UPCOMING EVENTS

Dale Kueter  
February 26, 2015  
Stewartfield, 6:00 PM

Ron O’Gorman, M.D.  
March 22, 2015  
Stewartfield, 2:30 PM

Don’t miss these spring events

Interested in writing a family history? If so, join the Friends on February 26th. Retired journalist, author, and novelist Dale Kueter will be discussing the “art” of story writing, the importance of recording the stories of those in our lives, and the significance of keeping families alive through story writing.

Like a good mystery? Cardiovascular surgeon Ron O’Gorman’s first novel, Fatal Rhythms, is garnering notice and awards. For ten weeks it’s been on the Amazon Best Sellers list for Medical Thriller and Christian Suspense. In December Suspense magazine selected it as the best in 2014 for professional thrillers. Come—find out who done it.

Annual dinner May 14th  
At Byrne Library

This year’s dinner will be spectacular. Attendees used to the open bar, wonderful cuisine, and silent auction won’t be disappointed. But there’s more. 2015 marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Friends. Twenty-five years of supporting the library and literature will culminate in what Mobile does best: a great party and a great gift—$25,000.00 to Burke Library. You’ve made this possible, so come celebrate your own good works. In addition, we’ll also be celebrating F. Scott Fitzgerald’s landmark novel, The Great Gatsby.

In addition, ragtime jazz pianist and showman Bobby Van Deusen will perform music from the Jazz Age, and make tunes of that era available for purchase on CDs. Classically trained, Van Deusen has performed with jazz artists such as Al Hirt and Pete Fountain. “When you’ve got a piano marvel in the house, you wind him up and let him go – and then go along for the ride” (South County Jazz Club Concert).

Reserve your spot early: Make a check out to Friends of Spring Hill College Library for $50/per person and mail to Audrey Patterson, 3763 Old Shell Road, Mobile, AL, 36608-1394.

For more information call Audrey Patterson (460-9230).
Dr. David Burke’s (SHC ’94) recent book, Atomic Testing in Mississippi (LSU, 2012), was born from his early interest in nuclear history. The tests the book covers were the only nuclear ones conducted east of the Mississippi. That fact surprised even some of Burke’s doctoral advisors.

The genesis for underground testing in Mississippi had its origins in the 1960s during the Cold War. Both Russia and the U.S. were embroiled in a public relations battle, each championing its ability to be a nuclear military superpower. Remember ducking under your desks to survive a nuclear attack? While this PR campaign held sway, third world countries expressed concern that above-ground nuclear testing was compromising the health of their citizens. Dr. Linus Pauling was in the forefront of those raising concerns.

Sensitive to these issues, the U.S. considered underground testing both because it could eliminate the health risk of atmospheric fallout and also help answer questions about the effectiveness and reliability of underground testing. Would it provide a safer alternative? Would the underground signals provide reliable results or be compromised by detonations? Would detonating into an underground chamber muffle the device and provide a way to cheat? Mississippi became the selected site because its salt domes provided an easier, cheaper way to create an underground chamber—much easier than excavating granite.

In closing, Dr. Burke made the following points:

- Historians don’t need to travel the world for research topics. Fascinating stories exist in their own backyards.
- The tests were never secret; they were front page in local and international papers.
- Rather than supporting Cold War PR strife, the tests fostered a pathway for dialogue.

As we waited for Dr. Dewey Weiss Kramer to begin her presentation, we knew it wouldn’t be a typical evening for the Friends of the Spring Hill College Library. Musica divina filled the Stewartfield ballroom, St. Hildegard’s octave-jumps drawing our thoughts to the Trinity.

Dr. Weiss Kramer put down her recorder and continued to enlighten us, now with words. Few of us were familiar with the work of Hildegard of Bingen, despite the fact that she is only one of four women named a doctor of the church. Quickly, our German scholar and Benedictine guide demonstrated how Hildegard earned that designation. Through visions, God commanded the saint to unlock the mystery of the universe in exuberant language. St. Hildegard wants us to re-cover, un-cover, and dis-cover the ancient truth of God’s relation with creation.

Hildegard of Bingen—monastic, theologian, poet, artist, feminist, ecologist—was perhaps the first to embrace multi-media. In addition to contemplative prayer and lectio divina, Hildegard added musica divina and visio divina. And to our delight, rather than simply lecturing us about these methods of prayer, Dr. Weiss Kramer played her recorder and shared color reprints of Hildegard’s illuminations, bringing us into the actual prayer process.

St. Hildegard teaches a holistic approach to God. Not only is God present in all of creation, but also we participate in His ongoing creation. Hildegard teaches an “exuberant incarnation,” the purpose for which the world is made. The reason for the incarnation is not the result of sin; rather, the purpose of the incarnation is for God to move closer to His creation. Thus, Satan is the culprit in Eden, because he envies Adam his magnificent voice and Eve her fertility. Hildegard emphasizes the feminine dimension of creation and the ecological, since creation is full of the divine spark.

Through St. Hildegard’s words, music, and art, Dr. Weiss Kramer helped us to appreciate the wonder of the Trinity. To conclude the evening, we examined another of Hildegard’s illuminations. The Holy Spirit embraces the world, wrapping arms around Adam and the new Adam, Jesus Christ, the exuberant incarnation, the Father’s son, willed into being before all time, to bring God close to His creation.

Guest column by Ron O’Gorman, M.D., cardiovascular surgeon and author of Fatal Rhythm, ten weeks on Amazon’s Best Sellers lists for Medical Thriller and Christian Suspense.
History Museum of Mobile curator Scotty Kirkland’s knowledge of his subject is extensive. His passion for it is infectious. Drawing upon the Museum’s extensive collection of one of Alabama’s most important artists, Roderick MacKenzie, he has curated a fabulous exhibit and a companion book: *The Ark of India*. Both commemorate the Museum’s 50th anniversary.

Although he made his home in Mobile, MacKenzie was to be an international citizen. Born in London in 1865, he left Scotland in 1871 for Mobile. After his mother died, he was sent to Episcopal Orphanage Wilmer Hall.

In 1893 he and his wife left Mobile for India, staying for 12 years. He completed major commissions there—painting the Durbar of 1903, an elaborate procession and ceremony in Delhi commemorating the coronation of Edward VII, and also tiger hunts in central India’s jungles. Thereafter (in 1896), he forsook future commissions to pursue his real passion: understanding and capturing the lives of the regular people of India.

Although he would become better known as the painter of the Birmingham steel series, MacKenzie’s greatest gift was embracing the broader world and recognizing the basic humanity of us all.

This is a must-see exhibit, running through September 6, 2015 (111 S. Royal Street, 251.208.7569). The Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Sunday from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. The book of MacKenzie’s drawings, paintings and beautiful prose is available at the Museum. For more information and a virtual exhibit, visit historymuseumofmobile.com.

### 1831 NOTEBOOK RETURNS TO SPRING HILL COLLEGE

In 1831 Morris Gates was a student at Spring Hill College, attending classes and keeping a composition notebook. How, after more than a century, his notebook ended up in the collections of the Oneida County Historical Society (NY) is partly a mystery.

Some parts of the puzzle are clearer than others. Mrs. Frances Nash (Kingston, NY) uncovered the notebook in her late great aunt Frances Alida Griffin’s belongings and donated it to the Society. Her great aunt, who became one the earliest trained nurses, had been educated and raised by Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Gates.

Although the relationship between Morris and Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Gates isn’t known, the notebook is back where it belongs—on the Hill.

Special thanks are due to Jeana Ganskopf, Director of Collections & Outreach at the Oneida County Historical Society (NY), who contacted Library Director Gentry Holbert about returning the work to the College.

*Books give us what we can’t experience in our own lives: a beginning, a middle, and an end.*

James Wood
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