Author Visit

The MUS Library is pleased to welcome Jonathan Rogers to our campus on Wednesday, March 25. He’ll speak in chapel and sign books.

As his website states, “Jonathan Rogers grew up in Georgia, where he spent many happy hours in the swamps and river-bottoms on which the wild places of The Wilderking are based. He received his undergraduate degree from Furman University in South Carolina and holds a Ph.D. in seventeenth-century English literature from Vanderbilt University, where he taught English for five years.”

His Wilderking trilogy includes The Bark of the Bog Owl, The Secret of the Swamp King, and The Way of the Wilderking, all centering on Aidan, a shepherd boy who learns he is really the prophesied Wilderking of the island kingdom of Corenwald. These books have been compared to C.S. Lewis’s Chronicles of Narnia, a world that Rogers himself has written about.

In The World According to Narnia, Jonathan Rogers takes the reader further into the wardrobe, straight to the heart of the imaginative world of C.S. Lewis. Rogers reveals how the plots and characters from Narnia reflect Biblical stories. He shows that the Chronicles of Narnia are able to awaken in the reader the desire to do what is good and true. Narnia makes you feel that a life of virtue is also a life of imaginative adventure.

Learning to Research

Part of the mission of a school library is to collaborate with faculty so that students learn increasingly complex skills while doing research. Bonnie Barnes has been scheduling meetings with some of the departments to enhance communication and service in this area.

Mrs. Barnes met with the History Department in November to discuss ways to help our students learn to do research. Several of our history teachers described projects that involve conducting research in creative ways, such as printing a newspaper for a noteworthy date, writing a recommendation for a historical figure, or making a model of a famous site.

In January, the English Department met in the library for a training session on Literature Criticism Online, a new database that replicates over 50 shelves’ worth of our most heavily used volumes of literary criticism. Now we’re able to search all these volumes at once, from any computer. Julie Pepera, from Gale Cengage Learning in Detroit, demonstrated the database and touched on several other online literary resources from Gale. Teachers gave their feedback on how long to keep the print volumes and whether to continue to purchase online updates.

The Science Department is scheduled to meet with library staff on February 25 to enjoy refreshments and learn about new books and online resources, particularly AccessScience.com, an online version of the McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology.

We hope to create an orderly sequence of research skills, allowing students to build on their knowledge as they advance to the next grade. Mrs. Barnes asks teachers who assign any research project to send her a copy of the assignment and the due dates, so that the library can be sure to have relevant materials ready for students to use. We can conduct sessions with classes on request to discover sources, help with organization, and assist with works cited lists. One-on-one help is always available—all they need to do is ask.
Faculty Book Club

Lin Askew has volunteered to facilitate the library-sponsored faculty and staff book club. His first pick for our enjoyment was the nonfiction book Blue Ara-besque: A Search for the Sublime by Patricia Hampl. About ten of us had a good time debating the merits of the book’s style and structure. The book to read over the holidays was Toni Morrison’s A Mercy. While some have likened Morrison to William Faulkner, the late John Up-dike in The New Yorker said this, “in time we come to compre-hend that it is 1690 in Virginia, and that the narrator is a sixteen-year-old black girl called Florens, who was, at her mother’s plea, impulsively adopted, eight years ago, by a white proprietor (‘Sir’ to Florens). . . . This adoption constitutes the ‘mercy’ of the novel’s title.” Check out his article entitled “Dreamy Wilderness: Unmastered women in Colonial Virginia” by going to the online version of this newsletter and following this link. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, February 12, during lunch at a place TBA.

New Databases

Columbia Granger’s World of Poetry: Includes poems, commentaries, glossary, biographies, and criticism—just in time for Poetry Month.

AccessScience: Searchable content from the daily updated McGraw-Hill’s Encyclopedia of Science and Technology.

Literature Criticism Online: Replicates all the brown books in the reference well.

Project Muse: 100% full-text access to humanities and social sciences journals. Similar to Jstor. On-campus access only.

Branch Out

What Do We Do Now? A Workbook for the President-Elect by Stephen Hess. A workbook to guide future chief executives, decision by decision, through the minefield of transition. Based on experiences of a White House staffer and presidential adviser, it shows what can be done to make presidential transitions go smoothly.

The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids by Madeline Levine. In this groundbreaking book on the children of affluence, a well-known clinical psychologist exposes the epi-demic of emotional problems that are disabling America’s privileged youth.

Born digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives by John Palfrey. Children who were born into and raised in the digital world are coming of age, and soon our world will be reshaped in their image. Based on extensive original research, including interviews with Digital Natives around the world, Born Digital explores a broad range of issues: What does identity mean for young people who have dozens of online profiles and avatars? What is the Internet’s impact on creativity and learning? What lies ahead—socially, professionally, and psychologically—for this generation?

Promised Land: Thirteen Books that Changed America by Jay Parini. Renowned critic Parini discusses the books he believes to have been most influential in shaping American culture.

American Lion by Jon Meacham. A thought-provoking study of Andrew Jackson chronicles the life and career of a self-made man who went on to become a military hero and seventh president of the United States. A critical analysis of Jackson’s seminal role during a turbulent era in history, the political crises and personal up-heaval that surrounded him, and his legacy for the modern presidency.