

## **More than Books**

### **Alan Wenzel to Speak at American History Series**

Former Highland Community College Speech and Communications Instructor Alan Wenzel will deliver a lecture at the library next Tuesday, March 25 at 7 p.m., on “1967: The Tumultuous Sixties Arrive in Hollywood.” I’m looking forward to finding out which films Alan has selected to illustrate his points.

During his years at Highland Alan taught a variety of classes, including a popular film appreciation course. His is the final lecture in the library’s Tenth Anniversary Edition of the American History Lecture Series.

Has this series gone by fast or what! It really opened with a bang in February with Steven Cole’s appearance as Frederick Douglass. The audience of 80 or so people who braved the weather to hear Steve was impressed, first of all, by his impassioned interpretation of a speech Douglass gave in Freeport in 1854, but also by the ties, we learned from Steve, that Douglass had to Freeport. Who would have thought?

The American History Lecture Series is co-sponsored by the Library Foundation and the Stephenson County Historical Society. The lectures are free and open to the public. Free cookies, also, and Gallery Café Proprietor Sandi Schubert promises to whip up something really special for the series finale.

If you miss Alan Wenzel’s lecture next Tuesday, and I hope you don’t, you can catch him at the Lindo Theatre on Wednesday, April 2, at either 1 p.m. or 7 p.m. Alan and Ed Finch will be there providing an introduction to the 1945 film, “Pride of the Marines,” which is the last of a World War II movie series the Lindo, Highland, and the Stephenson County Museum are jointly sponsoring.

I caught the Lindo’s March showing of “Run Silent, Run Deep” (1955), which I may or may not have seen before on television. I know I haven’t seen “Pride of the Marines.” It is a John Garfield film that Ed tells me is the biographical story of a heroic U.S. Marine Al Schmid, who was blinded by a grenade on Guadalcanal.

While it is true that films like “Run Silent, Run Deep” and “Pride of the Marines” are widely available for the small screen, the Lindo/Highland/Museum series provides the opportunity to see these films as they were intended to be seen, on a big screen, in a theatre, in the company of others. Alan and Ed’s introductions and their Q and A sessions are the icing on the cake.

Highland Community College, the Stephenson County Museum, and the Lindo have been running classic film series for five or six years. Ed and Alan recently announced that next fall’s series will be films of Sidney Poitier. The price is \$5 for a single show or \$20 for the entire series.

## **On My Nightstand**

Being one of the six people in the world who didn’t read “Eat, Pray, Love,” I wasn’t particularly drawn to Elizabeth Gilbert’s latest novel, “The Signature of All Things.” It is the story of a fictional amateur nineteenth century botanist, and, at 500 pages, it has been described as “sweeping.” Resist though I did, a friend insisted I’d like it, and she was right.

Now she’s promising me I’ll also enjoy “The Goldfinch” by Donna Tartt, which weighs in at almost 800 pages. Bestseller or not, it will take a little more urging for it to be my next book.

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