



FRIENDS
of the Oakland
Public Library

Off the Shelf

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Giving Back to the Community – D.T. Dessling, Bookmark Volunteer

By *Sophie Souroujon*, FOPL Board Member

It was on the cloudy Tuesday morning on *January 3, 2006*, when I arrived at the Bookmark to interview volunteer *D. T. Dessling*. D.T. was busy as usual, “de-sticking” prices from donated books and cleaning the book covers as we spoke.

D.T. works as night manager and security guard (midnight to 8 am) for Operation Dignity, where, according to their website, “Veterans help Veterans – providing a HAND-UP, not a HAND-OUT.” D.T. explained that Operation Dignity is a residential 24/7 transitional housing place for veterans and, although closely related to the Veterans Administration, is not directly part of the VA. He has worked at Operation Dignity for a decade.

It’s close to The Bookmark, so about five years ago D.T. walked into the bookstore and see if it carried a book he had read many years. The book was Garrison Keillor’s “Lake Wobegon.”

Bookmark manager *Bob Frey*, who was close to the front desk the day D.T. entered the bookstore, directed him to where the sole copy was available, talking as they walked, about the Keillor book. Meanwhile, right above the shelf, in plain view, was a sign calling out “Looking for Volunteers.”

D.T. told me that as he looked at the sign, suddenly something really deep inside of him said, “It’s time to give back to the community.”

D.T. asked Bob for details about volunteering for The Bookmark and was told that a minimum shift consists of three hours, once a week. D.T. came in the next day and has “been here ever since.”

Listening to D.T., I understood that he truly enjoys volunteering at The Bookmark very much. He works well with Bob who, he emphasized several times, is a “very good manager who explains everything in a clear way,” adding, “Bob and I joke a lot. I also joke with Curtis who is on the shift from 10 to noon on Tuesdays. See? That’s Curtis, the tall guy who is standing there.”

D.T. showed me the large assignment calendar which Bob prepares for the volunteers: specific assignments for each day of the week with the names of volunteers for each of the shifts that day.

I thoroughly enjoyed watching the process of what D.T. was so lovingly and carefully doing as he spoke. He showed me exactly how to de-stick and remove grease (I learned something new) by using “De-Solv-It” or a scraper when required.

D.T. is “very handy with tools” so one of his favorite chores is “special projects” such as changing fluorescent lamps (“that’s mechanical. I know how to do that well”) and other small jobs that Bob asks D.T. to



Bookmark #2, 24" x 20", oil on canvas, A. Holdsworth ©1998
Bookmark Bookstore
721 Washington St.

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News from the Friends and the Library

'BookFriends' members

enjoy 10% discounts at:

Change Makers

6536 Telegraph Ave.

Laurel Book Store

4100 MacArthur Blvd.

Lucciola

Children's Bookstore

3980 Piedmont Ave.

Marcus Books,

3900 M.L.K. Jr. Way

Montclair Book Tree,

6123 LaSalle St.

Paradise Books,

3401 Fruitvale Ave.

Pendragon,

5560 College Ave.

(Used Books),

The Spectator,

4163 Piedmont Ave.

Walden Pond,

3316 Grand Ave.

And a 20% discount at our

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Mayor Mott's Oakland

Building City Beautiful: Mayor Mott's Oakland, an exhibit on display now through **April 30, 2006** at the Oakland History Room of Oakland Main Library (125-14th Street), pays tribute to the influential **1905** to **1915** mayoral administration of Frank K. Mott.

A century ago, the people of Oakland elected **Frank K. Mott** as mayor to guide the city into a new century. Incorporating the doctrines of the Progressive Movement and adhering to the principles of the nascent science of urban planning, Mott's visionary leadership nurtured Oakland's rapid transformation into a major American city on the Pacific Coast. The Oakland History Room honors his legacy with an exhibit of materials from its collections that illustrate Mott's commitment, and his contributions, to the enduring cityscape of Oakland.

Scarcely one year into his administration, Mott - and the entire region - faced the nearly complete devastation of the city across the bay, when one of the largest earthquakes ever to strike the continent leveled much of San Francisco and set much more of it ablaze. Institutions across the state will recognize the centennial of that disaster as part of the 1906 Earthquake Centennial Alliance (see more at <http://1906centennial.org/>). The exhibit includes documents from that time - with souvenirs left to the library personally by the mayor - that show the energy and generosity displayed by East Bay residents in giving aid to dispossessed San Francisco. Items include copies of telegrams sent to and from the flaming ruins and a worn copy of the newspaper printed by The Oakland



Tribune for its competitors across the bay whose newsrooms were on fire.

Mott's energetic administration resulted in the city's expansive park system, including the realization of Lake Merritt as an inner-city water park. It oversaw the development of an urban skyline along Broadway, including construction of Oakland City Hall, the tallest building west of Chicago when it was dedicated in 1914. At the same time, the city's population was continuing its rapid increase, culminating in a real estate market that enjoyed the sale of a home in Oakland every six minutes.

Many of the items in the exhibit are among the personal effects of Mayor Mott, who left them to the library following his death. These and numerous photographs and other materials from the collections of the Oakland Public Library recall a city at the start of its ascent into prominence and honor the legacy of an energetic, dedicated and honest politician who helped that happen.

For more information about this free exhibit, call **(510) 238-3222**, or see the Library's Web site: oaklandlibrary.org. The Oakland History Room is open Mondays, Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10 am to 5:30 pm; Wednesdays and Thursdays from noon to 8 pm; Fridays from noon to 5:30 pm, and Sundays 1 to 5 pm.

Next Board Meeting

The Board of Directors next meets on **Monday, March 13, 2006, at 5:15 pm** at the Main Library West Auditorium, 125 14th Street.

Members and supporters are encouraged to attend.

Dessling (contd.)

perform from time to time. I had a sense that the two of them have an excellent rapport and the voice in which D.T. described what he does at The Bookmark was strong evidence of the pleasure that he finds in his work.

D.T. is clearly in his element at The Bookmark: he has a sense of camaraderie and understanding with other volunteers. D.T. also likes the half-off discount volunteers receive, and was one of the things that attracted him in the first place.

One of the perks that he has found at the bookstore, in addition to buying books, is the purchase of movies, audiotapes – light-hearted comedies, entertainment and various books on history (“I like history”) plus books on cars, boats, planes, aviation in general, “machines, that’s what I like best,” he noted.

D.T. came to California during service with the Navy and fell in love with the area while stationed at Treasure Island and fell in love with the Bay Area; he knew that some day he would like to come back to “this beautiful place.”

“Do you know what it means to get up in the morning and see that beautiful sight of San Francisco’s skyline from Treasure Island? Wow!”

It’s not the only attractive place he’s attached to. “(Dunn’s Block) is a charming building. I think it was established in the 1880’s. I like Old Oakland in general. I like the old-fashioned feeling about this place. This it not a library. There is no hustle and bustle in this establishment. This is a good place to be.”

D.T. chose to give back to the community and the community is grateful to him for heeding the call, “Looking for Volunteers.”

Isabel Allende

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, April 20th!**



The Oakland Public Library and *Friends of the Oakland Public Library* will host our annual Authors Night in April in celebration of National Library Week. This year, the wondrous **Isabel Allende** (*Zorro, House of Spirits*, etc.) will be our keynote speaker, in conversation with **Pat Holt** (of Pat Holt Uncensored website).

This free event will take place from **7:00-9:00 pm** at the Oakland Museum of California.

Watch for more news in FOPL's April issue, or visit the Library's Website at oaklandlibrary.org in March.

Exhibit of Origami and Painting

Playful and Reflective: Painting with Origami is a new exhibition of works by Korean-born artist **Won-ju Hulse**, who now resides in Oakland. In celebration of the Asian Branch's 30th anniversary, Ms. Hulse's work will hang in the children's area of Oakland Public Library's Asian Branch, located at 388-9th Street, Suite 190 (in the Pacific Renaissance Plaza), from **March 20** through the end of **May, 2006**.

Inspired both by nature and dream images, Ms. Hulse's works incorporate folded paper shapes (origami) with jewel-like glazes of color (acrylic paint) to form playful and reflective paintings that find poetry in a wide variety of subjects. **Won-ju Hulse** will also present two origami workshops for children during May's gala celebration of the Asian Branch anniversary. Dates and times will be announced later.

New Books from Your Old Vehicle

Your Car, Boat, Motorcycle, Recreational Vehicle, or other old vehicle can earn money for our public library.

Charity Connection, a service of Volunteers of America, will sell your vehicle with a portion of the proceeds going to F.O.P.L.

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Tell them you want to make your vehicle a tax-deductible gift to the

Friends of the Oakland Public Library!

“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.”
Abraham Lincoln
(1809 - 1865)

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721 Washington St., Oakland, CA 94607 (510) 444-0473

Basic membership benefits include this newsletter, a **20%** discount at The Bookmark Bookstore, book sale previews and that good feeling that comes from supporting our public libraries. Book Friends and other supporting members (**\$50** or more) also receive discounts at participating local booksellers. *Your membership contribution is tax deductible as allowed by law.*

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