

NOTES

A CONVERSATION WITH CAROLYN GRAY

MARYLOU DRIEDGER

Over the last two decades Friends of the Winnipeg Public Library has donated nearly \$40,000 to the Writer-in-Residence program. For the last seven years we have been pleased to provide a representative for the Writer-in-Residence selection committee. In November I had a lively chat with current Writer-in-Residence Carolyn Gray.

Did you know she shares her home with her beloved golden retriever Minnie? She attended Luxton Elementary School and lived only one house away from Burton Cummings. She's written a biography of local magician Dean Gunnarson and her award winning play *Elmwood Visitation* features a Winnipeg doctor who photographs ghostly spirits.

Did you know Carolyn spent twenty-five years involved in three different puppet companies? She went to Prague to learn how to make marionettes and has visited Manitoba schools to help children learn the art of puppetry creation and play writing. Her company Adhere and Deny once staged

a Winnipeg Fringe Festival play called Dr. Faustus featuring over a hundred puppets.

Did you know Carolyn was at the University of Saskatchewan for the last two years earning a Masters degree? She is a staff writer for the Manitoba Metis Federation. Carolyn previously served as the executive director of the Manitoba Writers Guild and as a scriptwriter for a true crime television series. She is also a creative writing instructor at the University of Brandon and for years directed many of the advanced companies at the Manitoba Theatre for Young People. And, she was recently appointed as the new editor of *Prairie Fire*, an award-winning Winnipeg literary magazine.

Did you know Carolyn is a fan of Toronto horror writer Michael Rowe? In fact she is working on a horror movie screenplay during her Writer-in-Residence term.

Carolyn was an avid reader of Enid Blyton's
...CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



If you'd like to consult with Carolyn your manuscript can be dropped off at the Reader Services desk at the Millennium Library, e-mailed to wpl.writerinres@gmail.com or mailed to *Writer-in-Residence, Reader Services, 251 Donald Street, Winnipeg, MB. R3C 3P5.*

WHAT IS JOAN THOMAS READING?

Five Wives, a novel by Winnipeg writer Joan Thomas, won the 2019 Governor General's award for English language fiction. We caught up with Joan in November and asked her what she was reading.

"I just finished *The Innocents* by Michael Crummey. Reading it is like peering through a keyhole into a miniature,



perfectly-realized and illuminated world. As one of my friends says, 'You will read it in a gulp, and it will stay with you forever.' "I have also read Nathaniel Rich's *Losing Earth*. It is an account of the United States climate study commissioned by Jimmy Carter. That report predicated everything we are facing now, and when it was released in 1983 there was still time to stop the melting trend of polar ice. But Carter was out of office by then, and under Ronald Reagan the findings of the study were downplayed and suppressed. This is an infuriating true story that I wish were fiction.

"Waiting on my bedside table is a new novel by Manitoba's Lauren Carter- *This Has Nothing To Do With You*. It has a dynamite premise, two adult siblings dealing with their mother's conviction for murder. Early reviews rave about it."

Joan Thomas was a speaker at the Friends'

2010 Books and Brunch event and was the Writer-in-Residence for the Winnipeg Public Library from 2012-2013. Friends of the Library are financial supporters of the Writer-in-Residence program. We couldn't be prouder of Joan and the phenomenal success of her novel *Five Wives*.

MARYLOU DRIEDGER

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“WHAT GREAT FUN I’VE HAD!” - ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL BOOK SALE

The 15th annual Friends Book Sale on October 26-27, 2019 was the busiest yet. More than 75 Volunteers worked hard and enthusiastically all weekend, some new to the Sale, some veterans, happy to be back. The Sale is readers’ delight and shoppers have a great time – and say so, also enthusiastically. Board member MaryLou Driedger overheard shoppers as they exited the sale, and collected these comments:

“This was super wonderful!”

“I come to this sale every year. I wouldn’t miss it.”

“I’m a teacher and now my classroom is stocked with books.”

“I’ve been here browsing for hours. It’s awesome”

“Large print books are so hard to find, but I found some here.”

“As you can see from this stack I’m a biography man.”

“I’m ready for eight months of winter reading now.”

“I found all these lovely art books and I am going to frame the pages to make an art wall in our house.”

“I hope there is enough room in my car for all these books.”

“I got Christmas presents for my grandkids.”

“A big thanks to the volunteers for doing this.”

“This is my second visit today and I’ll be back again tomorrow.”

“I found a bunch of new authors I want to try.”

“I wish I had three or four more hands so I could carry more books.”

“I hate to go home and leave so many beautiful books behind.”

“I found some really nice surprises.”

“What great fun I’ve had.”

... That about sums it up. The Book Sale raised over \$26,000. Between the Book Sale and the Friends’ Book Cart at Millennium Library, the sale of gently used books will earn an estimated \$40,000 in 2019 to contribute to Friends’ support for Winnipeg Public Library projects and programs.

The Book Room team deserves huge thanks! They are a wonderful gang of worker bees who really know how to put together a great book sale. This team sorted/selected/priced/packed for 12 months, worked at the Sale, and then spent more hours on post-sale clean up. And, they are a pleasure to work with.

BILLIE STEWART
BOOK SALE MANAGER

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Stephanie George and Staff at the St. James Library

Winnipeg Public Library Branch Staff

GloboSapiens, 3096 Portage Avenue
- Cathy Buttazoni

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INTRODUCING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Friends of the Winnipeg Public Library recently welcomed four new members to their Board of Directors.

Rita Burgess is a financial planner with more than forty years of experience in the banking industry. She served on the Winnipeg Public Library Board for six years, two as chair. Although a devoted Bombers and Jets



fan, you are just as likely to see Rita at a ballet or theatre performance. She enjoys spending time with family and reading historical fiction. As a child Rita loved curling up in a big chair at the Gimli Library and looking out over the lake as she read. She appreciates how decades ago, the library bookmobile made it possible for her young children to have access to Winnipeg Public Library books. Just walking into a library makes Rita's heart happy.

MaryLou Driedger is an employee of both the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Education Department at the University of Winnipeg. She was one of the founders of the Friends of the Library group in Steinbach. MaryLou enjoys the unique artwork and beautiful outdoor

reading garden at the Millennium Library near her home. Two of her all time favourite reads are

A Fine Balance by Rohinton Mistry and *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare. MaryLou is a free-lance journalist and newspaper columnist who hopes to be a regular contributor to the Friends newsletter. She loves traveling, cycling, playing with her grandchildren and writing daily posts on her blog.

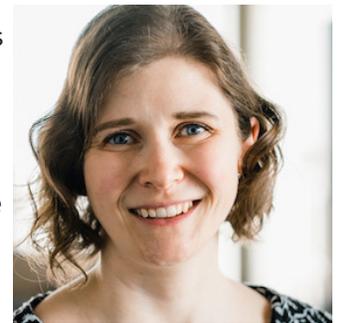
Kim Gandier has over twenty years of experience in marketing and communications. She and her family enjoy traveling and spending time at their cottage. She loves food and cooking which may explain why cookbooks are high on her list of favourite reads, along with other non-fiction titles and inspirational literature.



Kim frequents the Sir William Stephenson and Charleswood libraries. A curious person by nature Kim loves the way libraries open doors to all kinds of interesting worlds of information. She hopes to use her marketing expertise to help the Friends of the Library refresh their brand and develop more strategic and consistent ways to communicate with their stakeholders.

Chelsea McKee-Trenchard is the Director of Family Services for a company that helps multi-generational family enterprises plan for carrying forward their legacy. Chelsea wanted to join the Friends of the Library board because she

feels libraries play a very important role in community building. She appreciates the way libraries eliminate social barriers and provide education and information for everyone. Chelsea is a huge fan of the Japanese writer Haruki Murakami and one of her favourite books is *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. Chelsea enjoys cooking, playing board games and hanging out with her husband and her cats.



A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR BOOK SALE VOLUNTEERS!

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Pam G.
Pat S.
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Trudy H.
Wanda C.

BOOKS & BRUNCH - 15 WONDERFUL YEARS

Visitors to the May 5, 2019 Books & Brunch at The Gates on Roblin enjoyed a scrumptious brunch and listening to engaging speakers John Einarson and Kathy Knowles who shared “Books I have Known and Loved”. MC Charlene Diehl kept everything running smoothly. The Rainbow Auction was, as always, extremely popular.

MC Charlene Diehl, who is a writer, editor, performer, and director of THIN AIR - the Winnipeg International Writers Festival, shared that she had FUN and finds it “so satisfying to support such important work.”

John Einarson, author, musicologist, broadcaster and educator told us, “...I had a blast...” He focused, with a touch of humour, on Winnipeg libraries and books that influenced him. Who would have thought a young person going to the Winnipeg Public Library’s main branch on William Avenue to read the covers of the records, would become such a well-known writer of music biographies, all thanks in part to having free access to one of the libraries in our city. (Just think how excited young John might have been if he would have had the opportunity to borrow musical instruments, such as those now available from the Library’s

current Sun Life Musical Instruments lending program.)

Author Kathy Knowles, Director of the Osu Children’s Library Fund, was excited to hear about the initiatives sponsored by the Friends of the Winnipeg Public Library, which is understandable considering she has spearheaded the creation of more than 200 libraries in Africa.

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and many left with smiles on their faces.

As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, after 15 years of offering the Friends’ Books & Brunch, the Board of Directors has decided to discontinue this fundraising event. We have so appreciated your support over the years, as attendees, volunteers or donors. Thank you!

Planning is ongoing to develop events that will align with our values of being community focused and committed to literacy and learning. We look forward to seeing you at the next event.

Please support these Books & Brunch auction donors and make sure you let them know where you saw their names. Also check out our guest speakers’ favourite books at friendswpl.ca.

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...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

books as a child and a regular visitor at Winnipeg's St. John's Library. She found it a mysterious and fascinating place. "I wanted to go down into the basement and explore all of its rooms."

These days Carolyn's fascination with the library comes from her Writer-in-Residence post. She has already worked with writers of all genres and ages, from teenagers to octogenarians. Carolyn is delighted to engage with these budding authors and finds their enthusiasm for writing feeds her own.

Winnipeg author Jodi Carmichael had the privilege of working with Carolyn as a part of a mentorship program in 2013. She praises Carolyn for her gentle instruction, her sensitive coaching, her excellent questioning and the way she pushed her to become a better writer. "In 2016 my novel *Forever Julia* won a Manitoba Book Award," says Jodi. "That would never have happened without Carolyn."

The Writer-in-Residence position is funded by the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Public Library Board, the Friends of the Winnipeg Public Library, and Manitoba Sport, Culture and Heritage.

COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF NOTES...

THE GREAT ESCAPE THROUGH LITERATURE: THE WORK OF THE PRISON LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

More about this organization, the work of Board Member Chelsea McKee-Trenchard, and this literary project in our next issue!



Create: Words and Art from WCC features prose, poetry, and drawings by 12 incarcerated Manitobans. The pieces published in the chapbook are challenging and humorous - and speak to universal themes such as courage, grief, love, and resilience.

2019 - 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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FRIENDS DAY BOOK CLUB

Meets on the 2nd floor of the Millennium Library at 10:15 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. For more information call (204) 488-3217

Books for 2020

January 21

The Only Café

Linden MacIntyre

February 18

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

Rebecca Skloot

March 17

By Chance Alone

Max Eisen

April 21

The Age of Innocence

Edith Wharton

May 19

The Innocents

Michael Crummey

June 16

Wrap-up meeting

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EXCITING CHANGES ARE COMING!

A message from Board President Kathy Blight

The Friends of the Winnipeg Public Library is evolving to serve the needs of our community. As a volunteer-led fundraising organization, we must be nimble and strategic to achieve our goals.

Society is changing and so are we. We have a revitalized board of directors with fresh perspectives and the energy to transform our organization. Our events and programs and the people involved with them are changing. In particular, Billie Stewart who has done a tremendous job of organizing the annual Friends Book Sale, is retiring from her leadership role in the early months of 2020. Our organization has big shoes to fill and it will certainly take more than one person to assume Billie's role. While we don't have all the succession plan details defined yet, we are committed to ensuring the Book Sale will continue, as it is an integral fundraiser for the Friends organization.

As it relates to our annual Books & Brunch, we will not be hosting the event in 2020. We appreciate your support over the years and are grateful to Ray Louie at The Gates on Roblin for the great venue, good food and attentive staff. Planning is ongoing to develop inclusive events that will continue to align with our values of being community focused and committed to literacy and learning. Stay tuned!

Our members, attendees and volunteers are at the core of our events. Thank you for supporting us over the years. We look forward to seeing you in the Best of Friends Gift Shop, buying that special book at the Book Sale, and at our upcoming events.

If you have any questions related to these changes, please get in touch with us at info@friendswpl.ca or leave a message at 204-488-3217.



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