came from the Bainbridge Island Japanese-American Community and Friends of the Library.

- And in-kind gifts came from Dave McCardle, who removed a dead tree from the library parking lot, and Cheryl Svornich of C & T Services, who contributed many hours of production time to the Library News.

- And Frank Hoehlterhoff, who died just a few days ago, donated a painting which graces the branch manager’s office. He was an avid library user, and will be remembered fondly by staff.

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By PEGGY HUGHES
Young People’s Librarian

In the Young People’s Library, we are often asked for our suggestions for appropriate novels to read aloud to young children, or books that would be enjoyed by a wide age range of listeners.

With Jim Trelease, the noted read-aloud specialist, coming to Bainbridge in April (see calendar, page 1), we anticipate an increased interest in read-aloud materials. Therefore we offer our own list of a dozen great books for reading aloud. All may be found in the Bainbridge juvenile fiction collection.

Cutwings, by Ursula LeGuin (Orchard Books, 1988). Four young cats with wings leave the city slums in search of a safe place to live, and meet two children with kind hands.

Daughter of Sagué, by Diane Himm (A. Whitman, 1997). In the early 1900s as change comes to her village on Puget Sound, 10-year-old Ida Bowen worries about what is ahead for herself and other members of the Suquamish people.


Gooseberry Park, by Cynthia Ryland (Harcourt Brace, c.1995). When a storm separates Stumpy the squirrel from her newborn babies, her animal friends come to the rescue.

Hatchet, by Gary Paulson (Viking Penguin, 1987). After a plane crash, 13-year-old Brian spends 54 days in the wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet and also learning to survive his parents’ divorce.

The Hobbit, by J. R. R. Tolkien (Ballantine Books, 1982). The adventures of the well-to-do hobbit, Bilbo Baggins, who lived happily in his comfortable home until a wandering wizard granted his wish.

Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle, by Betty MacDonald (Harper & Row, 1985). From her upside-down house, the eccentric Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle issues to parents her marvelous cures for such children’s diseases as Won’t-Get-Away-Toys-itis and Answerbackism.

Pick and say, by Patricia Polacco (Philomel Books, 1994). Say Curtis describes his meeting with Pinocks Ayler, a black soldier, during the Civil War, and their capture by Southern troops. Based on a true story by the author’s great-great-grandfather.

Piggie Longstocking, by Astrid Lindgren (Puffin books, 1977). Escapades of a lucky little girl who lives with a horse and a monkey — but without any parents — at the edge of a Swedish village.

The Three Terrible Trims, by Dick King-Smith (Crowns, 1994). Three mice brothers, ignoring the class system separating the four class of rodents in their farmhouse, befriend a lower-class mouse and form a team to fight cats.

Walk Two Moons, by Sharon Creech (HarperCollins, 1994). After her mother leaves home suddenly, 13-year-old Sal and her grandparents take a car trip retracing her mother’s route. Along the way, Sal recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, whose mother also left. (Newbery Award Winner)

Willowow, by Tom Bodet (Knopf, 1999). In their father’s absence, 13-year-old September and her younger brother Ivan disobey his orders by taking the boat out on their Alaska bay, where they are caught in a terrifying storm called a willowow.

For more read-aloud recommendations look for our new read-aloud bibliography, or ask at the check-out desk in the Bainbridge Young People’s Library. For other book selections consult Eleanor Wheeler, Galia Christensen, or Peggy Hughes at the young people’s desk.

Storybook Science

It happened on Wednesday, February 9, The Pacific Science Center’s “Storybook Science” van pulled into the Bainbridge Island library’s parking lot filled with ant farms, microscopes, eyecroppers, color wheels, insects, teeth, wetland models, bird songs, skiffs, boats, rocks, charts and graphs, a diggerdoon, and more.

Also in the van were Heather and Amy, two members of the Pacific Science Center staff who led 13 science programs in four days to local children. Each hour-long program began with the reading of a picture book followed by activities designed to explore the science behind the story.

The programs were created for children ages 4 years through third grade; 336 children and 122 adults participated.

Washington Mutual’s sponsorship of the Storybook Science program provided teachers and equipment, and the firm also contributed a copy of each book used in the series to the library. Similar programs are being offered in 20 Washington communities from February through April.

Thanks to Storybook Science, the Bainbridge Library now has these new books in its picture book collection:

- A Bad Case of Stripes
- The Full Belly Bowl
- Grandma Takes Me to the Moon
- Hey, Little Ant
- Insects Are My Life
- Music, Fiver Manhattan
- The Puddle
- Rotten Teeth
- Squiggly / A Wetland Walk
- The Toll-Bridge Troll
- Westlandia
- What’s Under the Bed?
- When Agnes Caws

Children’s corner

A new series of story hours for preschool children begins this spring in the young people’s library downstairs.

Two groups of youngsters are targeted:

Terrific Two — Stories, songs, fingerplays and fun for 2-year-olds and accompanying grown-ups in 20-30-minute sessions. Pre-registration is required, by sign-up at the young people’s checkout desk or by calling 842-4162, extension 816. Terrific Two will meet Mondays from 10:30 to 11 and from 11 to 11:30 April 17, May 1, 8, 15, and 22.

Preschool Storytimes — Stories, songs, fingerplays and fun for 3-5-year-olds. Each session is 30 minutes long, and no registration is required. Dates are Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11, April 19, 26, May 3, 10, 17, and 24.

The library will be closed on Monday, May 29, Memorial Day.

Poets in the library

Students in Ordway School gathered in their library recently to hear their own poems read aloud by Lorraine Ferron of Port Townsend (right), who spent four weeks as poet in residence at the school in February and March. She visited each classroom four times, and children from kindergarten through fourth grade got to experience being successful writers. (The poet-in-residence program was funded by grants from several local and state groups, including the Ordway PTO.)

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Bainbridge Island

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Art director O. Kern Devin, who is designing the soon-to-be-published book about the building of the new Bainbridge Island library, admits he likes noble causes.

That's why he agreed to contribute his professional design skills to the book, "They Like Noble Causes," now being created by a team of local artists.

"This book has been great fun," Devin said. "It's just my cup of tea ... one of the most enjoyable professional things I've ever done. I really got involved."

He likes working on things he really believes in, he said, as for example the logo and signage he designed for his church.

The library book, now in the final production phase, will be released later this year. Sharon Abrams is coordinator of the project, Barbara Winther the author, and Art Griec the lead photographer.

"Our fit was really good," Devin said. "Barbara is a real professional, and so is Art ... and everybody in the project was trying to do something that was really good, to make it better and make it right.

The play form really works," he added. Each chapter opens with a short play script — Winther is an award-winning playwright — followed by a descriptive text. "It works for me as a designer," Devin added.

Abrams says Devin is a natural for the role of art director. When she began the search for the right person to do the job, she asked several people for recommendations. One friend told her emphatically, "There's really only one. You want Kern Devin to do it." She agrees.

All the team members — writer, art director, four photographers, a mapmaker, and others — are contributing their services because they believe in the library. Their spouses and friends believe in the project, too. (Devin's wife, Joyce, is herself a librarian.)

This is not Devin's first effort for the local library. In 1980, when the original Bainbridge library building was outranged and the expansion drive held, Kern designed campaign materials for that successful drive.

Devin has lived most of his life on Bainbridge, and Island history is important to him.

The book, he says, is not just a history of the library, but a history of Bainbridge Island.

"The history of Bainbridge Island is totally integrated with that of the library," he said.

Though born in Hawaii, Devin grew up in Seattle, spent much of his childhood on Bainbridge (at Venice) and has always had family in the area. (An uncle was mayor of Seattle in the 1940s.) He majored in industrial design at the University of Washington, and became a highly successful graphic designer and commercial artist.

Bainbridge has been home for most of his adult life. As a young man he served in the Coast Guard in Baltimore, met his future wife there, and married her in 1955. He and Joyce saved their money and moved to Bainbridge, where he opened a studio and they raised their family.

"I've always had my own studio," he said, recalling that the studio was first in his home and then, for some years, "in the penthouse at Colman Dock."

He did institutional work for many major clients: several colleges and universities, foundations, and large firms like Boeing, Weyerhaeuser, Safeco, and Battelle. Some of his assignments took him to Europe, and the entire family spent a year there. "The kids took the train to school," he recalled. "We fell in love with Europe."

Now that he's retired, he and Joyce like to travel to (and Hawaii and Europe, of course) and he's devoting more time to painting — still lifes and landscapes and, most recently, portraits. His paintings have sold well in Hawaii.

But right now, the project closest to his heart is "They Like Noble Causes." The book is a labor of love for all concerned.

"We've had people who really put their hearts into it, who really felt that they owned the project," he said.

Working with Abrams, Winther, Devin, and Grice on the book project are photographers Mary Rendlett, Joel Sackett, and Linda Youker, and Kathryn Ault, a professional artist who is drawing a map of Bainbridge that will be included.

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Library volunteers at Snow benefit

Library volunteers turned out in large numbers to celebrate the December premiere of the film based on David Guterson's best-selling "Snow Falling on Cedars."

Among those helping with preparations for the buffet dinner and program that followed the film were (from left) Jane Brand, Susan Richards, Sarah Griffiths, Judy Karr, Mary Ann Campbell, Cindy Harrison, and Steve Olsen.

Guterson, director Scott Hicks, and members of the Bainbridge Island Japanese-American Community spoke and answered questions from an audience of hundreds that packed Commodore School for the occasion.

The benefit raised thousands of dollars for the library, the Bainbridge Island Historical Society and Museum, Bainbridge Performing Arts, and the Island's Multi-Cultural Committee.

The library's money from the benefit will be used to purchase materials fostering multi-cultural understanding.
Libby Anderson connects people with books

If Libby Anderson looks familiar to most library users, it's not surprising. Though she's been on the library staff for just a few years, she's lived on the Island since 1973 and was well acquainted with Bainbridge even earlier.

Growing up in California she spent summers in Sequim; her mother was from Seattle. She loved visiting Fay Bainbridge State Park as a child and, after graduating from San Jose State with a major in arts and humanities, she decided to move to the Island. “My sister was here, and I came and never left,” she says. She met her husband, Mike Bomoff, here, and for many years she's been involved in a lot of local activities, including women's soccer.

She's worked at the Princess Angeline Restaurant in Sequim, the Bainbridge Park District, Strawberry Hill School, and for eight years at the Eagle Lovejoy, and countless experienced gardener with greener than green thumbs. In reaching out to your community, you gave so many residents of Bainbridge Island a wonderful opportunity to come together in an esprit de corps.

"For such a Herculean effort and triumph, there ought to be an Academy Award, but surely the citizens of Bainbridge Island will bask in the sunlight of your success for many generations to come.

Books received include:
Basic Country Skills
The Big Book of Gardening Skills
Garden Retreats
Hardy Roses
The Organic Gardener's Home Reference
Caring for Perennials
Contained Gardens
Stonescaping
The Feng Shui Garden
The Lawn & Garden Owner's Manual
The Vegetable Garden's Bible
Just the Facts!
The Big Book of Gardening Secrets

Shaker Medical Herbs
Nature Journaling
Successful Perennial Gardening
Secrets of Plant Propagation
Scarcecrows
Landscaping Makes Cents
Watering Systems for Lawn & Garden
Natural Stonescapes
Secrets to Great Soil
Seed Sowing and Saving
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Bulbs
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A Garden of Wildflowers
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Easy Gardening 101
Glorious Garlic
Herbal Tea Gardens

The Bainbridge Public Library gardens have been attracting admiring visitors for many months. Still more acclaim came in February when the library received first prize in the national "Grow Together Garden Contest" sponsored by The Garden and the Friends of the Library U.S.A.

With the award came a $1,000 check and 65 of Storey's "best garden books," wrote John Storey, president of the Vermont-based book publisher.

"The garden book collection you have won runs the gamut from composting and mulching to topiary and water gardening. We hope you and your patrons enjoy these excellent books for years to come," he added.

"Reviewing Bainbridge's landscape proposal, we are in awe of the daunting, almost impossible task of restoring the Library's property after the building project was complete. You were blessed with platoons of volunteers (The Friday Tides, to name one) and contributors, such as the Hardy Fern Foundation, a local landscaper, the expertise of Ann

Storey Award brings cash and garden books to library

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Local artists’ work on display at library

By VERDA AVERILL

Two well-known Bainbridge Island artists will have one-woman shows at the Bainbridge Public Library this spring. Barbara Kowalski’s works are on display through April, and Constance Miller’s art will be featured in May, June, and July. Both exhibits are coordinated by Joanna Newnham, of the library’s art committee, and are part of an ongoing program featuring local artists. Much of the art is on display in the large meeting room; if the room is closed, library visitors may ask for admission at the checkout desk. (There is no charge.)

Barbara Kowalski is a five-year resident of Bainbridge Island with a lifelong interest in art. (Both her mother and father were involved in the arts.) She has a bachelor’s degree in art education from the University of Colorado and a master’s in painting from the University of Denver, and has pursued a career in art — as both a painter and a teacher — over 40 years, while raising a family. She moved to Bainbridge Island to be closer to her children and grandchildren (four of her grown children now live here) and quickly became a respected member of the local arts community.

Kowalski’s paintings can be categorized as word art about art, science, social commentary, and work that relates to things seen or expressed. 

In her current exhibit, large mixed-media paintings are shown along with a pair of smaller pieces using hand-made paper. Look closely and you will see that several of the paintings include exit signs “signifying options left to us as a society if we choose to use them,” she says.

Her work continues to evolve, and living here has influenced it. Her most recent series of paintings was inspired by the building of her house, and looking at the surrounding trees during the framing of the house. She’s calling these new paintings “House Bones.”

Connie Miller’s show, which will follow Kowalski’s in May, will include a collection of wall hangings and something new for her, small concrete sculptures.

Miller, who’s lived on the Island since 1984, is well known as a fabric artist and active member of the local arts community. She created the colorful covers for the stools in the children’s library as part of the original art designed for the library expansion in 1996-97.

And she recently served as coordinator of the artwork installed as an integral part of the new Bainbridge Island City Hall.

Miller has a long-standing interest in textile arts which she traces back to her training in theater and fashion with costumes. Her work has included batiks, tie dye fabrics, and weaving, as well as large, colorful, painted floor cloths (handome, one-of-a-kind carpets) based on Victorian horribles.

She taught for several years at Seattle’s Lakeside School, where she was known to students as “the cloth lady.”

Miller has been interested in the arts all her life; both her mother and grandfather were painters, and her degree in acting has led to another career in the communication arts. (She coaches people in public speaking and acts as a trial consultant.)

Recently she has been studying Buddhism, and the colors and designs in her painted hangings reflect that interest.

The small concrete sculptures, still in the design phase, represent a departure from her previous work. I expressed my interest in concrete technique and admitted I was “really curious to see how they turn out.”

“So am I,” she laughed, adding, “My feeling about artwork is to try to get out of the way of the process. That’s when the artwork really succeeds.”

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday-Wednesday 10:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Thursday-Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
(See calendar on page 1 for closures)

NEW WEBSITE ADDRESS

For Linknet Users

http://www.kit.org

LIBRARY PHONE NUMBERS

Bainbridge Island Branch ............. 842-4182
Toll Free to Kitsap Regional Library

842-3083

For Computer Support

and Other Departments ............. 780-2102
or 1-800-455-9513

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