

LIFE

Local literary roundup: Check out Zip Books, Authors Series and telescopes

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Published 6:00 a.m. PT May 15, 2022

Here's a look at what's going on in our local libraries.

Palm Springs Public Library now offering Zip Books

A new grant-funded program provides Palm Springs Public Library cardholders with speedy access to books or audiobooks that are not in the library's collection.

Here's how it works: A patron simply requests the item, the library purchases it from Amazon and the book is shipped directly to the patron's home. Called Zip Books, these items are checked out like any other library item. When finished, the patron returns the item to the library, where it will be checked in and added to the collection so other cardholders can enjoy it.

"The California State Library developed this program in response to a number of rural libraries that were struggling to provide resources to their communities," says Jeannie Kays, city librarian and director of library services. "It was designed to be an alternative to inter-library loans, which takes a lot of time and money."

A Palm Springs Library card is required to use this program and the items, like other library items, are subject to loan time limits and other borrowing guidelines. Only physical books and audiobooks on CD are available as Zip Books.

"Right now, we've ordered 224 titles, and we've got about 25 requests in the hopper that have come in today," Kays says. "We're getting a lot of requests. We've got some prolific readers who are using this system and really loving it."

Another benefit of the program is that it helps a library's collection to become more closely matched to the needs of its local community.

For more information, visit pslibrary.org

DHS Library ends author series season with two nonfiction books

Author Marge Snell will pay homage to Armed Forces Day by presenting her book, "Lest We Forget," on May 21 from 1-2:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Desert Hot Springs Library. Like so many other World War II veterans, Marge's husband, Russ, was never able to talk about the war. It was only later in life he shared his horrific experiences. As a registered nurse, Marge saw the residual effects the war had on her husband, causing severe PTSD before it was recognized as an illness. This book, in these times, will deliver an emotional response about all wars. Artifacts mentioned in the book will be on display, and all veterans who attend will be honored.

And then on May 26 from 1-2:30 p.m., Luis Fuerte, award-winning cameraman of the "California Gold" TV series, will present his book, "Louie, Take a Look at This! My Time with Huell Howser." Fuerte takes the reader on an adventure of two men from very different backgrounds who instinctively knew what makes for good and enriching entertainment. The book relates the history of KCET and recounts the many iconic shows Howser and Fuerte produced.

These two authors conclude a very successful first season of the Author Series in the new library. Authors interested in presenting a book next season should contact Sally Hedberg at sallyhedberg@gmail.com.

For more on the Desert Hot Springs Library, visit rivlib.net/branch/desert-hot-springs.

From books to stars: Rancho Mirage Library launches telescope program

On April 18, the Rancho Mirage Library & Observatory announced the launch of its library telescope program to help foster scientific literacy, stimulate an interest in astronomy and provide people who have never looked through a telescope the chance to experience the excitement of discovery.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Smaby Family Foundation, Rancho Mirage joins more than 400 other libraries across the United States that lend portable user-friendly telescopes to patrons. The library is also allocating a percentage of its 30 telescopes for educators to check out to share with their students.

To borrow a telescope, patrons must be 18 or older or have a parent or guardian present. Telescopes are treated like other library materials and can be searched in the catalog. When checking out a telescope, the clerk will demonstrate how to carry the telescope and will give a brief overview of the components.

Telescope loaning is part of a national program that was established in 2008. For more information, visit librarytelescope.org. For more on the Rancho Mirage Library & Observatory, visit ranchomiragelibrary.org.