

“Librarian’s Shelf” by Melodee Pedersen

Library Friends offer programs with Chautauqua theme

The Friends of the Columbus Public Library would like to thank everyone who donated books and other items for our recent book sale. We would also like to thank all the volunteers who donated their time and energy to the cause, and our shoppers who braved the weather this past weekend to come browse our treasures. We hope you enjoy your selections, and remember when you are done with them; you are welcome to donate them back to us. That's called recycling. Our next sale will be in August, during Columbus Days. We accept donations year-round for our sales. They may be brought to the front desk during library hours, or dropped off in the library book drop. We truly do appreciate all of you. The book sale is a major source of our funding, and will be used to pay for children's and adult programming.

One such program is coming right up. On February 28th, the first event leading up to the Chautauqua in June will be held in the library auditorium. A book discussion of "Mules and Men" by Zora Neale Hurston will be led by Professor Peggy Jones. "Mules and Men" was originally published in 1935, and is the story of Zora Neale Hurston's travels in Florida and Louisiana in the mid-1920s, collecting folk tales of the southern African-Americans. She also studied "Hoodoo" in New Orleans, and the second part of the book deals with those experiences, including spells to get a lover or get rid of a lover you don't want. Hurston wrote this book to preserve the culture at the time, and so it is written in that dialect, but it is not hard to follow. It connects you in an extremely fascinating and entertaining way to a culture and way of thinking that is quite foreign to most Nebraskans. If you enjoy learning about other cultures and would like to explore a part of American heritage not given much attention, then you owe it to yourself to give this book a try. The library has several copies, as well as book notes for those who just want an overview of the book.

Peggy Jones (M.F.A., University of Nebraska-Lincoln) is currently an Assistant Professor at UNO, Graduate and Women’s Studies faculty member, past Interim Chairperson of the Black Studies Department, and a member of the Nebraska Humanities Council Speakers Bureau. She received an Individual Artist Fellowship from the Nebraska Arts Council for her play, “The Journey,” which tells the story of Aaron Douglas, the first black graduate from the art department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1922. Her most recent publication is a chapter titled My Mother Tongue: a Linguistic Autoethnography in “African American Women’s Language: Discourse, Education and Identity.”

Other programs leading up to Chautauqua will be the film "The Plow that broke the Plains", a fascinating documentary about the Dust Bowl, March 28th at the Platte County Museum. The next book discussion will be "All the King's Men" by Robert Penn Warren on April 25th at the library, followed by the film "The Grapes of Wrath", starring Henry Fonda, shown May 23rd at the Platte County Museum.