

More than Books

Saturday afternoon puppet show kicks off summer reading

The library's summer reading program is going to get a rousing start at 1 p.m. Saturday when Mr. E and Maggie present "Paws to Read: The Great Dog Race." This all-ages program is designed to bring books to life using magic, puppets, storytelling, and a whole lot of fun.

Entertainer extraordinaire Rob Erdmann combines storytelling, magic, and puppets with audience participation to create an exciting interactive experience for young audiences. If you remember any of Mr. Erdmann's previous appearances here, you will doubtless recall how he incorporates these elements - the puppets, the magic, the storytelling - in a way that delights young and old alike. The whole family can enjoy this kick-off treat, courtesy of the Freeport Public Library Foundation.

Each summer Mr. Erdmann creates a new program to compliment the Illinois Library Association summer reading theme. I can hardly wait to learn what his fancy has done with the "Paws to Read!" theme.

I appreciate being able to bring someone with Rob's qualifications here as our "Paws to Read!" opener. He is an experienced teacher with a BS in Elementary Education. He is certified in Illinois to teach all elementary grades as well as middle school language arts, science, and social science. Rob maintains that it is this experience that provides him with the advantage of knowing how to engage students and excite them about reading.

This program is free and open to all ages. Registration is not required. For more information, call the library at 815-233-3000.

But that's not all folks!

No need to wait until Mr. E and Maggie's "Great Dog Race" at 1 p.m.

Come early, when the library opens at 9 a.m., sign up for the summer reading program, and select a free book just for signing up. At 10 a.m., children will be able to practice their reading skills by reading aloud to one of the sweet certified therapy dogs who will be on hand for at least an hour, until 11 a.m.

Youth Services Supervisor Anna Doyle will be doubling Saturday as a face-painting artist on Saturday. Although I assume this is a just-for kids perk, the Freeport Public Library Foundation believes summer reading fun should be for teens and adults as well as children.

Thanks to the Foundation, there are separate programs, drawings, and prizes for teens and adults. If you're bringing a child to the library, register yourself for the program and get your own free book. Adult Services Supervisor Pat Vorwald has selected a wide range of mass market and trade paperbacks, fiction and nonfiction, for us to choose from.

I have my eye on a collection of Patrick McDonnell's Mutt cartoons, which I love, but I'm also thinking this might be a good opportunity to finally try the first volume of the Ice and Fire series, "The Game of Thrones."

I've never been much of a fantasy fiction reader. That said, I've been sucked into watching the first two episodes of the HBO "Game of Thrones" series. A fan of the series tells me I'm missing out on lots of what's going on in the plot by not reading the book(s). What I want to know is, are they available as audio books?

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