

More than Books

Next Up for “One Book, One Freeport”

This year’s American History Speaker Series is included as one of the sets of programs in this year’s “One Book, One Freeport” effort. Our presenters have all agreed to focus on some aspect of United States history during the period known as The Cold War, circa 1947 – 1991.

"The United States Air Force Since 1947" is the topic of Rock Valley Community College Professor Dr. Martin Quirk's American History talk scheduled for next Thursday, March 12, at 7 p.m. Dr. Quirk, thanks to his friendship with Ed Finch, is a regular presenter at the American History Speaker Series. If you've heard any of his previous presentations, you know you won't want to miss his always interesting take on whatever he happens to be talking about.

Take it from me! The first time I heard Dr. Quirk speak was in 2006. His topic was “Kansas after the Civil War.” Now before the lecture, if there was anything I knew, it was that I had absolutely no interest whatsoever in Kansas after the Civil War. My mistake! Dr. Quirk's lecture was the series sleeper, and I and several other attendees agreed right then and there that we'd do our best to make it to any of his subsequent appearances.

Dr. Quirk has been at Rock Valley Community College since 1998. He currently heads the RVCC History Department and describes himself as a social historian. I had to look that one up! Social History is sometimes described as the “history of the people,” which I take to mean that social historians are concerned with the experiences of everyday people in the past. However Dr. Quirk’s approach is defined, his studies have led to a collection of incredibly diverse presentations over the years, including “Underappreciated Events that Shaped American History” (2010), “Women Homesteaders on the Prairie” (2011), and “To the Dark Continent: American Adventures in Africa 1800-1945” (2012).

Whether Dr. Quirk is talking about how immigration changed the city of Boston (2013) or the evacuation of Saigon (2009), I am going to do my best to be in the audience. Please join me on March 12 to learn about “The United States Air Force Since 1947.”

Space: past, present, future

Dr. Rudy Valdez, an aerospace engineer at Sundstrand Corporation in Rockford, has agreed to appear at the library this Saturday afternoon, at 1 p.m., to participate in the “One Book, One Freeport” series, presenting “An Overview of Space: Past, Present, and Future.”

Dr. Valdez is the 2013 winner of the Rockford Register Star Excalibur Award. The award was established by the newspaper in 1971 to honor individuals whose outstanding service and commitment have made the Rock River Valley a better place to live, work, and raise families.

Word has it that Dr. Valdez is not coming alone. He is going to be accompanied by a really big space suit.

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