

More than Books

Summer Program Update

Where has the time gone? The library's Summer Reading Program is almost over. Between now and August 2, however, there's still a lot to look forward with a variety of children and family programs and reading incentive prizes for children, teens, and adults.

Tuesday Movie Mania

Every Tuesday, at 2 p.m., the library has been showing popular children's films. All the movies have been free and open to everyone. Popcorn is courtesy of Mrs. Mike's. The series concludes next Tuesday, July 29 with "Despicable Me 2."

The library's special teens-only movie series, which includes snacks, has been extended one week, until Thursday, August 7, when "Divergent" is available for showing on screen in the library's first-floor meeting room.

Thursday Specials

Every Thursday, at 1 p.m., the library has presented a special program aimed at elementary school-aged kids. Yesterday's program on Egypt was a joint effort between the library and the Freeport Art Museum. The week before, the Discovery Center Museum from Rockford was here with a portable planetarium.

I have every expectation that Youth Services Supervisor Anna Doyle will continue to bring quality cooperative programming such as this to the library for the children of Freeport.

Annual Pet Show

The 1 p.m., Thursday, July 31 special is the library's annual pet show, with judges from Therapy Dogs, International, Inc. Your child's pet could win Best in Show, but be assured that there will also be lots of fun and prizes for the runners up.

When I think of a pet show, I still think of dogs and cats, but we welcome all sorts of entries, including stuffed pets. I will probably never get over the year former Friends Forever Humane Society Manager Mary Jo Dawson awarded best-in-show to a girl's pet rat. "The rat was very clean and well-cared for," Mary Jo explained, "and had an extremely knowledgeable owner."

Library Summer Hours Continue through August

There's a lot to like about summer at the library, such as all the summer reading programs for adults, teens, and children.

One thing I don't much like: shorter summer open hours. From Memorial Day through Labor Day, the library is closed on Sundays.

The reasons are purely financial. If library budgets permitted, libraries everywhere would be open longer hours. This is where twenty-first century technology comes to the rescue.

Technology to the Rescue

Even if we can't be open 24/7, we are able to offer more 24/7 services to homes with Internet service. Computer users can connect with the library's online card catalog, PrairieCat, from home, via the library's website, at www.freeportpubliclibrary.org, to see if we - or another library in northern Illinois - own a particular item. The next step is to place a hold, also known as a reserve, on the item you want.

I've been using online library catalogs for a long time. If they're new to you, I suggest coming into the library and having a staff person provide some tips and tricks for using the catalog, including how to place holds from home. It is a useful feature to master so that the item you want can be waiting for you to pick up at our check-out desk.

Holds are filled in the order in which they are placed on the computer, so the sooner you put your name down for a new, popular title that is checked out to another borrower, the sooner you'll have it to read or listen to or view yourself.

It is also part of twenty-first century service that libraries buy multiple copies of best sellers, so you should never have too long to wait for a popular title. If you do, complain! Something has gone wrong, and we'll want to fix it.

Getting the Most from PrairieCat

Although staff are available during open hours to show members of the public how use the library's online catalog, PrairieCat, to get the most out of it, I recommend that you sign up for a short, individual training session. Call me at the library at 815-233-3000, and I'll match you up with a staff person who is adept with library technology.

In about ten or fifteen minutes, you can learn some tips and tricks for searching the catalog. You can also learn how to place holds (reserves) for materials, how to renew your own material at the library or from home, how to access the catalog from home, and how to get to your account to find out what you have checked out and what you have on hold already. Become a whiz at PrairieCat in one easy lesson!

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