

# Rochester Public Library



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### Library

[Home](#)

[Events](#)

[Newsletter  
Archive](#)

### Featured Links

[Friends](#)

[Wit, Wisdom  
& Wine](#)

[Rochester  
Reads](#)

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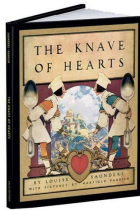
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## January Newsletter

### Libraries Change Lives



Unusual and Special books *by Sylvie Nickle*

The Friends of the Library's mission regarding books could be defined as stewardship -- responsible authority for processing donations in a way to obtain the best possible value for the Library.

### What's @ the Library?



One Book, One Community

Everyone is invited to participate by reading and discussing the books and attending related events in February 2010.

### 9th Annual Wit, Wisdom & Wine



Every year in January, the Rochester Public Library Foundation hosts an entertaining and intellectual cocktail party at the library. Attendees listen to their choices of speakers as they sip wine, sample hors d'oeuvres, mingle, and bid on silent auction items.

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## Unusual and Special Books by Sylvie Nickel

The Friends of the Library's mission regarding books could be defined as stewardship -- responsible authority for processing donations in a way to obtain the best possible value for the Library.

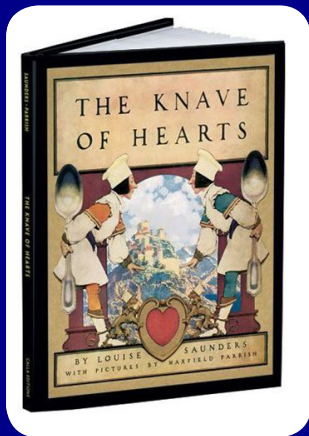
### How We Got Started

A surprising number of the thousands of books donated to the Library each year can be described as "unusual and special" (U&S). Back around the turn of the century—this century, that is—Carol Smyrk, co-manager of the Friends Bookstore at the time, and Dr. Randy Brown, a knowledgeable book collector and volunteer pricer for the Bookstore, realized that many of these books were even more valuable than could be featured on the Bookstore's Collectibles shelf.

And so, as an added feature of the RochesterFest celebration in 2001, they pioneered the Silent Auction of rare books. The star of that first auction was *Tarzan and the Forbidden City*, which sold for \$100 to a local collector who stopped by frequently to ensure he was still the high bidder.

Then came Maxfield Parrish: A stunning 1925 1st edition of *The Knave of Hearts* appeared amongst the donated books, and Carol & Randy realized it was VERY VALUABLE. The donor couldn't be identified, so the book was listed on eBay—and it sold for more than \$1200! Everyone was elated, and the Friends began seriously thinking beyond the bookstore and yearly sales. Against advice, in 2003 Carol sold a very battered 1st edition copy of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* for \$450 on eBay instead of allowing it to be tossed in the trash.

Al Dollerschell, Friends Board member and former RCTC librarian, began "rescuing" obscure and eclectic books from the sorting room and selling them via Amazon.com with increasing success.



The RochesterFest Silent Auctions continued through 2006, when Carol and Sylvie Nickel, who had now signed on to the "unusual and special" team, decided that offering the books just once a year was too limiting (not to mention that the follow-up work was a bit overwhelming). They began featuring their treasures along with the various Friends sales, but at a separate table with set "buy-it-now" prices. And even then, many books needed to bring still higher prices from more specialized buyers than came to the sales.

So Sylvie also began listing some Unusual & Special books on Amazon--often attractively illustrated children's books that she hates to part with, but also deceptively modest-looking histories or memoirs. Recently, a plain-looking copy of *Frontier and Indian Life and Kaleidoscopic Lives*, a memento of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Washburn, North Dakota sold for \$280 (appropriately, to a buyer from Bismarck).

Sometimes we've actively gone out to find buyers. When the Extraordinary Bookseller closed its doors and donated many boxes of military history books to RPL, we contacted the local Civil War and World War II roundtable leaders with a list for their consideration, and we filled a rack with "war" books to display in the bookstore and at one of the special sales.

## How Much Is That Book Worth?

Spotting a potentially valuable book is often a matter of intuition; age and condition aren't necessarily the key factors. We do research on various online Web sites to find just how unusual and special it is. If Amazon.com has many copies listed starting at \$.01, or if AbeBooks has 547 copies, then best it go to the bookstore. But if not too many books are offered for sale, then we read

the descriptions to see which best match our copy, consider local buying habits, and price accordingly. If the book is particularly eye-catching, we'll feature at one of the special sales; if it's not, we'll probably just sell online. Sometimes we must decide between a "slow dollar" and a "fast nickel" in pricing.

## Now Available in a Showcase Near You...

RPL's John Hunziker creatively adapted a rarely used 2nd floor display case to fit the needs of the Unusual & Special team, and a selection of our books can now be viewed "between sales" in the display next to the elevator on the 1st floor. Patrons interested in one of the displayed books can contact Carol or Sylvie and "buy it now." Soon we plan to display some of the books currently listed on Amazon and offer them at an appropriate discount (no Amazon fee, no shipping charge) if purchased on-site. Keep an eye on the display, and also watch for additional articles on Friends book-selling activity.



## One Book - One Community

Rochester Reads seeks to encourage community discussion, family reading, literacy, understanding, and cross-community interaction by promoting the reading of one book. Everyone is invited to participate by reading and discussing the books and attending related events in February 2010.

Rochester Reads 2010 events are set for February. Program highlights include a February 26th visit to Rochester by Masha Hamilton, author of *The Camel Bookmobile*. Hamilton will speak to the general public at Willow Creek Middle School auditorium at 7:00 p.m. This program is free and all are welcome. The Rochester Reads partners are grateful to The Friends of the Library and the Alpha Upsilon Alpha Chapter from Winona State University – Rochester for sponsoring the visit.

Gerald Casper, RCTC Hill Theater director, has written an original play based on the Jr. Rochester Read's title, *Home of the Brave* by Katherine Applegate. Performances are scheduled for February 11, 12 & 13 at 7 p.m. and February 13 at 2 p.m.

Additional Rochester Reads programs include: A Portrait of Kenya – cultural program, an African lunch cooking demonstration, a film: Africa – the Serengeti, etc. For more information about these and additional Rochester Reads programs go to [www.RochesterReads.org](http://www.RochesterReads.org) or call 507-328-2305.

## Rochester Reads Sponsors

Post-Bulletin Company, the Friends of Rochester Public Library, the Rochester Public Library Foundation, AUA Winona State University Rochester, Rochester Community and Technical College, the Kahler Hotel and Dr. Peter Dyck.

## Rochester Reads Partners

Rochester Public Library, Post-Bulletin Company, Adult and Family Literacy Program, Rochester Public Schools, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Rochester Community and Technical College, and the Diversity Council.

## Adult Title

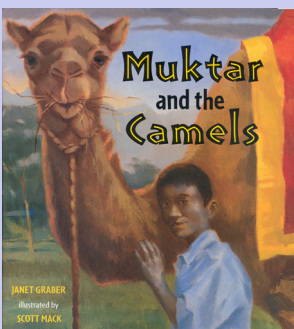
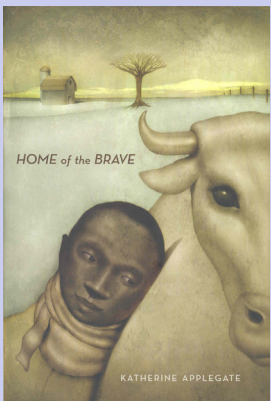
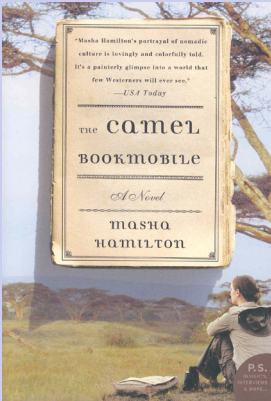
*The Camel Bookmobile* by Masha Hamilton.

## Junior Title

*Home of the Brave* by Katherine Applegate

## Children's Title

*Muktar and the Camels* by Janet Graber



# 9th Annual Wit, Wisdom & Wine

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annual

Wit, Wisdom & Wine



## Wit, Wisdom & Wine

Every year in January, the Rochester Public Library Foundation hosts an entertaining and intellectual cocktail party at the library. Attendees listen to their choices of speakers as they sip wine, sample hors d'oeuvres, mingle, and bid on silent auction items.

The event takes place on Saturday, January 16th at 6:30 pm. Early-bird registration is \$60.

After January 8, registration is \$70

## Speakers:

*American Smooth* - April and Gary Dahl, Dahl Dance Center

*The Blue Notebook* - Dr. James Levine

*The Health Reform Debate: What's Happening and Why* - Tim Penny

*Open Wide and Say "Ha!"* - Father Nick

*Quest for the Perfect Ingredient* - LeeAnn Zubay, Zzest Market

*Wine Geek 101* - Michelle Repinski, Paustis Wine Co

*Ladling Gravy: The Unique Role of the Community Newspaper*  
- Randy Chapman, Publisher, Post-Bulletin Co.

*The Last River Rat* - Kenny Salwey

*Whisky Appreciation* - Helen and Bryan McIver

*Patriotic and Historical Art* - Gil Gutknecht

*Race: Are we so Different?* - Robert Garfinkle, Science Museum of Minnesota

## Raffle

This year's raffle features the winner's choice of one of three pieces of jewelry donated by Hight & Randall, Ltd. Tickets are \$10.00 and are available from any RPL Foundation Board member, at the library Administration office on 2nd floor, or at the Wit, Wisdom & Wine gala event. Need not be present to win.

## Event Sponsors:

Bridgestreet Worldwide

Think Mutual Bank

## Other Sponsors:

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