Lunch & Learn Programs Remain Popular

One never knows what one’s going to learn at one of the Lunch & Learn talks. Jointly sponsored by the Rensselaer Retirees Forum and the Friends of the Folsom Library, there’s always something that’s bound to pique a person’s interest. Here’s what’s coming up in the near future:

On December 7th, RPI Athletic Director Jim Knowlton will present “Athletics at RPI--An Inspiring Story!” Jim plans to start off with a quiz (with prizes!) to see how knowledgeable the audience is about Rensselaer's athletic programs. In case one of the questions is "What percentage of our students participate in some form of organized athletics?" the answer is 70%. Pretty surprising, don't you think? Please note: This program will take place on the first Friday of the month rather than the second.

There won’t be a program in January because a lot of the community is not here during the semester break, but we’ve been fortunate to have Rensselaer County Historical Society Curator Stacy Pomeroy Draper agree to come talk about "The Great Fire of Troy" on February 8th. This year marks the 150th anniversary of this horrific fire.

Stacy sent me the photo seen on the right, which shows the burnt district in the foreground. The many-spired building on top of the hill was the Troy University, which later became St. Joseph's Seminary. After the building was razed, the Folsom Library was built on the site.

Aftermath of The Great Fire of Troy (1862)
Image courtesy of the Rensselaer County Historical Society
I’m always interested in hearing what others are reading, so I asked our Friends. Here are some of the responses.

I just finished up reading the *Hyperion Cantos* by Dan Simmons. I do recommend the book! The *Hyperion Cantos* is a series of four books, split up into two sets. Dan Simmons does an amazing job leading his readers through his vast and impressive universe in this piece of science fiction. As he relays the lives of his characters through their own eyes, the reader gets to experience being a warrior, a priest, a diplomat, and many more lives as he ties and twines several plots together. The reader is in store for amazing plot twists, fantastic revelations, and cliff hangers that keep you on edge and wanting more! This book has things for all sorts of readers to enjoy, whether it’s utopian/dystopian settings, apocalyptic risks, the crazy and mysterious unknown, or just the appreciation for an incredibly well written text - it can be found with the Cantos.

— Chaz Goodwine, Troy, NY

Oh dear, Adrienne, I don't read the kind of book that normal folks read. But if you think it would give some of the other Friends a chuckle, I'll mention that the tome occupying me at present is *An Introduction to Large-Lap Valves & Their Use On the LMS* by Adrian Tester and Wales Aberystwyth. It's about design matters related to some classes of steam locomotive that ran many years ago on the London, Midland & Scottish Railway.

Come to think of it, Friends might be interested in the book after all......something to have at one's bedside, as a remedy for insomnia.

I just read your message more carefully and realized that you didn't restrict the subject to books. One interesting magazine article I just read is "*Cuba's New Now*" by Cynthia Gorny, in the November issue of *National Geographic*. It made me feel so sorry for the many in Cuba who struggle daily just to exist in its idealistic but badly out-of-kilter system.

— Steven Smith ‘55, Camden, ME

**Andrew Carnegie** by David Nasaw. In 1901, he was the richest man in the world and by 1919, he had give almost all of it away. His fortune built over 2,500 libraries in the world.

— Bob Mayo, Grafton, NY

I’m reading *Steve Jobs*, the biography of the iconic Apple founder, by Walter Isaacson.

— Jeff Miner ‘78, Troy, NY

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— Sam Wait ‘53, Niskayuna, NY

I was reading *The Spirit of Compromise: Why Governing Demands It and Campaigning Undermines It* by Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson (Princeton 2012). Helps to understand the political agony we're in but can't say I'm optimistic about getting out of the agony.

— Bob Albern ‘54, Kinderhook, NY

New Assistant Archivist Joins the Library

Earlier this year, the Folsom Library was very fortunate to hire Jenifer Kuba to fill the Assistant Institute Archivist position vacated when Amy Rupert left last year to take a position with EBSCO in Massachusetts. Jenifer received her M.S in Information Science from the University at Albany and her B.A. in Art History from Skidmore College. Prior to her arrival at Rensselaer, she was the Assistant Director and Archivist of the Adirondack History Center Museum in charge of the museum’s Brewster Library as well as responsible for all museum and library programming, outreach, and was curator for all exhibitions. Jenifer began her career at RPI by implementing a new database for the Archives collection guides. To date, Jenifer has transformed the “RPI History Revealed” blog, staged a new exhibit at Folsom Library entitled “Signs, Seals & Symbols,” is re-doing the Archives and Special Collections website, and is planning a presentation for spring 2013 to share more collections with the Rensselaer community. Welcome, Jenifer!
A Year of Exceptional Lunch & Learn Presentations

For those Friends who weren’t able to make some of our past talks, here’s a recap on what was offered in the last several months:

October 2012 — “How Are You Using LinkedIn? What’s New, What Works and Why Should I Care?” presented by Tom Whalen, Director of MBA and MS Career Resources at the Lally School of Management and Technology

September 2012 — “Amos Eaton’s Land,” presented by Kathleen Helfrich ’68, ’96


March 2012 — “Fuel Cells and Their Role in Electrochemical Energy Conversion,” presented by Dr. Daniel Lewis, Associate Professor in RPI’s department of Materials Science and Engineering

February 2012 — “Moving Toward the Light: One Family’s Journey into Solar Power,” presented by RPI’s Jim Evans, Director of Multimedia Services at RPI

December 2011 — “Good Stories Are Everywhere,” presented by Gazette reporter Sara Foss

November 2011 — “Wings of Fortune,” presented by former Rensselaer ROTC instructor Edward Chevrette

October 2011 — “Fado: A View From Lisbon,” presented by Dr. David Mendonca, Associate Professor in Industrial and Systems Engineering

September 2011 — “Sustaining an Information-Driven World,” presented by Dr. Fran Berman, Vice President for Research at the Institute
New Roof Almost Completed

The Folsom Library is now sporting a new roof. Construction took place over the summer and a portion of this fall. Although it’s certainly not something we see very often, it sure is gratifying not to have to worry about leaks potentially ruining our collections or causing damage to the building, especially after a long, wet weekend.

2012 McKinney Contest

As the group does every year, the Friends of the Folsom Library again contributed $250 to help the Department of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences fund its annual McKinney Writing Contest awards ceremony. The event was co-sponsored by the New York State Writers Institute.

Winners of the writing contest competition received their awards from novelist Ann Enright during the ceremony in the Biotech Auditorium, Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies on April 18.

Enright, who won the 2007 Man Booker Prize for her novel The Gathering, has also has published essays, short stories, a non-fiction book, and several other novels. The Irish author’s writing explores themes such as family relationships, love and sex, and Ireland’s difficult past. Her latest novel, The Forgotten Waltz (2011), won the 2012 Andrew Carnegie Medal in Fiction.

In addition to the $250 contribution, Friends also covered one-half the cost of about a dozen softcover editions of The Gathering and The Forgotten Waltz sold in the campus bookstore to students, staff, faculty, and Friends.
QUOTES WORTH SHARING

“A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never-failing spring in the desert.” ~ Andrew Carnegie

“When I got my library card, that's when my life began.” ~ Rita Mae Brown

“The richest person in the world - in fact all the riches in the world - couldn't provide you with anything like the endless, incredible loot available at your local library.” ~ Malcolm Forbes

“The library connects us with the insight and knowledge, painfully extracted from Nature, of the greatest minds that ever were, with the best teachers, drawn from the entire planet and from all our history, to instruct us without tiring, and to inspire us to make our own contribution to the collective knowledge of the human species. I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries.” ~ Carl Sagan, Cosmos