

Library Welcomes Nobel Prize Nominated Author, Alison McGhee



by Catherine H. Armstrong

The Rochester Public Library will host Minnesota resident and Pulitzer Prize nominated author, Alison McGhee, on Thursday, January 30 at 7:00 p.m. in the library auditorium.

McGhee is the New York Times bestselling author of children's books *Someday* and *A Very Brave Witch*; and her Pulitzer-nominated adult novel, *Shadow Baby*, was a *Today Show* Book Club selection.

With nearly two dozen published books to her credit, McGhee will discuss her writing and creative process, which cover a broad range of genres including poetry, children's picture books, young adult novels and adult fiction.

Creativity is an inherent part of McGhee's personality, and her earliest memories all include plans of someday creating art for others to enjoy

"The first thing I remember wanting to be was an actress," McGhee said. From there, she transitioned to aspirations of dancing, and then a singer and songwriter. Finally in first grade when she learned to read and write, McGhee's love of the written word began to flourish as she began her first steps toward becoming the writer she is today.

"I always wanted to be a writer from the time I learned to print," she said. "I loved to read (and) I read constantly." Reflecting back, McGhee admits "I think I just wanted to be an artist. I wanted to live my life translating my own experiences into some form of art (and) the thing I had some talent at is writing."

After graduating college with a degree in Asian Studies, McGhee moved to Boston where she typed papers during the day to pay the rent. "I never had a Plan B. It was the only

thing I wanted to do," she explained. "I got up early and wrote stories...(and) just blindly plowed on." It took six years to publish her first story in a local magazine, and another seven years before publishing her first novel.

Since those early days in Boston, McGhee has risen to levels of success that most writers only dream of achieving, and has successfully bridged the generation gap with her talent for reaching a broad range of genres. Her unique ability to write for a variety of audience interests is somewhat unusual in a field where most authors tend to choose a single genre, but McGhee insists she has no difficulty transitioning from one genre to another. "I find it all equally challenging," she said. "A novel is a novel. It doesn't matter if it's for a 7 year old or an adult. Whatever I have an idea for with regard to a book, I just start writing it."

While every mother loves each of her children equally, McGhee's personal favorite of her published works is *All Rivers Flow to the Sea*, a Young Adult novel about a 17-year old girl learning to live in the new reality of her life after a car crash leaves her sister in a long-term coma.

"It speaks to me about the yearning and the longing that adolescents feel," she said. "When you finish it, you feel as though you know the people. You love them. They're around the corner from you and they have told you things that you didn't know were in your own heart until you read them. (It includes) a lot of struggle, a lot of beauty, and love and sadness."

McGhee's stop at the Rochester Public Library is part of her "Legacy Tour" in January where she'll be visiting a series of schools and libraries over a 7-day spread throughout Southeastern Minnesota. She's especially excited to visit Rochester because, she says, it's simply a beautiful town. "It's an interesting town. It's beautiful - the town that Mayo built. It's a beautiful place (and) the library is gorgeous," she said.

This event is appropriate for all ages. For more information, contact the event coordinator, Katherine Stecher, at the Rochester Public Library by calling (507) 328-2300.

News from the Bookstore

by Mary Barrett, Bookstore Manager

“Fall Into Reading” Button Contest



This year during Rochesterfest, Bruce W. had a button design contest, and the people working at the sale wore buttons imprinted with the winning designs. In addition to a grand prize winner, the buttons represent age groups from pre-school through high school.

Each winner received a library bag as well as a Bookstore gift certificate and other prizes. At the left are the three age-group winners as well as the grand-prize winner.

International Star Wars Read Day

On Saturday, October 11, the Friends sponsored two events that corresponded with the International Star Wars Reading Day. In the morning, the children’s librarian ran a Jedi Camp, and over 250 people showed up to make light sabers out of swimming noodles, tape, and various markers. In addition the children participated in a variety of activities such as a bean bag toss. In the afternoon, the children’s library had created multiple trivia contests for families to show their knowledge so they could vie for prizes. Attendees ate “Wookiee Cookies” as they answered progressively more difficult trivia questions. Those who were in costume also had a chance to participate in a fashion show, and prizes were awarded for the best costumes. In all, about 100 people attended the afternoon portion of the event.



Jim Lanier – Author Visit

On Friday, October 18, musher Jim Lanier, who has participated in sixteen Iditarod sled dog races, spoke in the Library Auditorium. The Friends provided sled-dog cookies, hot Tang citrus drink, and other treats to the over 60 participants. Mr. Lanier began with a slide show of various spots on the Iditarod trail, set to music with a country-western song created specially for Mr. Lanier. During his presentation, Mr. Lanier talked about various items of food he’d eaten on the trail, including snacks as well as hot drinks. After reading from parts of his book *Beyond Ophir: Confessions of an Iditarod Musher*, Mr. Lanier answered questions posed by members of the audience. Many of the attendees then went up to the display to see the frostbitten toe Mr. Lanier saved after it had been amputated!

News From the Friends' President

by Barbara Eakins

As the end of 2013 nears, we have been working on the final activities before we welcome 2014.

The 2013 Holiday Gift and Bake sale was held on December 6 and 7. This annual sale featured gift quality books and delicious home-baked items provided by the Friends.

The Whiteout Wednesday Sale in the Bookstore was held on November 27th, with the Friends assisting customers with finding and gift wrapping books.

On December 17, the Friends participated in gift wrapping at the downtown Barnes and Noble.

The 2014 budget requests from the Library have been reviewed by the Friends' Finance Committee, and nominations for the 2014 Friends' Board of Directors are currently being accepted.

And finally, the Friends' Annual Meeting will be held on January 27. Please make sure to put this date on your calendar. Watch for details in this newsletter, on the Friends' website, or at the Rochester Public Library website.

Please plan to attend where you will meet other Friends, enjoy a tasty luncheon and hear plans about the upcoming year.

A Note from the Library Director

By Audrey Betcher, Library Director

After we completed the strategic plan in December, 2012, the library board not only approved making the physical changes to the current library building that I've described in the last couple newsletters (and I hope you've seen), but they also approved looking at the longer-term needs of the library building.



From all we are reading and hearing about, the Destination Medical Center will keep Rochester and Olmsted County on a steady path of growth for the next 20 years. The growth will have an impact on almost every aspect of life including the public library. If we don't prepare to grow and change, we won't be able to meet community needs into the future.

For the last several months, we have been working with HGA, a local architectural firm, and George Lawson, a library

building consultant, to talk about how best to meet community needs looking at current needs and going out 25-30 years. George Lawson helped us put the needs into words in a formal Building Program, and HGA turned the Building Program into conceptual drawings. I will work with Barbara to find a time in the new year to show you the slides we have of the designs to give you an idea of the concept as it exists today.

If we don't advocate for the community needs that we address through the library, we will be in this exact building in 20 years with many more people to serve and constraints on space. We won't be able to meet the needs of the community if we don't have the space to do so.

To turn these concepts into reality, we need your help. You are the passionate citizens who believe in literacy and reading, in preparing kids for school, in the power of information, and in community engagement. To lend a hand, please call John Hunziker at (507) 328-2343 or send an e-mail to jhunziker@rochester.lib.mn.us. There will be many ways to help.

Friends of the RPL Annual Meeting

Please join us on Monday January 27, 2014 at 11:30 a.m. in the Rochester Public Library Auditorium.

A light Luncheon will be served starting at 11:30 a.m. After a short business meeting which will include the election of 2014 Board Members and Officers, there will be a program of interest which will include a guest speaker. Rochester Public Library's own Sarah Joynt - one of our amazing Young Adult Librarians - will discuss recent and future changes in the library, including the new space allocated for the Young Adult Readers section.

Please RSVP to Gail or Marilyn by calling 328-2341.

Winterfest Book Sale

February 6-9, 2014

Rochester Public Library Auditorium

Thursday, February 6

(Friends-only Preview Sale)

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

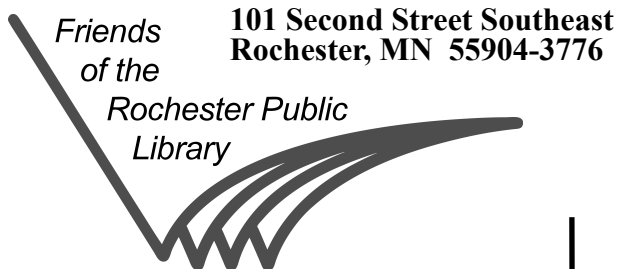
Friday and Saturday, February 7 & 8

9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 9

1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

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Friends' Bookstore Hours

Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays
10:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Tuesdays and Fridays
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Saturdays
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM (Winter)

Sundays
1:30 PM - 4:30 PM (Winter)

It's time to renew your Friends' Membership for 2014. You can renew your membership at the Friends' Bookstore, by U.S. mail or online at www.rochesterpubliclibrary.org/supporting/friends/membership.html.

Address to renew by U.S. Mail: Friends of RPL, 101 Second Street SE, Rochester, MN 55904.

Thank you for being a member!