

“Librarian’s Shelf” by Melodee Pedersen

“American Girl” program coming to Library

The Friends of the Columbus Public Library are sponsoring a Kit Kittredge movie and raffle event on June 19th at 2:00 p.m. at the Columbus Art Gallery. A Kit Kittredge doll and book valued at over \$100 has been donated by the American Girl Company. It will be raffled off just before a showing of the Kit Kittredge movie. Admission and popcorn are free and you need not be present to win. Raffle tickets are on sale now for \$1 per ticket at the library's front desk. The film is rated G.

In 1986, American Girl first introduced a line of historical characters in books and as dolls. The 9-year-old fictional heroines live during important times in America's past, providing a child's point of view of significant events that helped shape our country, and bring history alive for millions of children. Since its inception, the company has expanded into baby dolls, contemporary dolls, a magazine and now quality family films.

A period piece set in the Great Depression and based on the extremely popular American Girl book series, "Kit Kittredge" is a moving story about a girl whose family is profoundly affected by the Depression. The quality of the film is evident in the list of actors involved, including Abigail Breslin as the title character, Stanley Tucci, Joan Cusack, Jane Krakowski, Julia Ormond and Chris O'Donnell. When the story begins, we see Kit Kittredge living a very comfortable life in a nice home with her mother and father despite the Depression that is affecting many of her neighbors. However, Kit's world is soon turned upside down when her father loses his business. This forces him to go to Chicago to look for work. In order to help keep their home, Kit and her mother take in boarders, thereby supplying the film with an array of fascinating characters. Just to name a few, we have a magician, a monkey, a dance instructor, a mobile librarian, and two young hobos. When her own family and boarders become the victims of a crime, Kit's must utilize her investigative skills to solve the crime and exonerate her friend, who is accused of the crime.

Kit Kittredge is set during the same time period as the Chautauqua happening the same weekend in Columbus. It is hoped the film will help children gain an understanding of the Depression and give them common ground to discuss related topics with their parents. The film mentions such things as soup kitchens, jumping trains, even saving leftovers. There is an extremely authentic look to the piece as well. Parents will appreciate the over 70 vintage cars used, as well as the clothes re-created from the pages of Sears Roebuck catalogs. Although set during the Depression, the heart-warming story and Kit's plucky nature make this film anything but depressing. Film critic Roger Ebert says of the movie, "It has a great look, engaging performances, real substance and even a few whispers of political ideas, all surrounding the freshness and charm of Abigail Breslin...If you have or know or can borrow a girl (or a boy) who collects the American Girl dolls, grab onto that child as your excuse to see this movie. You may enjoy it as much as they do -- maybe more, with its period costumes, settings and music."