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Collections & Connections

Jennifer Wilson
Western Kentucky University, jennifer.wilson@wku.edu

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With record numbers in sales, enthusiasts came in masses to hear, meet, and buy books from their favorite authors and illustrators at the 17th annual Southern Kentucky Book Fest held April 18 at the Knicely Conference Center. Bestselling author Diana Gabaldon, known for her popular Outlander series, filled a room with more than 500 fans, some waiting for hours at the entrance, eager to get seats close to the author. Other well-known authors such as Jamie Ford, Terry Brooks, Mary McDonough, and Doreen Cronin brought in their own fan clubs.

“Book Fest was a tremendous success,” said Kristie Lowry, SOKY Book Fest organizer. “We are getting such positive remarks on social media, in person, and through surveys given to participants.”

More than 1,200 attended Children’s Day and the Kentucky Writers Conference the Friday prior to the main Book Fest event. According to Lowry, a new writing workshop for teens was also well attended. “We wanted to offer something specifically for those in grades 9-12 and the response was terrific. We definitely would like to continue this program next year.”

Bowling Green resident Crystal Bowling has attended the Writers Conference more than once. “I enjoy attending for the discussions and ideas, not only for the authors presenting, but for the writers in the audience. It’s a wonderful event with a sense of community,” said Bowling.

Noted as one of the largest book festivals in the state, SOKY Book Fest has been named by the Kentucky Travel Industry Association (KTIA) to the Top 10 Festivals & Events for Spring for the third consecutive year.

In addition to sales from the event, Book Fest is funded with grants and donations by companies and individuals. “We could not have this event without the generosity of our supporters,” said Connie Foster, Dean of the Libraries. “We appreciate every dollar we receive to make Book Fest such a success.”


The Southern Kentucky Book Fest partnership announced Kiran Bhatraju as the winner of this year’s Kentucky Literary Award for his book Mud Creek Medicine: the Life of Eula Hall and the Fight for Appalachia. First awarded in 2003 and reintroduced in 2012, the Kentucky Literary Award is given to an author from Kentucky or one whose book has a strong Kentucky theme.

Bhatraju is a native of eastern Kentucky. His father, an immigrant from India, worked as a physician with Eula Hall at the Mud Creek Clinic and Pikeville Medical Center for two decades. There Kiran first met Eula Hall. Bhatraju began his career working on poverty issues for Congressman John Yarmuth (KY-3) on Capitol Hill where he began researching Eula’s life. Founder and CEO of Arcadia Power, a renewable energy company, Bhatraju is working on his second book, an oral history of twentieth century immigrant physicians throughout the US. Kiran lives in Washington, D.C. with his wife Sara.

The announcement was made at the Knicely Conference Center at the Southern Kentucky Book Fest Meet the Authors Reception on Friday, April 17. The award was made possible with the generous support of Friends of WKU Libraries.
WKU Libraries is pleased to announce its partnership in the launch of Kentucky Research Commons, a new digital portal that presents and provides access to research from university repositories. Hosted by bepress on its Digital Commons platform, the site aggregates contents from the institutional repositories of a growing number of Kentucky institutions, including Asbury Theological Seminary, Bellarmine University, Eastern Kentucky University, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, and Western Kentucky University. Institutional repositories are playing an increasingly significant role in the way universities share, manage, and preserve their scholarly outputs.

Connie Foster, Dean of Libraries at Western Kentucky University, believes there is strength in numbers, stating, “The Kentucky Research Commons brings another dimension to open access, collaboration, and the intellectual output of universities in the Commonwealth through a shared research portal. Faculty can showcase their research; students can explore research and creative efforts across Kentucky; legislators, funding bodies, and all citizens of the Commonwealth and beyond can visualize the impact of educational outcomes in one place. The Readership Map highlights in real time the use of the portal and dramatically visualizes international reach. While each institution shown in this portal realizes individual growth and impact, the collective strength cannot go unnoticed in this endeavor. The continued commitment by bepress to create new and enhanced ways to support its user community is unparalleled.”

For more information visit the Kentucky Research Commons at kentucky.researchcommons.us.

WKU Libraries recently launched International Journal of Faith Community Nursing (IJFCN), the 6th electronic journal offered on TopSCHOLAR (http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/ijfcn/) – WKU’s scholarly research and creative activity database. International Journal of Faith Community Nursing is a peer-reviewed publication and the official journal of Faith Community Nursing International (FCNI). The primary aim of IJFCN is to support the practice of faith community nurses worldwide through publication of current research and best practices.

Community Outreach

Ecuadorian Xavier Bonilla, well-known political cartoonist also known as “Bonil,” spoke at Barnes & Noble on March 26 as part of the Far Away Places speaker series.

Special Collections Library Assistant Maria Lewis spoke at “Kinky, Curly, or Straight: Perspectives on Black Hair” as part of Black History Month.

The cold, snowy weather didn’t keep out the crowds at the SOKY Book Fest Used Book Sale that was held in early March.

Library Professor Haiwang Yuan discussed his book Tibetan Folktales.

Nate Northington—the first African American football player in the Southeastern Conference—spoke on March 19 at Barnes & Noble as part of the Kentucky Live! speaker series.
Jennifer Joe, Assistant Professor and Coordinator at WKU –Owensboro Library, was invited by IGI Global, an academic publishing company that specializes in education and sciences, to do 12 ten-minute lectures on Academic Libraries in the Digital Age. The videos are scheduled for completion in June 2015.

Chris Robinson-Nkongola, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of WKU-Glasgow Library, graduated from Glasgow-Barren County Leadership program.

Sandy Staebell, Associate Professor and Collections Curator for the Kentucky Museum, received the Library Faculty Award for Public Service.

Charles Smith, Professor and Science Librarian, received the Library Faculty Award for Research/Creative Activity.


Todd Seguin has taken a new position as Scholarly Communication Specialist within the Department of Library Technical Services. His responsibilities will include uploading new materials to TopSCHOLAR, as well as engaging in outreach to solicit more content and promote open access across campus.

WKU Libraries recently received an “Award of Excellence” for the Library Public Relations Materials category at the Academic Library Advancement and Development Network (ALADN) conference in San Diego, CA in April 2015. The award was a result of WKU Libraries’ effort to create a general awareness campaign featuring students with varied majors from colleges across campus.

Library faculty participated in a Day of Play Workshop catered to student teachers and other faculty in Ransdell Hall on April 27. Pictured here is Library Faculty Tony Paganelli pointing out advantages and illustrating techniques for Makerspace Musical Instruments to a group of education students. Other working displays included iPlay Robots, Story Starters with LEGOS, Makerspace playbook, and Desktop Manufacturing Math.

WKU Libraries offers Makerspace workshop

Architectural Sciences Major Ryun Warren learned firsthand the importance of preservation during his internship with WKU Archives. Warren researched, processed, and cataloged over two hundred sets of construction drawings pertaining to several projects on campus dating from 1930s to 2000s. According to his blog update, the importance of preserving was impressed upon him throughout his internship. “This experience has truly been informative as both a study of architecture and a study of my WKU home. The history of this campus as told through its buildings is arguably as telling as any other means of relating the history of how The Hill came to be,” said Warren. For more on Warren’s project, go to wku.edu/library and search Ryun Warren on the library blog.

WKU Libraries

We are saddened by the death of friend and colleague David C. Runner. David attended WKU from 1971-75, working for four years as a library student worker. David had been employed with WKU Libraries since 1975 and became Library Technology Consultant in Information Technology in the newly formed Library Systems Office in 2012. David will be greatly missed.

Good Luck Kristie!

Kristie Lowry, Literary Outreach Coordinator and SOKY Book Fest organizer, has taken a new position in Virginia. Thank you Kristie and best wishes on your new adventure.

WKU student Ryun Warren learns importance of preservation

Laura DeLancey, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Electronic and Continuing Resources, gives a presentation on Madagascar in the WKU Libraries We’ve Been Everywhere series.
Western Kentucky University senior Jessica “Abby” Zibart has been selected as the recipient of the WKU Library Student Assistant Scholarship. Zibart is working on a major in anthropology and a minor in folk studies, scheduled to graduate December 2015.

Award winners honored
Western Kentucky University students Logan Secrest (left) from Buffalo, Ohio and Wesley Osborne (right) from Owensboro, Kentucky received undergraduate research awards at a recognition ceremony in Cravens Library on Monday May 4, 2015. WKU Libraries and WKU University Experience faculty offer the awards in an effort to recognize the important role of good undergraduate research in college academic success.

Zibart wins scholarship
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