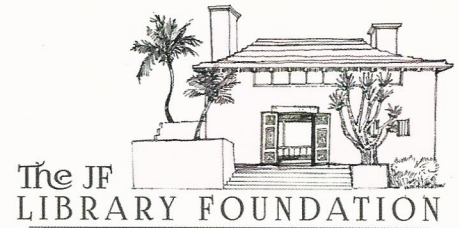


October 2016

BookNotes



**Johann
Fust
Library
Foundation**

*Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches,
letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.*

— Pauline R. Kezer

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Continuity and change work their magic on places as well as on people. Over the summer, our library has seen a number of changes, accomplished through teamwork by staff, volunteers, board members, and our Lee County librarians. It takes the sustained engagement of many people throughout the year to keep our library a beautiful and comfortable place for our patrons.

The first change you will see right away – a new tree by our entrance. For decades, a lovely *Dracaena draco* welcomed library users, but it was in distress. As hard as it was to say goodbye to an old friend, horticulturist Woody Thayer determined it could not be saved. He recommended a replacement, which was enthusiastically endorsed by our library garden consultant Mary Ellen Flanagan. Our new “greeter” is a strikingly beautiful *Beaucarnea recurvata* – also called an elephant’s foot, or ponytail palm. In the spirit of our long time Librarian, we might call it “Pansy’s Ponytail,” or for those who read *Elephant Company*, perhaps “Bandoola’s Foot.”

Requiring another big change, the venerable “shabby chic” white wicker furniture in the Loggia had become far more shabby than chic. The forecast is for ever-increasing wear and tear, so we knew that replacement furnishings would have to be sturdy as well as graceful. Our Library Foundation volunteers have raised funds from the semiannual used book sales which they wanted to go toward the purchase of the new furniture. The Boca Grande Woman’s Club supported the effort with a generous grant. Board member Becky Deupree spent countless hours consulting designers, volunteers, librarians, patrons, and manufacturers to find the best choices at the best price. We are grateful to everyone who helped us to update the Loggia to meet the needs of our patrons.

Another example of change was small but important — you’ll find a new handle on the door exiting from the main stacks. It may seem almost beneath notice, but it is a safety upgrade, recommended by our librarians, who saw patrons often struggle with the (original?) small, flimsy handle. Surprisingly, even this item took much thought and planning. There are many door handles, but relatively few were the right design, the right finish, the right size to accommodate big and little hands, and could be securely fastened onto the narrow wooden borders of the old glass doors. With the help of SunTech Builders, the perfect handle was chosen and installed.

As for continuity, those of us on the JF Foundation Board never forget that a library is first and foremost about books (and these days, about CDs and DVDs and eBooks, too). We want the Johann Fust Community Library to remain the beautiful, welcoming library that it has been for more than 60 years, and we know we have to make changes in order to do that. We cherish our library’s past even as we plan for its future.

In our immediate future are wonderful programs, including a trio of Boca Grande authors whose work is appearing in a renowned literary journal this fall; a Florida-based mystery by an author with ties to Boca Grande; Regina Calcaterra’s much-awaited return to Boca Grande with her sister Rosie; a celebrated author’s investigation into the restorative powers of nature; thoughts about reading and writing fiction by one who wrote the book on the subject; and an island resident who is an expert on that most perfect of all foods – cheese! More programs may be added and all of those events are free. Headlining our Annual Benefit on March 2 will be Joseph Kanon, author of seven best-selling Cold War era thrillers praised by every major reviewer. We hope you will join us for his talk and for the sponsor reception afterward at the beautiful home of Ann and Bob Fletcher. And don’t forget our twice-yearly book sales! Details are on the calendar inside – and updated throughout the year on our website: www.jfcl.org at Upcoming Events.

We’re off to another great season!

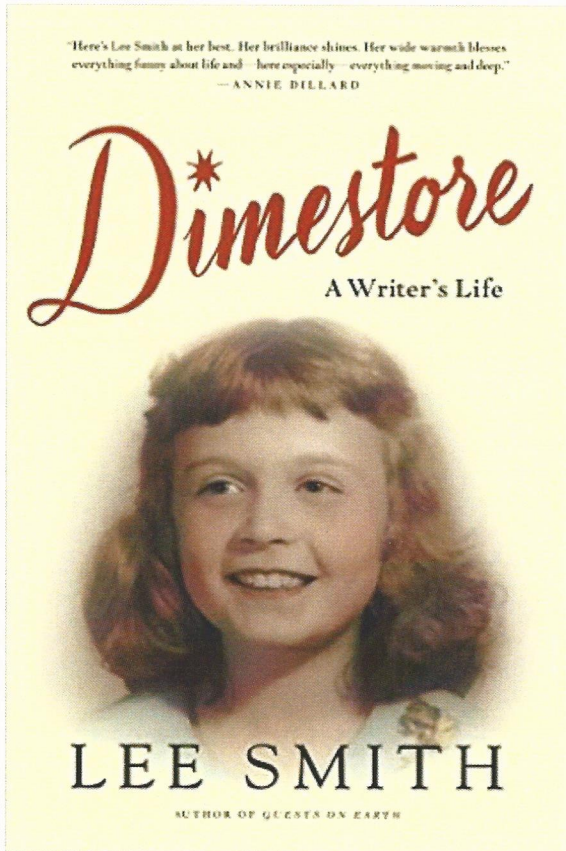
Candice Shy Hooper
President

Book Review by Alice Gorman

Singing the Truth: A Memoir to Remember

"I will pass, we will pass says the water, as it sings against the stone."

— Pablo Neruda



Of all the books I had the privilege to read over the summer, I continue to remember and relive the experience of Lee Smith's memoir: *Dimestore: A Writer's Life*. It occurs to me that for many readers not so familiar with the rise in popularity of the contemporary memoir (the word taken from the French "memoire," meaning memory), questions might arise. Is a memoir simply another name for an autobiography? What is the history of memoir as a genre and why are some memoirs so much better than others? What is it about Lee Smith's memoir that makes it so compelling?

In Gore Vidal's words: "A memoir is how one remembers one's own life, while an autobiography is history, requiring research, dates, facts double-checked." Additionally, a memoir, at its best, is a writer's revelation of specific influential aspects of his/her life. That revelation can be based upon place of origin, or family experience, or personal crisis, or disaster or triumph, or a combination of the above, but always it is a narrative clarification of the writer's development and character.

Historically, a memoir has ranged in scope from the ancient war treatises written by Caesar and the confessions of St. Augustine to Henry David Thoreau's account of his experiences at Walden Pond in the 19th century. The explosion of published

contemporary memoirs began in the early 1990's with the literary acclaim of *This Boy's Life* by Tobias Wolff, and Mary Karr's *Liar's Club*. Without a category for memoir, the 1997 Pulitzer Prize for autobiography and biography was awarded to Frank McCourt for *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir*. The criteria that distinguishes one memoir from another is the same criteria that distinguishes a work of fiction: the quality of the writing.

Lee Smith is a long-time, award-winning fiction writer and teacher of creative writing. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, she has published 13 novels and 4 collections of short stories. Although *Dimestore: A Writer's Life* is a memoir and her first book of nonfiction, it is written with the same skill that she applies to her unforgettable novels: the same attention to detail, the same brilliant power of observation and insight into character and place, the same ear for authentic dialog, and the same beguiling humor and witness to emotional truth. Her first person narrative, written in essay form through chapters of her memoir, reads like the most enchanting novel. As the Neruda poem suggests, Lee Smith's writing about the experiences of her family and her life growing up in Grundy, Virginia, flows like water over a stone. It sings the truth.

Other Good Reads

Lincoln's Generals' Wives:

Four Women Who Influenced the Civil War for Better and for Worse, by Candice Shy Hooper

The One-in-a-Million Boy, a novel by Monica Wood

Girl of My Dreams, a novel by Peter Davis

Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis by J.D. Vance

JF Library Foundation 2016-17 Calendar

OCTOBER

- 27 — In co-operation with The Hermitage Artist Retreat
Library Foundation *Literary Series* 4 pm Library Loggia
Gary Mormino — *The Beach: Florida History Amid the Sand Dunes and Smoked Fish*

NOVEMBER

- 5-10 — Veterans Day Commemorative Poppies available at the Library Foyer
- 14 — Library Foundation Volunteers' FALL BOOK SALE 9:30 am to 5 pm Library Loggia
- 15 — Library Foundation Volunteers' FALL BOOK SALE 9:30 am to 5 pm Library Loggia
- 16 — Library Foundation Volunteers' FALL BOOK SALE 9:30 am to Noon Library Loggia
- 29 — Library Foundation *Literary Series* 4 pm Library Loggia
A Conversation with Boca Grande Authors Alice Gorman, Lucinda Sullivan and Daly Walker
Led by Sena Jeter Naslund, founder and editor of The Louisville Review

DECEMBER

- 10 — Library Foundation *Literary Series* 4 pm Library Loggia
Regina Calcaterra and Rosie Maloney — *Girl Unbroken*

JANUARY

- 12 — Library Foundation *Literary Series* 4 pm Library Loggia
Dr. Catherine Donnelly — *The Oxford Companion to Cheese*
- 19 — Library Foundation *Literary Series* 4 pm Library Loggia
David Mather — *Crescent Beach*
- 25 — Gulf Coast Symphony Travelling Quartet 4 pm Library Loggia
- 27 — Library Foundation *Literary Series* 4 pm Library Loggia
Elizabeth Stuckey-French — *Writing Fiction: An Insight for Writers and Readers*

MARCH

March 2—BG Community Center - 4:30 pm
JF LIBRARY FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL BENEFIT
AUTHOR AND PUBLISHING EXECUTIVE JOSEPH KANON
LEAVING BERLIN

Reception for sponsors follows at the home of Ann and Bob Fletcher.
Tickets and sponsorship information will be available later this year.

- 7 — Library Foundation *Literary Series* 4 pm Library Loggia
Florence Williams — *The Nature Fix*
- 20 — Library Foundation Volunteers' SPRING BOOK SALE 9:30 am to 5 pm Library Loggia
- 21 — Library Foundation Volunteers' SPRING BOOK SALE 9:30 am to 5 pm Library Loggia
- 22 — Library Foundation Volunteers' SPRING BOOK SALE 9:30 am to Noon Library Loggia

Save the Date — Library Foundation Annual Benefit — March 2, 2017

Best-selling author Joseph Kanon



Leaving Berlin - "a fast-moving, thinking man's thriller"

— *The Wall Street Journal*

Los Alamos - one of "20 Best Spy Novels of All Time"

— *The Guardian*

In Memoriam: Dr. Henry "Hank" Wright

by Alice Bingham Gorman

Boca Grande's beloved doctor, Hank Wright, was many things to many people. He could tell a joke, shaggy dog or off-color, with the wit of Bob Hope and the dead-pan timing of Jack Benny. He could diagnose a degree of inebriation down to the last drink. He could save a life.

There are as many Hank Wright stories as there are residents who speak of his personal care and concern. In 1977 when my father was dying of lung cancer in Boca Grande, Hank came to his house every day to bring his medical expertise and good cheer for my father and support for my mother.

When Hank's first wife Anne died in 1995, after serving on the Board from 1983, Hank was elected to the Board and served until 2004 when he was made an "Honorary Director" (later *Director Emeritus*) until his death in 2016. He rarely missed a meeting in nearly twenty years. During the planning stage of the renovation and merger with the Lee County Library, Hank originally expressed doubt. His concern was that the Library not lose its character. Upon completion, he was one of the first to applaud.

To June Wright and all of Hank's family, the Board of the Foundation would like to express our appreciation for his years of commitment and service to the Library. Hank Wright never doubted the value of service to his community, and we will always be in his debt.

See "Scrapbook" of photos from last season at www.jfcl.org/events