

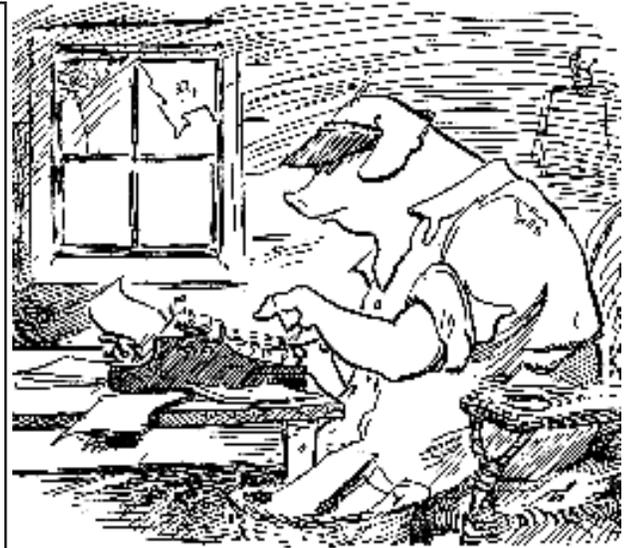
THE BEAN HOME NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the memory of our friend, Walter R. Brooks

Vol. 22, No. 1

Spring 2014

From the Editor	2
From the President	3
No, Not That Walter R. Brooks, <i>by Michael Cart</i>	4
My Freddy, <i>by Nancy Joroff</i>	5
Homer and Freddy, <i>by Michael Cart</i>	6
The Poet's Corner	7
"The Party", <i>by Victor Manjarrez</i>	8
Freddy and the Sweet Crunchy Biscuit	9
Favorite Library Contest entries	10



Why Hamilton?

If you're wondering why Hamilton, New York has been selected as the site for the 2014 Freddyfest, wonder no longer: it's because of the locality's association with Walter's family; specifically with his paternal grandfather and namesake Dr. Walter R. Books (see accompanying article for more about him), who, as pastor of the local Baptist church and member of the faculty of Madison (later Colgate) University, was one of Hamilton's leading citizens. The First Baptist church – located across the street from the clergyman's spacious home – is adorned with a Tiffany-designed plaque dedicated to Dr. Brooks' memory and the Brooks Family – including our Walter – is buried in the local cemetery.

Located in central upstate New York near the lovely Finger Lakes region, Hamilton is a scant twenty miles from Walter's boyhood home of Rome, New York. It was established in 1795 and named in honor of Founding Father Alexander Hamilton. It contains the Village of Hamilton, the site of Colgate University, which the magazine *U. S. News and World Report* ranks as the eighteenth best liberal arts college in the U. S. (the mercenary among us may be interested to know that Colgate has also been ranked fifth on *Forbes* magazine's list of "Top Colleges for Getting Rich," the only non-Ivy League school in the



Colgate's bookstore

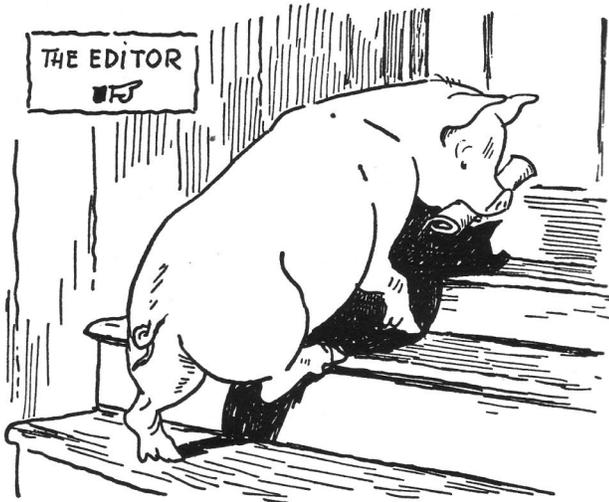
top five!). It's worth noting that a bust of Grandfather Brooks adorns the University Archives.

The Hamilton Village Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and those of us who have been there can testify to the charms of this small town (population 6,690).

Welcome to what *Forbes* magazine has called "one of the friendliest towns in America."

The convention itself will take place at the White Eagle Hotel and Conference Center, 2910 Lake Moraine Rd., Hamilton, New York, November 7-9, 2014. Call 1-800-295-9322 or 315-824-2002 to make your reservation. Be sure to reference the Friends of Freddy to get our group rate indicated above. ☺

From the Editor



O, Spring, O, Spring
You wonderful thing!
O, Spring O, Spring O, Spring.
O, Spring, O, Spring,
When the birdies sing
I feel like a king,
O, Spring!
-Shakespeare, Jr.

Okay, okay, it's not Shakespeare; instead it's Freddy's first poem, which he modestly (!) attributes to the Bard. —or at least to his spirit. In retrospect it's appropriate that the poetic porker should have selected my second favorite season (fall is my first) as the subject of his initial effort, for that lovely season of rebirth and re-awakenings has finally arrived. (It's been a hard winter here in Indiana.)

Freddy subsequently celebrated the season du jour in a second poem (much better than the first!). It goes like this:

Spring is in the air;
Birds are flying north;
And though trees are bare,
Now they're putting forth
Leaves. The fields are green,
Sun is getting higher.
Monday Mr. Bean
Put out the furnace fire.
Birds are building nests;
In the swamp are peepers;
Men discard their vests;
Eggs are getting cheaper.

There seems to be something about the season that inspires verse. Even Jinx, the least poetic animal in the known universe, penned a verse in its praise. Here's its context:

"Hi, gents," said the cat breezily. "Boy, what a day! What a day I've had! Ah, spring, spring! I made a poem about it, Freddy":

Hooray for the Spring! What a glorious feeling!
All the little lambs on the hillside squealing!

Tighten up your braces! Tuck in your shirt!
All the little green things growing in the dirt!

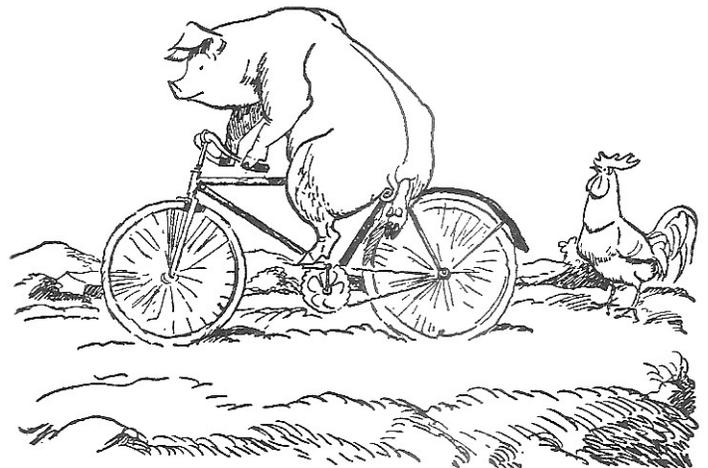
"I didn't really see any lambs, though," (Jinx continues). "Spent most of the day chasing butterflies. Ah, what is more uplifting, my friends, than to sally forth in the glorious springtide and chase butterflies across the hills of Bean!"



I regard *Wiggins for President* as the quintessential Freddy book.

It's worth noting, on the 75th anniversary of its publication, that this genial stuff comes from *Wiggins for President* (later re-issued as *Freddy the Politician*) and that its setting is, indeed, the springtime.

Though it contains only two poems – the second is Mrs. Wiggins' campaign song ("Hail, all hail to Mrs. Wiggins, etc.) – I regard *Wiggins for President* as the quintessential Freddy book. The theme of responsibility is an important one that is carried out in inspired fashion with the founding of both the First Animal Bank and the First Animal Republic. The characters are now well established and richly realized, while a slew of new ones are introduced: John the fox, Mr. Weezer, the owls Old Whibley and his niece Vera, the smarmy detective Jason Binks, and Mrs. Bridget O'Halloran (Freddy in disguise). And, of course, the woodpeckers – Grover, John Quincy and X -- are among the most shudder-inducing villains in the series. And as a bonus we have the rats, too, along for the ride. The humor is robust (the scene of Freddy's attempting to ride a bicycle is among the funniest in the entire series, I would submit) and the plot, less episodic than some, is coherent, suspenseful (will the woodpeckers actually manage to take over the farm?), and altogether captivating. Hail, all hail to *Wiggins for President!* 🐷



From the President



One of the joys of reading Walter R. Brooks' stories is the debates his characters have over words and their usage. As an example, think of Freddy and Theodore the Frog discussing Freddy's poem "Ants Are Awfully Aggravating" in *Freddy and the Ignormus*. Freddy tells Theodore that he has the first line of the poem: "The busy ant works hard all day." He needs a rhyme for 'day.'

"Stay, hay, play – that isn't so hard," said the frog. "Look, if I give you the second line, will you walk up to the Big Woods . . . The busy ant works hard all day and never stops to rest or play."

Uncle Solomon, the owl, debates with Freddy in *Freddy Plays Football*. Freddy recites a poem about a pig with a line: "Plods the wanderer pig, on weary feet . . ." Uncle Solomon interrupts: "And his poetry gives me a pain." Freddy and Uncle Solomon dissect the poem for several pages with the owl concluding with "For the pig all puffed up

with self-esteem, a roll in the muddy gutter." When Freddy gives his alternate ending as "For others, the coffee with lots of cream. And the toast with lots of butter," Uncle Solomon declares, "It has always struck me as significant . . . that in all poetry written by lower animals – I distinguish them thus from humans and from birds – there is an intense preoccupation with food."

This leads me to an article by word expert Bryan A. Garner that was published in the May 2013 *American Bar Association Journal*. Garner discusses a variety of rhetorical devices. Brooks relies upon a number of them in his books. For example:

- Adding a superfluous syllable in the middle of a word, such as saying "athuhleet," instead of "athlete."
- Referring to oneself in the third person. Caesar did this in his writing *The Gallic Wars*.
- Lopping off the full word: "Flu" instead of "Influenza."
- Using a symbol to include the whole: "Wall Street," instead of "stock investors."
- Including 'Wellerisms,' taken from the Dickens character Sam Weller in *Pickwick Papers*. Garner gives the following example: "We are not what we seem," said the needle to the thread."
- Repeating phrases. Here is a Charles the Rooster favorite: "The cause, Sir, the cause! Let the world know the cause."

Garner concludes his article with a Brooks reference: "These rhetorical devices . . . appear in popular culture. Think of the song from *Mr. Ed*, the popular 1960s TV show." (Walter, of course, created the character of Ed.) The lyrics use [two figures of speech]: "A horse is a horse, of course, of course."

I personally tried my hand at rhetoric on April 12, speaking about Freddy at the Faxon Branch Library in Elmwood, Connecticut. The program was sponsored by the American Book Collectors of Children's Literature, a local group. The library was very grateful for the contribution of a complete set of Freddy books given by the Friends of Freddy as part of the recent favorite library contest. 🐣

Convention News



We're still putting together the convention program, but there have been some notable developments already. Dave Carley writes:

UNLEASH YOUR INNER HAM!

Once again, Friends of Freddy is presenting a play, as part of the weekend's events. This year – marking its 75th anniversary of publication – it's *Freddy the Politician* (nee *Wiggins for President*). A very fitting choice in an election year, and one of the great books in the Freddy series. As we did last year, the adaptation will be performed from scripts (i.e. no memorization needed – just an

ability to project one's voice). We will probably be performing it in a Hamilton area venue on the Saturday afternoon, and will be inviting local residents to join us. We'll probably have a quick rehearsal on the Friday evening, and another rehearsal just before we present the show. Everyone had fun last convention!

If you have any thespian leanings, let Dave Carley know. (dcarley@sympatico.ca)

And convention coordinator (and FoF president) Henry Cohn reports:

Andrew Rotter, a history professor at Colgate, has agreed to speak at the banquet on Saturday night. He is an expert on foreign relations and knows a great deal about the U.S. in 1939 when *Wiggins for President* was published. But even more than this, he wrote to me that he read the Freddy books back in his school days!

If you want to attend the convention, information on signing up and making reservations is on the front page.

If you would like to make a presentation, please contact Henry at: Henry Cohn, 80 Richmond Lane, W. Hartford, CT 06117 (860-523-9372), main132@comcast.net. 🐣

No, Not That Walter R. Brooks

by Michael Cart



Friends of Freddy may be surprised to learn there is not one infamable Walter R. Brooks but two! The second is Dr. Walter R. Brooks, our Walter's grandfather and namesake. (The Dr. is an honorary degree from Madison University about which more in a moment.)

Walter's grandfather was born in Nelson Flats, New York on August 3, 1821. He grew up in southwestern New York State on the banks of Lake Chautauqua. There he became a "boy preacher" and, to formalize his education, headed off to Hamilton, New York to become a student at Madison University, which had been founded as a Baptist institution of higher learning in 1819. The seventeen-year-old became a member of the class of 1843. Though he failed to graduate, he was ordained as a Baptist minister in his hometown of Mayville, New York in 1842. A number of pastorates followed until he returned to Hamilton to become, on January 1, 1859, pastor of the First Baptist Church. That same year he became Secretary of the Madison University Education Board ("**He had a beautiful hand,**" University Archivist Emeritus Harold D. Williams, reports, "And his minutes were a joy."). Subsequently, in 1864, he became a member of the Corporation and from 1865 to 1873 and again from 1883 to 1888, Secretary of the Board of Trustees.

Like his grandson, Dr. Brooks was an amateur naturalist, "in love," as one observer noted, "with nature and full of its poetry and its life, often praying in the silent recesses of the woods or meditating amid the dewy dampness of the swampland in the myriad companionship of the ferns and mosses, diatoms and amoebas" (phew!).

Recognizing his avocation, the University invited him to join its faculty and he became a teacher of natural history, which, at the time, incorporated geology, zoology, biology and botany. However, it was not in the classroom -- where he was, reportedly an uninspiring lecturer (as a minister he was criticized for preaching, "in a solemn monotone," over his congregation's head) -- but in the field where he shone as a teacher. His colleagues recalled his "enthusiastic conduct of field excursions" while a former student remembered him as "an enthusiastic believer in field work."

His enthusiasm in the field carried over to the classroom when he discussed the flora and fauna of the outside world. His successor at Madison, Professor Albert Perry Brigham recalled the power of imagination that led Dr. Brooks to "personify all plants and lowly

animals and even fossils. As he handled them and showed them to his students, he felt the dignity of their lives." This sounds remarkably like his grandson, our Walter, with his gift for anthropomorphizing animals (Freddy, anyone?). Two other similarities are worth noting here: like our Walter, Dr. Brooks was often praised as a writer for his "rare, pure use of simple English." And also like Walter, Dr. Brooks reportedly detested "sham and artificiality."

Given the times, one of the most remarkable things about Dr. Brooks' teaching was its embrace of the Darwinian theory of evolution, which -- according to the theologian Dr. William Newton Clarke -- he "fully accepted as the Divine method in creation. He was a scientist of the modern school who looked upon the world of nature in the light of recent discovery. He lived in two worlds: the world of nature and the world of Christ."

In his personal life he was no stranger to tragic loss: his first wife, Susan, died young, leaving him to raise three young sons, two of whom -- Arthur and Charles -- also died young; Arthur at the age of nineteen in the Civil War and Charles at the age of twenty. Only the third son, William Walter, survived to later become our Walter's father. Small wonder that, it is said, Dr. Brooks "often appeared sad, his manner introspective." One of his prayers from that period survives. Called "A Prayer of Submission," it begins, "My heart, darkened and torn with its grieves and fears flees as a bird to its mountain, to Thee. In Thee, from whom my trial cometh, alone is there refuge for my soul . . . whatever it shall please Thee to take away from me, may (it) please Thee to leave me the comfort of Thy peace."

Worldly comforts were no stranger to Dr. Brooks after his second marriage to Abby Kinmouth, a wealthy widow who brought a dowry of \$500,000 (\$6,500,000 in today's currency) to their marriage. The newlyweds bought the elegant, two-story house that survives on leafy Broad Street across from the First Baptist Church. There, according to a local observer, "they kept a fine equipage and coachman and lived in style." Williams (the archivist emeritus) agrees that there "was considerable hospitality" at the Brooks house and that in terms of local aristocracy the Brookses occupied "pretty much the top level."

To his credit, Dr. Brooks was notably generous with his resources. The families of Civil War soldiers, for example, "were often helped in their straits by his free-handed, unobtrusive benefactions." He was equally generous as a teacher, routinely paying for students' classroom materials when they couldn't afford them. And a former student once extolled his "large-heartedness toward students who could not afford the extra expense of a field trip to Trenton Falls," paying the cost himself.

In 1873, when he was fifty-two years old, Dr. Brooks gave up his pastorate of the First Baptist Church. Nine years later, in 1882, he built a small church in the nearby village of Randallville; it was "a snug little chapel having a decent cupola, a spacious yard, and sheds for the accommodation of teams . . . it would seat two to three hundred people." There Dr. Brooks returned to the pulpit and it was there that his death came in an almost theatrical fashion: on Sunday, February 19, 1888, as he was conducting the opening services, he suffered a stroke. The congregation was afraid to move him and so he lingered there in the sanctuary, unconscious, for two days until death finally arrived on February 21st. He was sixty-six years of age. ☹

My Freddy

By Nancy Joroff

I am one of the few, if not the only, member of Friends of Freddy who did not read Freddy books as a child. I chauffeured a child to a FOF meeting and sat in the hallway (once I realized I was not leaving my offspring in a room of predators) and read *Freddy and the Popinjay* in an attempt to see what the big deal was with this series. Perhaps not the best title with which to start, the book left me cold. So I assumed it was something one had to read as a child to stay so involved. As the years passed, I learned a lot about books from the FOF convention talks and was certainly impressed with the people who had read Freddy in their youths. But, what was the lasting attraction?

Around age 50, I decided to read the entire series straight through

I am sorry I did not find the Freddy books as a child. I was happy with my readings but it is clear my life would have been richer with Freddy.

and found what must have held the interest of adults who read these books to and with their children...the wonderful humor of Walter R. Brooks. This time, when I got to *Popinjay*, I found the bird adorable and the plot appealing. When I, to my amazement, found myself President of the FOF and leading a convention, I was terrorized. All who read this series as children retained minute details, knew all the characters and their antics in each book. I read the series a second time enjoying it even more. But the grasp of all the wondrous details was not mine.

Rather than admit that perhaps the gray cells were aging, I looked at the difference of coming to a book as a child versus as an adult. A book cannot have the same appeal at different ages. Plots and character eccentricities remain with young readers; humor strikes the adult reader. I began to think of the childhood readings I had done. What book or books did I read where I remembered such a myriad of details?

Most of the Freddy convention attendees have said that they read the series around 3-5 grades. So what did I read at that time? *Little Women* and *Eight Cousins* came to mind. But these were more realistic books. You met (most) of the same characters in the 4 books of the series but it was not quite like the Freddy series. A series, what series did I read? *The Maida Series*, *The Hardy Boys*, *Nancy Drew*...the latter two more for older readers, the first for children but again more realistic than the Freddy books. *Winnie the Pooh*; the animals in this series are endearing but I only really remembered or thought about them when I read them to my own children. They did not stick with me.

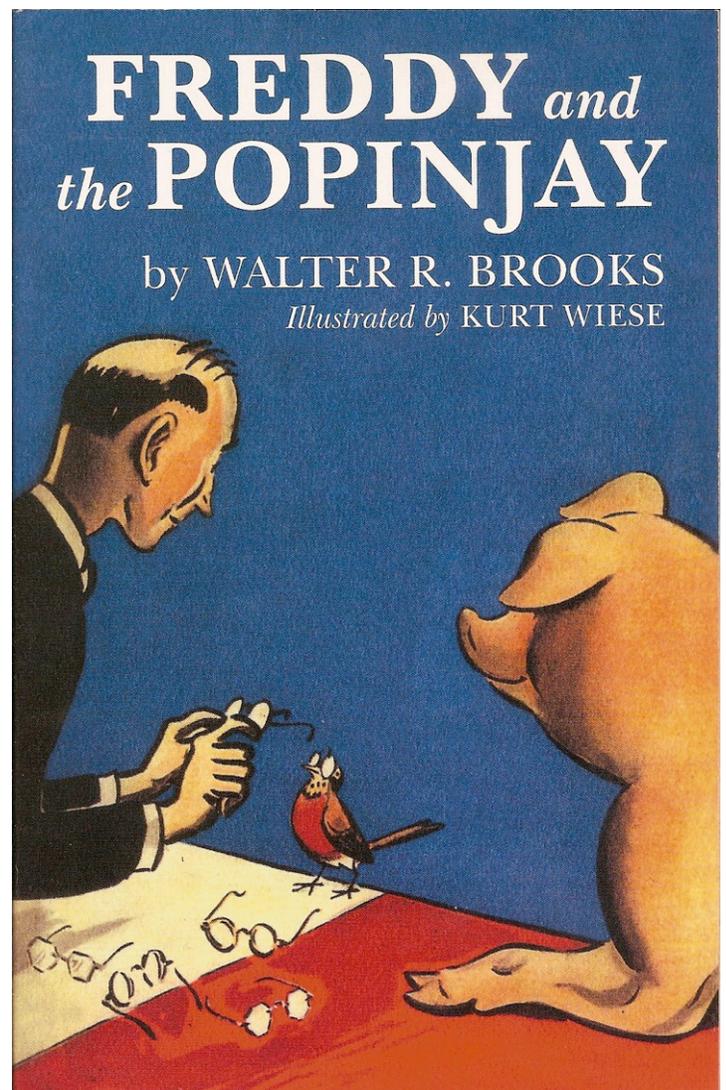
What then was my Freddy?

Peter Pan? Maybe. But, again, the actual details did not stick with me. This book gave me the freedom to fly, to never have to grow up. My experience of this story is that it put me there...I was not just watching the story, I could enter it. Maybe this was what Freddy gave young readers (but could not do for older ones). But it still did not have the range of characters that the Freddy books have.

Range of characters, human and animal...but of course, *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* and *Through The Looking Glass*. Without having reread these books, I can recall so clearly the various characters and their idiosyncrasies: the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, the Lobster's Quadrille, the Walrus and the Carpenter, the White Rabbit, the Red Queen, Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, Father William, the Caterpillar etc. Exact words still ring through my mind. This was my Freddy. Animals who could talk and were eccentric; a human who could understand them, plots and incidents to remember; poems that stuck with you...all the ingredients of the Freddy books but only in two volumes. Perhaps this is the difference; 26 books allow the magic to go on and on, especially when they were being published one by one. Readers would and did enjoy them over time...they would become a part of one's life, not just a 2 volume read and it was over. Freddy readers grew up with the books.

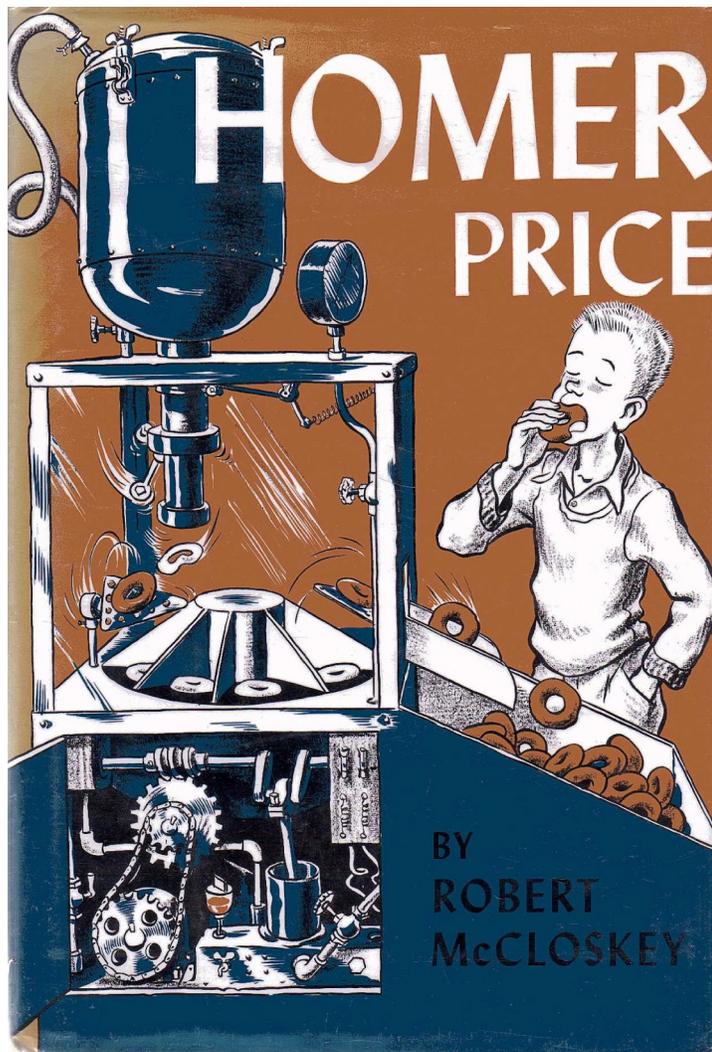
The trouble with reading works of dead authors is that you can read them all at once and then, it is over. You do not grow up with them. I am sorry I did not find the Freddy books as a child. I was happy with my readings but it is clear my life would have been richer with Freddy.

A Past President of the FoF, Nancy is currently our Youth Coordinator. ☺



Homer and Freddy

by Michael Cart



According to critic Helen Painter, “Perhaps seldom has an individual in his representation of reality verging on the comic made greater use of his own background and personal characteristics in his work . . .”

No, she’s not talking about Walter R. Brooks (though she might be); instead, her subject is the late, great author-illustrator Robert McCloskey, winner – **twice** – of the prestigious Caldecott Medal for his classic picture books *Make Way for Ducklings* and *Time of Wonder*. But it’s not his picture books that I celebrate here but, instead, his wonderful novel in the form of six stories, *Homer Price*. Why? Well, for one reason in spirit and tone, Homer evokes the Freddy books at their best. For a second, Walter almost wrote a *Horn Book* article about McCloskey’s novel. Here’s how it happened:

McCloskey’s redoubtable editor, the legendary May Massee, arranged with Bertha Mahoney Miller, the editor of the magazine *The Horn Book*, for the publication of a laudatory article about *Homer Price* on its publication in 1943. Mrs. Miller planned to ask Walter to write the piece. Unfortunately Massee magisterially dismissed the possibility, sniffing, “I like Walter R. Brooks and I like his books, but the older I get, the more I realize that authors just simply can’t review each other’s books, especially when they are in the same genre.”

I would dispute this, of course. For I think Walter would have found, in Robert McCloskey, a kindred spirit. Both, for example, set their books in small towns: Walter, in Centerboro; McCloskey in Centerburg. (The critic May Hill Arbuthnot called it “a juvenile Main Street”). Both evoke and gently satirize the quintessentially American “booster” mentality that infected founding fathers across the length and breadth of the U. S. of A., who were convinced that each hamlet and village that they founded was, perforce, the very center of the American universe.

Like Walter, McCloskey enjoyed satirizing small town authority figures. There is the sheriff, for example, a spoonerism-spouting political hack who is too busy getting his hair cut and talking about the World Series to help Homer capture a band of gun-toting bandits (“We’ve been dindled,” the sheriff howls, “doggonit – I mean swindled!”).

There is the judge, a pompous blowhard whose pronouncements are delivered in capital letters (“Yep,” said Homer, “the judge mentioned that she had come to live in Centerburg; he said that she was a Public Spirited Person and Would Be An Addition To The Town”).

And how about the mayor, who, observing a latter-day pied piper leading Centerburg’s children out of town, can only think to moan to the sheriff, “Sheriff, we can’t lose all these children with election time coming up next month” (why, I wonder, doesn’t Centerboro have a mayor?).

Further, in the spirit of Uncle Ben, the preadolescent Homer is an inveterate tinkerer, whose hobby is building radios (McCloskey and Walter would admittedly have parted company here, since Walter detested the radio!). It’s worth noting that Homer’s parents own and operate a tourist court and gas station, serving the needs of restless Americans traveling on the open road in automobiles, though there’s no indication that Uncle Ben ever stopped by in his atomic-powered car for a fill-up but maybe Mrs. Church did! Even more like Uncle Ben is Homer’s own uncle, Ulysses, who operates a “very up and coming lunch room over in Centerburg,” where he is a passionate believer in labor-saving devices, most notably in his invention of an automatic doughnut-making machine, a device that will provide the basis for the most famous of the Homer stories in which a wealthy woman (pace, Mrs. Church) loses a piece of jewelry in the doughnut batter.

It’s the incongruity of the traditional small-town setting of *Homer Price* and the clumsy inroads of the modern mechanical age (something that is generally foreign to the Freddy books) that provides much of the humor of McCloskey’s book. Indeed, it reaches its zenith in the final story “Wheels of Progress,” which couples a traditional small town historical pageant – “One Hundred and Fifty Years of Centerburg Progress” – with the dedication of a new suburb “Enders Heights,” which consists of one hundred houses that “looked as alike as one hundred doughnuts.” No wonder, for they are all prefabricated to Uncle Ulysses’ theory of progress. Of course, something will happen to ensure that none of the residents can find their own house amid all those other lookalikes and it will be up to clever Homer to save the day.

Have I mentioned, by the way, that Homer’s best friend is a boy named – wait for it – Freddy? It would be a lovely thing to think that this is a nod to Walter but I’m afraid it’s only happy coincidence. Homer’s friend is little more than a sidekick; it is Homer himself who most resembles our Freddy, for he is skeptical, inventive, ingenious, bright as a hundred watt light bulb and smarter than any of the adults who surround him. Now if he were only a poet . . . 🐾

The Poet's Corner

(As we all know, Freddy is an accomplished poet. At the October 2000 Friends of Freddy convention in Wyndham, New York, Harley Hahn gave a talk entitled "Freddy and the Internet."

As part of the presentation, he read a brand new poem, "The Internet," which he had written in the style of Freddy. The poem was well-received and, by popular request, is presented here for your enjoyment. Harley also offered a similar poem by Mrs. Peppercorn. It follows Freddy's.)

The Internet
By Freddy the Pig

The Internet is quite a place
Although it doesn't have a face,
Not really anywhere to go
To see a movie or a show.
But still I like to click my mouse,
And never have to leave the house
Except perhaps to take a break
Whene'er my back begins to ache.
It's also nice to have a snack
(For, as you know, food helps the back).
I'll look online for treats, and then,
Have them delivered to my pen.

And when it rains, I'll sit and chat
With Georgie, Charles and Jinx the cat.
If going out is too much trouble
I'll send some email on the double
To Mrs. Wiggins at the barn
Relating some old tale or yarn
About a case we've yet to settle
And use the net to prove our mettle.
By hunting clues around the globe
We'll use the Internet to probe
Into the minds of thieves and crooks
With information not in books
(Like Shakespeare, which I've not quite read,
Because it's holding up my bed).

On the Net, I use the Web
To find my fav-o-rite celeb-
-rities, then send them all email
And hope that they will tell me "Hail
To you, oh fearless Internaut,
You, who've been an astronaut,
Poet, banker, de-tec-tive,
The smartest pig to ever live!
Because of you, I've won my bet
That pigs can use the Internet."

One day, when I have lots of time,
I'll make a site, complete with rhyme
For all the world to have some fun
To come and see what I have done.
And everyone from near and far

Will, no doubt, say that I'm a star
And they will see I have the knack
But now I think I need a snack.

So that is all I have to say
About the Internet today.

As you know, Freddy is not the only poet. Another character, Mrs. Peppercorn, also writes poetry. Mrs. Peppercorn's philosophy is that it is boring to use the same old rhymes that everyone has been using for years. Instead, she creates new ones, endowing her poetry with a unique style.

During Harley's presentation, he also read a short poem about the Internet composed by Mrs. Peppercorn.

The Internet
By Mrs. Peppercorn

I love the New because it's nice
To spend some time in Cyberspace.

If you can't visit me or call,
You can always reach me by e-mail.

Or, if you like to talk or blab,
Come chat with me upon the Wab.

I have a plan to make me rich,
By selling poems on the Interniche.

So, if you want to chat sometime,
My screenname's Mrs. Pepper-rhyme.



The Party

by Victor Manjarrez

Mrs. Church for her party had planned a surprise;
She had asked her friend Freddy to wear a disguise.
“So that no one will know, don a suitable rig.”
“I’ll use one of my costumes,” said Freddy the Pig.

Thus a Mrs. O’Halloran swept through the door,
And with studied aplomb glided out on the floor.
Mercy, how could she dance such a fine Irish jig?
“Cause I’m fast on me trotters,” said Freddy the Pig.

Now the punch was Old Hemlock, a stout Irish brew,
When the ladies drew round for a smidgen or two:
“If you’ll pardon me, Madam, I’ll take a wee swig,
Only wettin’ me whistle,” said Freddy the Pig.

But the Hemlock proved strong when he’d tippled it down;
At the top of the staircase he tripped on his gown.
Then he rolled down the stairs and alas lost his wig.
“I was niver a lady,” said Freddy the Pig.

Up ran old Mrs. Peppercorn wielding a broom;
She would drive this “strange animile” out of the room.
But the broom hit a picture whose frame was too big.
Oh my, down fell the painting on Freddy the Pig.

At this point Mrs. Underdunk heard Freddy groan,
Saw his snout through the canvas and thought it her own.
“That’s my portrait just lying there, how infra dig!”
“Still, I see the resemblance,” said Freddy the Pig.

Tell me how did our Freddy escape from it all,
With so many surrounding him after his fall?
“Well, I’m tired of this nonsense, I don’t care a fig,
You can write your own ending,” said Freddy the Pig.

Victor is a long-time member of the Friends of Freddy. ☺



Plans for summer and fall

As with last year, our editorial staff will likely be too preoccupied with summer activities to produce a summer issue. But we’ll try to get one out in the early fall in time to provide further hints of the convention to come.

In the meantime, please check your mailing label. If it says “V22#2” in the upper-right-hand corner, then our aforementioned next issue will be your last unless you renew. You should find a renewal flyer included with this issue. You can either send that in with your payment or renew via our website (at <http://www.freddythepig.org/MemOrder.html> for US members).

And, as noted elsewhere, if you want to join us in Hamilton this November, see the information on the front page of this issue or on the website at <http://www.freddythepig.org/convention2014.html>. That URL is also the place to keep checking for updates between now and the next issue. Hope to see you there! ☺

The Bean Home Newsletter is published quarterly by the Friends of Freddy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of the writings of Walter R. Brooks and his literary alter ego, Freddy the Pig. Print memberships are \$25 for two years or \$45 for four. Electronic memberships are \$9.50 for two years or \$18 for four. (US funds only, please.) Overseas members please add \$12 additional for airmail delivery. Please make your check or money order payable to Friends of Freddy and send it to the official address given below.

Send changes of address to one of the FoF addresses given below.

Send letters for the newsletter to Michael Cart at the address below.

Address changes should be sent to the club address.

ISSN 0882-4428. Copyright © 2014 Friends of Freddy.

FoF web site: <http://www.freddythepig.org/>.

FoF addresses: Friends of Freddy, P. O. Box 912, Greenbelt, MD 20768-0912 USA. friendsoffreddy@gmail.com

President: Henry Cohn, 80 Richmond Lane, W. Hartford, CT 06117 (860-523-9372) main132@comcast.net

Vice-President/US: Rick Hill, 4951 Arroyo Linda Ave., San Diego, CA 92117 (858-270-5227) rickahill77@yahoo.com

Founder and Vice-President/Canada: Dave Carley, 11 Elm Ave., #426, Toronto, ON M4W 1N2 CANADA. (416-921-4025) dcarley@sympatico.ca.

Secretary and Book Donation Coordinator: Connie Arnold connie_arnold@hotmail.com.

Treasurer: Murray Millican, 1130 Bally Mote Dr., Dallas, TX 75218 (214-327-1077) wolfling1@aol.com

Youth Coordinator: Nancy Joroff, 181 Lexington Rd., Concord, MA 01742 (978-369-2712) ngondal@aol.com

Membership Director: Alice Tracy, 8300 Cypress St., Laurel, MD 20707 (301-490-5639) alice926@verizon.net

Social Media Director: Tim Deska-Kahn, 916 Rahway Dr., Newark, DE 19711 (302-368-4854) eleventeen1@verizon.net

Website Editor, Managing Newsletter Editor: Kevin W. Parker, 3-E Ridge Rd., Greenbelt, MD 20770-2958 (301-345-2774) kevin.parker@wap.org.

Newsletter Editor: Michael Cart, 3250 Forsythia Dr., Columbus, IN 47203 (812-373-9604) mrmcart@sbcglobal.net ☺

Freddy and the Sweet Crunchy Biscuit

by Chris Redmond

Most of the content in the early issues was discussion about the organization of the club, plans for the future, advice on how to track down copies of the books, etc. This was the very first article that focused on the books themselves, appearing in the third issue. And, yes, Chris Redmond is still a member.

How is a child in England supposed to understand the tales of Freddy the pig, so rooted in small-town America and so full of drug-stores, euchre, buggies, molasses cookies, Boston beans and “The Star-Spangled Banner”?

Somebody tried to answer that question in the 1950’s, although (as far as I know) nothing ever came of the plan. For I have a beloved, second-hand copy of *Freddy and the Bean Home News* which from beginning to end has been annotated and edited in teal-blue ink for the benefit of some, perhaps hypothetical, English child who thought of the third season of the year as “Autumn,” not “Fall,” and knew about “pictures” but not “movies”. I have no idea who carried out this labour of love.... as I say, the book was at least second-hand when I came by it. It bears the rubber stamp of Pearn, Pollinger and Higham Ltd., a bookseller in London 1s Strand, but I don’t think that was its immediate source.

How is a child in England supposed to understand the tales of Freddy the pig, so rooted in small-town America?

Looking at these dozens of annotations, and realizing what in Walter Brooks’ vigorous prose needs changing or explaining to an English reader, yields a new appreciation of how characteristically American Freddy and some of his adventures are.

Many of the changes are simply a matter of style and diction. For example, time after time the unknown annotator changes “mad” to “angry.” At the end of chapter 5, Freddy says, “Now I’ve got to go help Mr. Dimsey.” The annotator changes that to “go and help.”

“Come down cellar,” says Mr. Dimsey. The annotator makes that “come down into the cellar,” which is partly a grammatical change and partly a reflection of an English unfamiliarity with cellars as a place where normal people (and animals) spend time.

Some of the other changes made by the unknown annotator are more interesting. Let me list a few of them:

* In chapter 14, Freddy tells a strange bird about “a farm that is owned by Mr. William Bean.” The warbler, being smart, replies, “Is he one of the Boston Beans?” Trying to explain this joke to an English child, the annotator has written in “for a Boston bean, you must know, is a kind of vegetable.” (And then, inspired, he or she has crossed out, the whole annotation, and in the text itself simply changed the word “Boston” to “French.” A French bean must be as well understood in England as a Boston bean in America.)

* When The Star-Spangled Banner is mentioned in chapter 2, the annotator has put in a footnote: “The American National Anthem.”

* A mention of “euchre” in chapter 3 leads to another footnote:

“A card game they play in America, which would be rather like our rummy if it weren’t quite different. Pronounced ‘yooker.’”

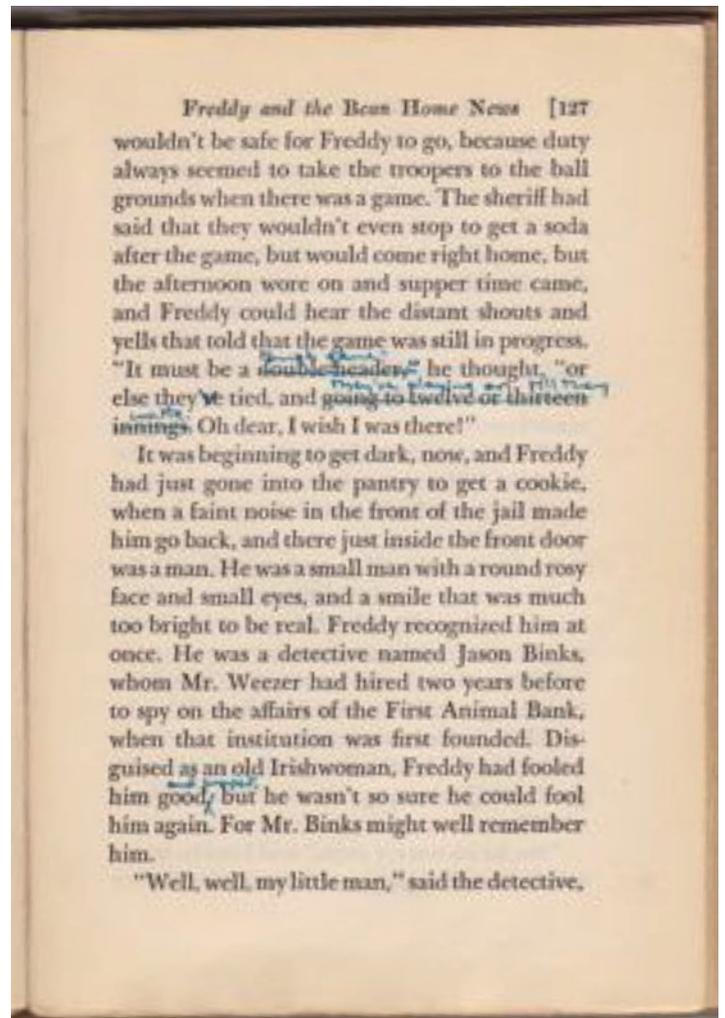
* Raccoons are explained as cousins of the bear in chapter 4, and viros in chapter 15.

* “Twinkling of a pollywog’s whiskers!” ejaculates Jinx in chapter 7. No English child knows what a pollywog is, but everyone has a gollywog, a little blackface doll that serves the role of a teddy bear, so the annotator changes the “p” to a “g”.

* A molasses cookie, mentioned in chapter 1, is defined by the annotator as “a nice, sweet, crunchy biscuit.”

* Smartness becomes cheek; gasoline becomes petrol; ball game becomes baseball, and “a doubleheader” becomes “a tough game” at the hand of somebody not very familiar with the North American sport; buggy becomes pony-cart; skillets become “pitchers”, not so much for meaning as to keep a two-syllable word in one of Freddy’s verses. “Montana” and “drugstore” are defined, and a footnote explains how it’s possible for Charles to be tucked in “behind” the stove.

And perhaps most striking of all, the quintessentially American name of Centerboro is changed every time it appears. The annotator hasn’t adopted the British spelling “centre,” although elsewhere “parlor” becomes “parlour” - but every time the town is mentioned, it gain an apostrophe: Centerboro’. Short for “borough”, right? ☺



Favorite Library Contest entries

My Favorite Library

by *Dave Carley*

Confession: I have been a serial lover of libraries.

As a child I was a prodigious user of the Carnegie Library in my hometown of Peterborough, Ontario. The children's section was on the top floor of the handsome red-brick structure and that's where I first encountered the pig of all pigs. I would dash in to the room (quietly), grab my allotment of two Freddys off the shelves, get them stamped and carded, and bike home as fast as I could, to begin reading.

In high school, my chums and I would feel very sophisticated as we did our homework in the carrels at the Bata Library at Trent University; a gorgeous building perched on the banks of the Otonabee River. (Our high school library was a bit too juvenile, we sniffed.)

At The University of Toronto there were various college libraries to love, ranging from an ancient, Hogwarts-style one at Knox College to the brutalist but easily-navigated Robarts Library.

Toronto's Children's Library is where I first learned (back in the 1980s) that the Freddy series was out of print.

And up north, I've been associated with the tiny library in the village of Buckhorn, a vital hub of learning and reading for an entire community.

Each one of those libraries was my favourite when I was using it. I've loved them all, loved them well, and we always parted on good terms.

But I am going to tell you about my most recent favourite, the London (Ontario) Library's Central branch. London is a couple hours

west of the acknowledged centre of the Canadian universe (Toronto), a pleasant mid-sized city of about 375,000. Something in the city's water produces entertainers – Hume Cronyn, Victor Garber, Ryan Gosling, Guy Lombardo and Rachel MacAdams all hail from there. Frederick Banting, the discoverer of Insulin lived in London. The city's nickname is 'The Forest City' and there are lovely old shaded streets, lined with gracious homes. There's a well-respected university (University of Western Ontario) and some fine hospitals.

It's not all sweetness and light. The city has lost some of its industrial base in recent years and the downtown is a nightmare of bad urban planning. Many beautiful old retail buildings have been torn down, and a lot of the commercial base has disappeared. Sitting in the centre of it all, like a forgotten hole in a retail donut, was a deserted 1970s-era Galleria Mall. Which brings me neatly to My Favourite Library.

When the retail vanished, the library moved into the mall, taking over the space formerly occupied by the department store anchor. A clever restoration in 2002 opened up the department store and now there are four magic floors of books and activity, connected by escalators travelling up the centre.

Libraries have changed. The stern, shushing madam librarians of my childhood have been replaced with helpful, smiling and caring employees. An incredible variety of Londoners use the Central Branch – from job seekers on computers to professors researching to community groups to, of course, book lovers. The London library is a pioneer in innovative activities including:

- A Women's health group that meets regularly with a public health nurse
- Abraham's Café – an ongoing program for discussing faith and religious topics, with panels and representatives from Islam, Judaism and Christianity
- Annual Book Camp – a literary day camp for children in the summer
- Gadget clinics – people bring in their new handheld devices, tablets and e-readers, and get help from staff about how to actually use them
- A film festival and concerts

I had the privilege of being the Writer in Residence at the Central Branch one year. (The fact that the library even has a writer in residence should shoot it up to the top of the list of Favourite libraries.) Part of my job was to talk with writers and user-groups, and stage readings of plays. I was given a little office just behind the Harlequin romances, a vantage point from which I discreetly studied that fascinating species of book lover, the *romanticus furtivus*. (Because you would be very surprised who sneaks up to the Harlequin section for a romance quickie between the covers.)

Alas, my office was two floors away from the Children's library, which is home to a complete collection of Overlook Freddys. But I would ride the escalator down and admire them.

If you are in London - and why wouldn't you be - take a look at what a creative urban library can do in animating a city's downtown. Admire their full complement of Freddys. And join me in voting for the London Library's Central Branch as Favourite Library!



My Father's Favorite Libraries

by *Chris Peters*

Rather than write about my own favorite library, I want to say a little about my Father's favorites, because his choices had a wonderful impact on my life, reading and otherwise.

I was born in 1944, in Pasadena, California, into a large book loving family. My father was a prominent lawyer in Los Angeles. My mother and father assembled an excellent home library, and put in special built-in shelves throughout the house. They loved books, bookstores...and libraries.

Out of these, my father had a number of favorite libraries.

After William Randolph Hearst died, my father spent weeks leading a team of appraisers through Hearst Castle to come up with numbers for the California inheritance taxes. There was a Gutenberg bible, first editions of all sorts. Wonderful stuff everywhere.

But it wasn't his favorite library. The Los Angeles and Beverly Hills libraries were close and had wonderful resources. But there were more libraries.

In 1957, (with the money from the Hearst evaluation – you got a percentage, in those days!) my parents took my brothers and me to Rome. It was a meeting of the International Bar Association, and my dad led the California Bar group. As such, he was invited to meet the Pope, and he got to visit the Vatican Library, which was filled with astounding volumes.

My Favorite Library:

Faxon Branch Library Elmwood, CT

by *Henry Cohn*

I choose as my favorite library the Faxon branch because when my fourth grade teacher gave me *Freddy the Detective* to read, and I enjoyed it, I went to the Faxon Branch for more Freddies. This is the library which allowed my love of Freddy to be nourished.

In those days, the early 1950's, I lived with my parents near Elmwood. Downtown Elmwood was the working person's section of more affluent West Hartford. Faxon served that community well. I frequently visited the Faxon branch, and hardly ever went to the main Noah Webster library on Main Street in West Hartford. It was closer and had what I needed. There were times that I didn't go to the library myself, but told my parents what I wanted to take out. I would look forward to their return from Faxon with a book for me.

Faxon had only a few precious Freddies – *Freddy Goes to Florida*, *Freddy the Detective*, *Freddy the Politician*, *Freddy Plays Football*, *Freddy and the Men from Mars*, and my favorite, *Freddy and the Bean Home News*. I must have read *BHN* at least four times back then.

While I remember all the wonderful times spent reading the Freddies, Faxon could also support my teen tastes. I don't remember all the titles, but they came from the Faxon branch.

Now I live on the other side of West Hartford from Elmwood, but I go to Faxon when I can get a book more quickly there than from the main Noah Webster library or the other West Hartford branch closer to my home.

Faxon still has a great and helpful staff. They have searched for a variety of difficult to find items for me through the years.

The branch serves a variety of ethnic groups today as West Hart-

Amazing as it was, the Vatican Library wasn't my Dad's favorite.

The Huntington Library (built by the old robber baron's money) was just 20 minutes away from our house and another favorite of my parents. We joined (and I was able to go and study there, and do research.) But not Dad's top favorite.

Before that, at UC Berkeley as an undergrad (and later law student) he practically lived at the Doe Memorial Library.

The Doe was also important in another way: there were all night study rooms available. This was often where he worked to support himself and my mother, late at night, with his "52 Assistants."

(In point of fact, Dad sometimes really had a "53rd Assistant" – one of the "strangers" who drifted into the game was, in fact, his friend Jack-- later to be a champion bridge and poker player. Never had a job in his life, did Jack, that didn't use a deck of cards. But that was in the future; at that point he was just a young guy who had a memory and a talent for cards. Afterwards, they'd split the take. Hey, Dad was going to be a lawyer, alright?)

None of these were my Father's favorite library, however.

Before he worked with movie stars, and Howard Hughes, before he argued cases before the Supreme Court, you have to go all the way back to his childhood.

He was born in 1902, one of nine children on a cold water farm in the hard dirt of Fresno, California. And in 1904, the Fresno Carnegie Library opened. And free access to books profoundly changed the direction of my father's life.

That was always my Father's favorite library.

ford has a much larger and more diverse population than it did in the 1950's. Now, in 2013, this library features a Welcome Center with books and DVD's in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese and Vietnamese. They have sessions to practice English, and occasional opportunities for their patrons to meet with local community leaders. They have a poetry writing group and adult book discussions. And they serve the entire West Hartford community with a film and discussion series – *Race Matters* – where my wife saw the movie *Crash* a number of years ago, and where she just recently attended a program on the book *Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock*.

Sad to say, all the Freddies that I read are now gone, probably discarded. When I heard about the Friends of Freddy in the 1990's, my interest in reading the books returned, as well as my desire to make sure that the Faxon Branch had at least some copies. I donated a couple of books to Faxon at that time.

I have entered this contest in hopes of bolstering the Freddy collection at the Faxon Branch. I hope to benefit my old place of learning and the deserving population it serves.

Harrisburg (IL) Public Library

by *Silas Curtis*

Dear Friends of Freddy,

My name is Silas Curtis and I am almost nine years old. My favorite library is the Harrisburg (IL) Library because the books there are very easy to find and because they have the kind of books I like. We go there because it is close to where we camp in southern Illinois. That is why I like the Harrisburg Public Library.

Sincerely,
Silas Curtis

The Friends of Freddy
P. O. Box 912
Greenbelt, MD 20768-0912
USA

**Put stamp
here. Post of-
fice will not
deliver mail
without prop-
er postage.**

Edwardsville Public Library
by Mary Curtis

Dear Friends of Freddy,

My name is Mary Curtis. I am seven years old. I like the Edwardsville Library in Edwardsville, IL because it has a nice playroom. The playroom has blocks that you can build towers with. There is a place where you can color in the room.

We go the Edwardsville Library because our library is very small. We go to our little library too but we go the Edwardsville Library because it is very big and nice. The babies can play in the playroom so Mom or Dad can go find a book. There is a big kid section and a little kid section.

The outside of the library looks kind of like a chapel. It has a fountain with flowers around it. Sometimes the fountain is off.

My family likes the Freddy books. Mom reads them when Dad is gone. Sometimes Dad is here and he listens to them too. The Edwardsville Library doesn't have any Freddy books.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Sincerely,
Mary Curtis

Worden Public Library
by Anastasia Curtis

Dear Friends of Freddy,

My name is Anastasia Curtis. I'm ten years old, and I'm going into 5th grade. I live in Worden, a small town of around 1000 people. I'm glad we have a library. Many towns around us don't. We can order books from bigger libraries at ours. Our library does a book fair once a year, outside. I can walk to the library, and it's always fun to walk to the Post Office, then to the library, and then to the park.

Our library has a good selection of books that I like, like the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. If we bring the younger kids, the librarian lets them color. Kindergarten, first, and second grade at my school go to the library every Wednesday. The children's librarian reads them a book, and then the kids can pick a book from the wide selection of children's books, including many of Dr. Seuss's works. I like our little library, and I hope we can get some Freddy Books.

Sincerely,
Anastasia Curtis