

More than Books

Lecturer looks at the right to bear arms

Although the weather gods were not with us last night for the kick-off lecture in this year's American History Lecture Series, I am forecasting good weather and clear roads for next Monday, January 23. That's when's former Highland Community College Director Eric Welch plans to examine how the United States Constitution's Second Amendment – the right to bear arms – has been interpreted over the past two hundred years.

The lecture begins at 7 p.m. Come early for good seats and great cookies, courtesy of the Freeport Public Library Foundation and Sandy Schubert, proprietor of the library's Gallery Café.

The Series continues through February. It is sponsored by the Freeport Public Library Foundation and the Stephenson County Museum.

Promise to “Downton Abbey” Fans

If you are a fan, as I am, of the PBS series “Downton Abbey,” I can guess where you are going to be at 8 p.m. for the next several Sunday evenings.

Season 2 runs through February 19. I promise to have enough copies of the DVD of Season 1 so that you'll be able to catch up on it before Season 2 ends, and I promise to have the Season 2 DVD available just as soon as it is released, which is a wee bit before the last few episodes end.

I have to say that would be a spoiler for me as I want to watch them as they appear on the tube during the “Masterpiece Theatre” timeslot. Nonetheless, I am looking forward to the DVD as I understand there are three bonus features included.

If you are not already a “Downton Abbey” fan, let me recommend the series. Season 1 begins just after the sinking of the Titanic and places events in the Abby household – upstairs and downstairs – in the context of historical events. Season 2 is set during World War II.

If I can't sell you on “Downton Abbey,” maybe I can interest you in other “Masterpiece Theatre” series on DVD. Not that we have them all in the Freeport Library collection. That's what interlibrary loan is for, after all.

Remember “Poldark”?

My personal favorite “Masterpiece Theatre” guilty pleasure is the “Poldark” series, set in the eighteenth century, following the American Revolution. It was based on 12 historical novels of Winston Graham, and 29 episodes aired in the late seventies on BBC before coming to Masterpiece Theatre.

I hold the “Poldark” series at least partly to blame of the demise of a perfectly good marriage. My then-husband, who was more of an “I, Claudius” sort of guy, hated “Poldark.” “Isn’t it over yet? When will it ever end?” he would ask.

Our marriage did outlast the series, but just barely.

Other Favorites

I’ve recently rewatched “The Jewel in the Crown” and “Brideshead Revisited,” but I’d better quickly note that I don’t recall which series ran on “Masterpiece Theatre” and which ones appeared on “Great Performances.”

The new film version of “Tinker, Tailor, Soldier Spy,” which I really liked, has me eager to go back to either the seven-part television series starring Alec Guinness or a wonderful audiobook reading of the John le Carre novel. Choices, choices.

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