

More than Books

Free Book Days

Pick up a free copy of "Rocket Boys" by Homer Hickam here at the library either Saturday, February 21, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., or during the same hours on the following Saturday, February 28, and get ready to join in the 2015 "One Book, One Freeport" communitywide read program.

Copies of "Rocket Boys" are courtesy of the Freeport Public Library Foundation. The book, set in Coalwood, West Virginia, is a memoir of a coal miner's son, inspired by the 1957 launch of Sputnik, who grew up to be a NASA scientist.

"Rocket Boys" was published in 1998 and was nominated by the National Book Critics Circle as the Best Biography of 1998. It was selected by the New York Times as one of its Great Books of 1998.

"Mr. Hickam," wrote a New York Times critic, "builds a story of overcoming obstacles worthy of Frank Capra, especially in its sweetness and honest sentimentality."

According to USA Today, "Rocket Boys" is "Unforgettable . . . Unlike so many memoirs, this book brings to life more than one man's experiences. It brings to life the lost town of Coalwood, W.Va."

More information about "One Book" programs and events will be forthcoming. I'd like to suggest that, in the meantime, you visit the Freeport Art Museum's exhibit, "Masters of the Muck: Coal Mining in America."

Freeport Art Museum

The Freeport Art Museum is hosting the coal mining exhibit now through March 7. The exhibit features photographs and artifacts on loan from the Moweaqua Coal Mine Museum in Moweaqua IL, the Princeton Public Library in Princeton IL, the private collection of David Johnson in Merrill WI, and images from the Library of Congress. The photographs and artifacts highlight the lives of coal miners and their families revealing the daily hardships of life in coal mining towns such as Coalwood.

Other "One Book, One Freeport" sponsors include the Library Foundation, the Stephenson County Museum, the Freeport Art Museum, Highland Community College, Freeport School District 145, Aquin Catholic Schools, the University of Illinois Extension, Lindo Theatre, FHN, and The Journal-Standard.

Grants from the Illinois Humanity Council and the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois also provide funding for this year's "One Book, One Freeport" programs and publicity.

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