

More than Books

Next Thursday, February 20, Highland Community College Instructor Jim Phillips is presenting a program about “Songs & Soup Lines: The Music of the Great Depression.” Usually the programs offer coffee and cookies from the Gallery Café, courtesy of the Freeport Public Library Foundation. I am lobbying for something different in honor of Jim’s topic. What do you think? Would you be scared away from the program if we served a depression-era soup instead of cookies?

One of Jim’s Highland Community College colleagues, Dr. Andy Dvorak, presents the last program of the month. On Thursday, February 27, Andy is going to give us the lowdown on whether or not the 1938 Orson Wells radio broadcast, “War of the Worlds,” really created a national panic.

Both Jim and Andy are among the regular speakers in the library’s Lectures in American History Series. I don’t believe their fans would ever forgive me if they weren’t part of our tenth anniversary edition of the series.

I remember particularly enjoying Jim’s 2011 lecture about Queen Liliuokalani, the last reigning monarch of the Hawaiian Islands. Andy’s 2011 lecture about Eleanor Roosevelt’s post-White House years was another standout.

The 10th Anniversary Edition of Lectures in American History continues through March, with three more talented speakers. Flyers with additional information are available at the library.

Food for Fines Update

We have one full bin of donated food in the lobby, and there are still two weeks to go in February’s Food for Fines drive.

If you read this column, you already know that, during the month of February, the library offers the public an opportunity to clear up any of those annoying library fines by bringing in canned food or other non-perishable food items. Bring in a can of tuna, for example, and we’ll “forgive” up to \$1 in fines. Two cans get \$2 off your record. All food collected stays in the community and will be divided at the end of the month between the Salvation Army and Freeport Area Church Cooperative (FACC).

This is a chance to take care of overdue fines and help the less fortunate at the same time. I really should tell you, however, that our automated circulation system, PrairieCat, provides pretty good inventory control, so fines are down, and that’s a good thing. What I want to do is remind you that you don’t have to have fines to donate to the drive. Consider the library a convenient collection point for a post-holiday community food drive.

Suggestions for the drive, beyond above mentioned tuna, include vegetables, chili, canned meats, jars of baby food or baby formula, and the ever-popular peanut butter.

Library Director Carole Dickerson may be reached by phone at 815-233-3000, ext. 216 or by email at cdickerson@freepubliclibrary.org