

Mansfield Reads Archive

Mansfield Reads! One City, One Book is a community wide reading event that encourages all the citizens of Mansfield to read the same book at the same time each year in April. The goals of the program are to promote awareness of the library and foster a sense of community through reading. It is based on a program started in Seattle in 1998 which has spread across the country into many communities large and small. In 2003, with a lot of help from Nancy Pearl at the Seattle library and very little idea of how much work it would actually take, the Friends of the Mansfield Public Library and the library staff decided that Mansfield was the perfect size to launch this type of program. So with the idea of using the inaugural program to celebrate the library's 75th year of service, Mansfield Reads! was introduced to the community in April 2004 and it has been a resounding success every year since.

2011

[Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde by Jeff Guinn](#)

In April 2011 Mansfield read the real tale of two kids from a filthy Dallas slum who fell in love and then willingly traded their lives for a brief interlude of excitement and, more importantly, fame. In *Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde* bestselling author Jeff Guinn combines exhaustive research with surprising, newly discovered material to tell the real story of Bonnie and Clyde and their troubled times.

Publisher's Weekly raved in its starred review of *Go Down Together*, that "Guinn's richly detailed history will leave readers breathless until the final hail of bullets" and that was certainly the case in Mansfield. Author Guinn visited the library for the 8th annual Mansfield Reads! Evening with the Author. The library was filled to capacity and guests were treated to a lively interview of Mr. Guinn by another esteemed Texas writer, and Friends member, James Ward Lee. Mr. Lee even prompted Guinn to tell the story of his re-enactment of the shoot out scene in the book. On Saturday Guinn returned to the library for a Writer's Workshop where he led "the best constructed, most practical and informative, and enjoyable workshop ever" according to one participant. Mr. Guinn also visited Mansfield high schools to speak with students about writing as a profession.

Other Reads! events included book club discussions all over town, a "create your own story" raffle giveaway in honor of the theme of National Library Week and a Barnes and Noble Book Fair weekend sale.

People all over Mansfield, from the barbershops to the civic clubs, were talking about Bonnie and Clyde and *Go Down Together*. The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library are proud to bring this award winning program to the community.

2010

[The Last Dickens by Matthew Pearl](#)

With **The Last Dickens**, Matthew Pearl reopens one of literary history's greatest mysteries in his most enthralling novel yet, a tale filled with the dazzling twists and turns, the unerring period

details, and the meticulous research that thrilled readers of bestsellers *The Dante Club* and *The Poe Shadow*. Pearl took the Mansfield community along on the journey when he visited the Mansfield library as part of the seventh annual Mansfield Reads! program. Guests at the Evening with the Author event listened enthralled as Pearl shared his account of writing the book. Mr. Pearl also shared his first edition volume of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and his Dickens action figure (yes, there is one of those!) with the packed house. The next morning the author delved even further into the experience of becoming a writer at the writer's workshop. Students at Mansfield high schools heard about Mr. Pearl's days at Harvard and Yale while visitors to the library studied comparisons of literary greats in a Shakespeare display from Humanities Texas. The award winning Mansfield Reads! program is reaching citizens across the city and even into neighboring communities. The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library are proud to showcase our library and our city with such inspiring and enlightening books and authors.

2009

[I'm Proud of You, Life Lessons from My Friend Fred Rogers by Tim Madigan](#)

The sixth annual Mansfield Reads! program visited Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood. It was certainly a beautiful day in our neighborhood on the Friday the author visited all four high schools then the library for the Evening with the Author. When Mr. Madigan shared his story as told in the book, there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Mr. Rogers' simple philosophies and extraordinary friendship affected the author and everyone who read the book. The author also shared his personal memorabilia in a display that allowed patrons a glimpse of the iconic Mr. Rogers as a real person. Kids got in on the fun when Storytime at the library included books on friendship and a screening of the television show *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*. Book clubs had discussions and people all over town were telling their friends that they "just had to" read this book! Mr. Madigan presented a writer's workshop on Saturday morning that gave aspiring writers insight into the process of writing a book to finish a month filled with reading, talking with neighbors and friends and visiting the library. Mansfield Reads! is making a difference in the lives of Mansfield citizens!

2008

[Friday Night Lights by H. G. Bissinger](#)

The Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF), a division of the American Library Association, has named The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library winners of the Best Friends Award in the category of Program Publicity for Mansfield Reads 2008: *Friday Night Lights*. These awards are given annually to recognize outstanding publicity and marketing materials created by Friends groups.

For the fifth Mansfield Reads! program the Friday night lights came on in April. When this book was chosen it met one of the goals of the Mansfield Reads! program right away; people were definitely talking about it! By the time April was proclaimed Mansfield Reads! month by the mayor, the library book club was talking about it, the citizens who attended the screening of the major motion picture based on it were talking about it and the lucky patrons who were part of the Evening with the Author were most certainly talking about it! The Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Friday Night Lights*, H. G. "Buzz" Bissinger, came to town and brought one of the main

characters in his book with him. Mr. Bissinger and James "Boobie" Miles kept students at all four MISD high schools enthralled when they visited and talked about the book with creative writing, journalism, and English classes as well as members of the football teams. Then a standing room only library audience was treated to a discussion that was both interesting and touching. As "Buzz" and "Boobie" recalled their experiences with this book people really saw for themselves what an impact a book can have. The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library are proud to showcase our library with such highly esteemed books and authors.

2007

Partner in Crime by J. A. Jance

The fourth Mansfield Reads! program hit the big time! The big time New York Times bestseller list, that is. Bestselling author J. A. Jance was coming to town. Mansfield Reads! chose her book Partner in Crime and everyone in town got in on the mystery. There was even a crime scene in the library. The murder scene from the book was recreated so everyone could follow the clues in the book in their own library. The Friends sponsored a Clue tournament, book clubs held discussions, and writers attended a workshop with the author. Ms. Jance spent a day at Mansfield High School where students asked questions and got their books signed. The highlight of the program was an evening with Ms. Jance. She shared stories from her life, insight into her writing and even her poetry. Mansfield citizens were treated to a truly special evening. The Evening with the Author event packed the library and has become one of the most talked about and enjoyable events in the city!

2006

Presidential Anecdotes by Paul F. Boller, Jr.

The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library soon realized that Mansfield Reads! had become a part of the community. Once the book was chosen this year, it was decided to get as many people as possible in on the fun. In cooperation with the Mansfield News Mirror a six week presidential trivia contest was held. Each week questions were posed in the News Mirror. Contestants sent in their answers to become eligible to participate in a live trivia game with Mr. Boller himself at the "Evening with the Author." The library book club and even the high schools were all talking presidential trivia. People all over town were reading their own copy of the book. Mr. Boller is a preeminent national presidential historian who has appeared on the Today show, NPR, and is a professor emeritus at TCU. Not only is he smart and witty, he has written many books on the Presidents as well as their inaugurations and their wives. He was bound to be a tough judge at the live contest but one Mansfield citizen did prevail and was awarded a trip to Washington D.C. to do his own presidential research! During the month, the library also sponsored a Teddy Roosevelt exhibit in conjunction with the Texas Council for the Humanities that included photographs and his personal writings. This year we were able to proclaim "We know our Presidents!" Next year? Stay tuned. You never know what mystery might be around the corner.

2005

Had a Good Time, Stories from American Postcards by Robert Olen Butler

The Friends of the Mansfield Public Library were given the Best Friends Award by FOLUSA, the national Friends of Libraries group, for Outstanding Publicity Materials for a Special Project in the large public library category in recognition of this project.

The big question this year was "how can this year ever be as good as last?" The answer was invite a Pulitzer Prize winning author and choose a great book. Had a Good Time is a series of short stories Mr. Butler wrote based on turn of the century postcards in his personal collection. The book was both entertaining and interesting and the author proved to be the same. Jeff Guinn has called him "the best living American writer, period." Mr. Butler, who won the Pulitzer Prize for another of his books of short stories titled Good Scent from a Strange Mountain, regaled the crowd at the "Evening with the Author" event and had them all in stitches with a reading from one of the humorous stories. He had done a simulcast with all three high schools via their new distance learning labs then met with select groups of students in each high school library earlier in the day. By the time he conducted his writer's workshop at the library the next morning, all of Mansfield had indeed had a good time. In addition to the lucky people at these events, the people who participated in the book discussions, those who came to enjoy the Turn of the Century Carnival, and those who visited the library to see Mansfield's own American Postcards from the collection of Della Icenhower all agreed that the second annual Mansfield Reads! was simply outstanding.

2004

The Good Old Boys by Elmer Kelton

This program was the winner of the Library Project of the Year Award from the North Texas Regional Library System.

The first Mansfield Reads! was a big celebration. The Friends even gave away a diamond in honor of the library's birthday. The library showed the movie version of The Good Old Boys complete with popcorn. There was a brown bag lunch, a book discussion with the library book club and throughout the library there were many displays on the Old West. Then Mr. Kelton came to town! What a treat for all the citizens of Mansfield. Mr. Kelton was voted the All-Time Best Western Author by the Western Writers of America. He is the winner of seven Spur Awards and Governor Rick Perry said he is "truly a Texas legend". Mr. Kelton certainly lived up to that description in the eyes of Mansfield. He entertained the high school seniors at Mansfield High during the day then mixed and mingled at the first "Evening with the Author" event. He was interviewed by Jeff Guinn, book editor of the Fort Worth Star Telegram, then answered questions from the crowd and signed books until the last person in line was happy. The next day was the Big Birthday Bash. Mr. Kelton cut the cake then signed more books while the citizens celebrated. The first Mansfield Reads! was indeed a big success.
