

paperwork

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www.regulatorbookshop.com

November / December 2009 • The Regulator Bookshop

Thank you and happy holidays!

As the end of another year rolls around, we realize once more how lucky we are to be (still!) running an independent bookshop here on Ninth Street in Durham, supported by our fabulous, loyal customers and the marvelous community that we call home.

Last year at this time, as economic storm clouds darkened, we must admit we were a tad anxious about our future. We asked folks to consider supporting their hometown by doing more of their shopping at locally owned independent businesses—**Shop Local First!** And you responded, giving us one of our best holiday seasons ever and helping us keep our doors open through 2009.

And what a year it has been! Filled with extraordinary evenings with writers like Abraham Verghese, Paule Marshall, Natalie Goldberg, Augusten Burroughs, Sue Monk Kidd, Wells Tower, and Michael Chabon. And with local writers like Reynolds Price, Haven Kimmel, Michael Malone, Clyde Edgerton, Sarah Dessen, Fred Chappell, Katy Munger, and Jill McCorkle.

Filled as well with every-day treasures, like parents reading to their children. Children learning to read themselves. The eyes of adults lighting up as they find a sought-

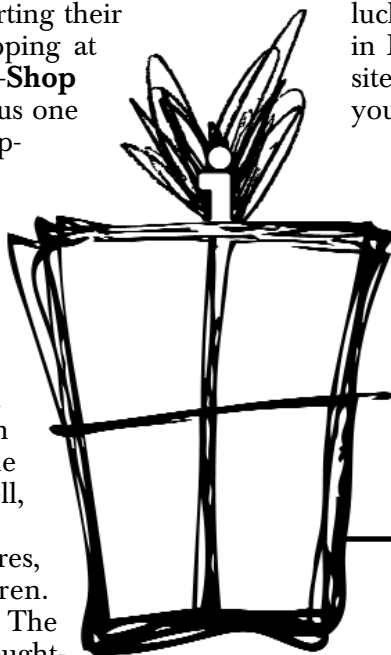
after book, or as they encounter a friend who is also browsing at the shop. Innumerable conversations about books, ideas, politics, cooking, gardening, raising chickens!

There was also the debut of our world-changing “**Shop Local/Save the Planet**” video, a.k.a. “Just Around the Corner,” already viewed by more than 16,000 lucky folks all around the country (and by some in Europe as well, we hear). See it on our web site, www.regulatorbookshop.com, whenever you have a minute and 52 seconds to spare.

Our improbable, audacious idea is to keep all of this, and more, happening for yet another year. We hope you’ll join with us in this endeavor—this holiday season, next year, and for years to come.

Looking forward to seeing you once more at The Regulator, we remain, as always, your devoted servants to the community and culture of the written word, and to the community and culture of our fair city,

The Staff of the Regulator Bookshop



Look for the Indie Bound symbol throughout the newsletter and find more reasons to Keep it Local in 2010!

WHY A BOOK?



indiebound.org

Because
A Scented Candle
Never Changed
Anyone's Life.



Shop Indie: Nurture Your Community This Season

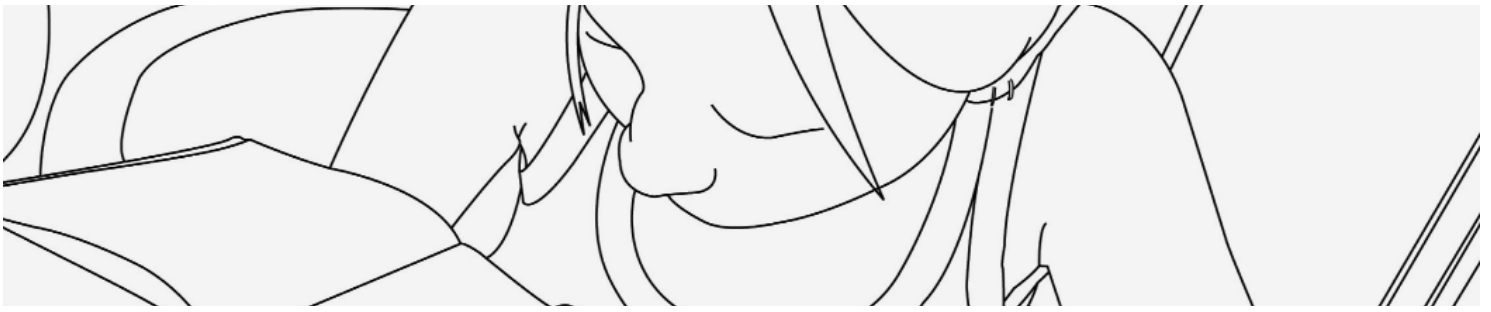
IndieBound is a movement of the American Booksellers Association. All rights reserved.

To help give back to our hometown, from Thanksgiving until Christmas The Regulator will once again be collecting donations for the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina's Durham branch. Drop your contribution by the store—see the list that follows—and we'll see that it gets to the Food Bank, who will see that it gets to the folks who need it the most. For a lot of people, times remain tougher now than they've been for many years. Donating food is a very direct way to help out.

HERE ARE THE ITEMS THE FOOD BANK IS LOOKING FOR:

- * Canned meals (stews, soups, tuna, ravioli, etc.) Pop-top cans a plus!
- * Peanut butter
- * Cereal
- * Canned fruits and vegetables
- * Rice, pasta and dried beans
- * Hygiene items (toothpaste, shaving items, soap, etc.)
- * Paper products (toilet paper, paper towels, etc.)
- * Infant products (diapers, wipes, formula, infant cereal, etc.)

PLEASE: No loose glass and plastic jars of baby food, as they will have to be discarded



Shelving chronicles: Notes from a bookseller's bookshelf

I love the new Nick Hornby (**JULIET NAKED**, Riverhead, hardback), all reflective and introspective about the meaning and power of rock and roll and the meaning and power of adulthood and parenthood. *Juliet, Naked* is a keeper. On my out of control bookshelves it's squeezed between early Oxford American Music issues, a 1981 Christgau's Record Guide, some favorite DaCapo Best Music Writing annuals, and **BOOTLEG**, by Clifton Heylin (Omnibus Press, paperback). Before he was a brilliant, obsessive Bob Dylan biographer, and way before P2P and Bit Torrent, Heylin wrote several entertaining and well-researched books about "the secret history of the other recording industry."

The den in my childhood home was covered floor to ceiling with psychology books. Serious titles on dark ominous spines, mostly hardbacks, lots of long words. Some of my earliest childhood reading memories are of pulling those books off the shelves and consuming chapters on child development, deviance, "the norm," and behavioral experiments. My father was chairman of the Psych Department at Middlebury College. Years later he laughed when I asked him about the variety of books in his collection. Most of them were sample editions of textbooks publishers would send to him for prospective course adoption.

Harry Potter books rule several shelves above my desk. My daughters were raised in the golden age of reading aloud. If you had a child in elementary school when **HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE** (J.K. Rowling, Scholastic Press, paperback) came out, you curled up on the couch each night and read them a chapter. All across the world everyone was doing that together. Then a year later the next book would arrive with the same enthusiasm. These magical releases were repeated later every other summer. Once again I imagined moms and dads, sons and daughters cozy together reading tales of our friend Harry. Soon enough and understandably, family members would sneak off and read ahead. And several years on, each person would want their own copy!

For a while books would be published earlier in England, so we would get those first of course. But the best perk of all time of being a bookseller was getting advance reading copies several months before the books official US release. We devoured those and shared them with our friends. Our copies are wonderfully dog-eared. Our sales rep sent doubles of every Harry bonanza.

Sarah Dessen has a new book out this year, **ALONG FOR THE RIDE** (Viking, hardback). No other writer writes so accessibly and honestly for young adults. And hits *The New York Times* bestseller lists with each new release! My middle school daughters embraced every one of her early books. She was their first "favorite writer." Once again her publisher's sales rep would send advance copies to the house and the girls would devour them and share them with their friends. What made her books extra special was that she lived just ten miles away over in Chapel Hill. While her stories are universal for the age group, some of the names and scenes were even more familiar. Sarah's books are crowded right next to J.K. Rowling's, close by Ann Martin, Alice Hoffman, and Ann Patchett. We are so lucky to have so many writers, and readers, in the Triangle.

My most yellowed accumulation of books has fond memories of yard sales and Goodwills. Just out of college, without money for new books, I decided I wanted to "collect" something unique. I wanted to have a used copy of every paperback edition of **JAWS** (Fawcett Books, paperback), all the different covers, all the different printings. I do have dozens now. The book has been rejacketed many times, for the movie tie-in, the DVD, and when Peter Benchley would release a new book. I just hope I haven't missed the graphic novel edition.

by John Valentine



WHEN YOU SHOP AT THE REGULATOR YOU SUPPORT LOCAL ECONOMY

For every \$10.00 you spend here, \$4.50 stays in this community. When you spend \$10.00 at a chain store, only \$1.30 stays in this area. (Our owners and all of our employees live here, we bank locally, and we buy many of our supplies from local businesses.) When you spend \$10.00 online, nothing stays local. This "local advantage" is so significant that if everyone in Durham shifted just 10% of their shopping from chain and on-line stores to locally owned, independent businesses, it would create 800 new jobs in the Bull City!

Shop Local First!



Staff faves in new non-fiction

EATING ANIMALS by Jonathan Safran Foer (Little Brown, hardback) For the novelist Jonathan Safran Foer, being a vegetarian has been an on again-off again struggle. Spurred by the birth of his son, he delves into a three-year research project on the meat industry, questioning the philosophy of our food and defining the stories we tell about it. For anyone who enjoyed Michael Pollan's *Omnivore's Dilemma*, *Eating Animals* operates as a response and a continuation of the discussion. The book is part autobiography but mostly research, and includes sections written from diverse voices across the debate: from the vegan who sets up slaughterhouses, to the PETA activist, to the heritage turkey farmer – we get a range of viewpoints that seek alternatives to our present-day factory-farm system. While the book seems most appropriate for vegetarians to give or receive, it is also for anyone interested in thinking of the meaning of our food and where it comes from.

by Jamie Hills

AN ALTAR IN THE WORLD by Barbara Brown Taylor (Harper One, hardback) Barbara Brown Taylor, an acclaimed preacher and author of the memoir *Leaving Church*, shares her insights about finding what is holy in everything. Paying attention to what we do daily—from hanging clothes on the line to walking, from simple interactions with people to allowing ourselves to get lost—blurs the distinction between the secular and the sacred, and helps us realize that everyday acts can be transformative and spiritually satisfying. For someone not attached to a particular church or spiritual path, I found her images sharp and wise and helpful.

by Nancy Blood

MANHOOD FOR AMATEURS by Michael Chabon (Harper, hardback) Chabon brings his considerable talents to bear on an often hilarious but dead-on depiction of “the state of the male” today. From the inferior new Legos to the splendors of “crap culture,” from the need for men to have a handbag—without, of course, looking like they are carrying a handbag—to faking it through a crisis, Chabon has us guys pinned right to the page—squirming, kicking, laughing, and screaming.

by Tom Campbell

INSIDE OF A DOG: What Dogs See, Smell, and Know by Alexandra Horowitz (Scribner, hardback) *Inside of a Dog* gets its title from the Groucho Marx quote that is the epigraph for the book: “Outside of a dog, a book is man’s best friend. Inside of a dog, it’s too dark to read.” Author Alexandra Horowitz applies a wealth of different perspectives throughout the book: personal knowledge about her dog Pumpernickel, research on dogs, scientific knowledge, the history of dogs and dog breeding, and a dog’s place in human society. It is in letting us see ourselves from a dog’s point of view (or sniff ourselves through a bloodhound’s highly attuned nose) that we get closest to the true experience of being a dog. And what is that like? As Horowitz writes near the end of the book, “it is smelly; it is well peopled with people... it is close to the ground; it is lickable. It either fits in the mouth or it doesn’t. It is in the moment. It is full of details, fleeting, and fast. It is written all over their faces. It is probably nothing like what it is like to be us.” *Inside of a Dog* is written by and for people who love dogs, but also for people who are fascinated by dogs, or for those who are simply fascinated by understanding the experience of something or someone other than themselves.

by Chelsea Baker

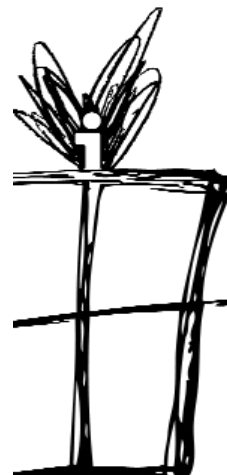
JUSTICE: What’s the Right Thing to Do? by Michael J. Sandel (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, hardback) More than 1,000 students sign up for Michael Sandel’s course on justice every time it is offered at Harvard. Reading this book, it’s easy to see why. Riveting social, political, and ethical choices are examined, grounded in the work of political and ethical philosophers. The perfect gift for political junkies, for anyone who likes to argue politics, for budding lawyers, etc.

by Tom Campbell

Upcoming Event! See page 6 for details!

THE JAZZ LOFT PROJECT: Photographs and Tapes of W. Eugene Smith from 821 Sixth Avenue, 1957-1965 by Sam Stephenson (Knopf, hardback) *Life* photographer Eugene Smith lived in New York from 1957–1965, in a loft apartment that became a late-night haunt of jazz musicians, including Charles Mingus, Zoot Sims, Bill Evans, Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins. Dropping in on the nighttime scene were the likes of Doris Duke, Norman Mailer, Diane Arbus, Robert Frank, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Salvador Dalí, as well as pimps, prostitutes, drug addicts, thieves, photography students, local cops, building inspectors, marijuana dealers, and others. Smith exposed more than 1,400 rolls of film over this eight-year period, photographing the jazz jams as well as life on the streets as seen from his window. He also recorded 4,000 hours of music on reel to reel tapes. Durham’s own Sam Stephenson discovered Smith’s photos and tapes and has spent the last seven years cataloging, archiving, selecting, and editing Smith’s materials for this book. An amazing time capsule.

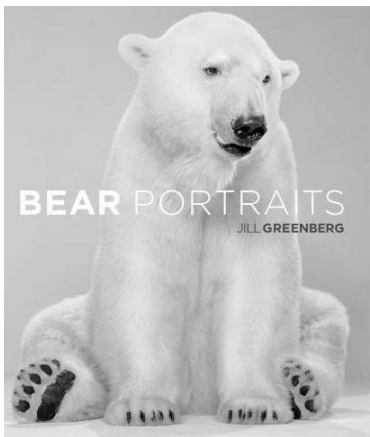
by Tom Campbell



WHEN YOU SHOP AT THE REGULATOR YOU SUPPORT THE ENVIRONMENT

Shipments that arrive at The Regulator, including special orders, average 24 books per box. When you order online, your order uses six times more packaging than books purchased from us. Extra packaging takes up more space, requiring 3X more trucks to bring books to Durham, from warehouses hundreds of miles away. (See the video on our web site for a fun look at this.)

Shop Local First!



Gifts to make you the talk of the tree

BEAR PORTRAITS by Jill Greenberg (Little Brown, hardback) You may recall last year's *Monkey Portraits*. While bears are not as diverse as the monkeys, the polar bear seems to be our current top charismatic megafauna, the poster-child for melting sea ice and also the ever-popular child's toy, the teddy bear. The portraits range from the adorable to the scary, cleverly paired with quotes like Woody Allen's "I don't think my parents liked me. They put a live teddy bear in my crib." In addition to portraying some adorable bears, the book has a sense of humor to it: A quote from Homer Simpson on one page is followed by a quote from Homer on the next. It's a fun book to leaf through.

by Jamie Hills

A fun book to find under the tree would be **PLAY: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul** by Stuart Brown (Avery, hardback) The theme of the book is that play is Serious Business. Well, not really. The theme is that play is good for us. It's especially good for children but it's also surprisingly beneficial for those of us who are former children, keeping our minds supple, active, and responsive. Know someone who is over-worked, overstressed? Give the gift of *Play*—the perfect antidote.

by Tom Campbell

BRIGHT WINGS: An Illustrated Anthology of Poems About Birds by Billy Collins and David Allen Sibley (Columbia University Press, hardback) This illustrated anthology of poems about birds makes a good gift for nature lovers, poetry lovers, and nature poetry lovers. Nearly every poet has a poem that features a bird, a long-standing symbol of the poet as singer. This collection brings many of those poems together in a nice gift book, paired with illustrations by David Allen Sibley, America's foremost bird illustrator, and edited by former U.S. poet Laureate Billy Collins.

by Jamie Hills

THE LITTLE PRINCE POP-UP BOOK by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (Houghton Mifflin, hardback) The classic tale has been revitalized in this unedited version of *The Little Prince*. The narrator's drawings hide behind flaps and you can make the Prince's beloved flower grow. The interactive nature of the pop-up adds a bit more charm to the already enchanting tale.

by Jamie Hills

CHRISMUKKAH: Everything You Need to Know to Celebrate the Hybrid Holiday by Ron Gompertz (Stewart, Tabori and Chang, paperback) With tips for the office holiday party or mixed-faith families, *Chrismukkah* contains loads of trivia, anecdotes, and fun facts that weave together Christmas and Hanukkah. A funny little book to get you in the mood for the holidays.

by Jamie Hills

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTED by David Javerbaum (Spiegel & Grau, paperback) The book, written by David Javerbaum, a correspondent for *The Daily Show*, skillfully satirizes both pregnancy and parenting guides, with a fetus asking at one point "Why won't my parents stop playing me Mozart?" Get this for your expecting friends and family members, and just make sure they have a non-joke guide for themselves as well.

by Chelsea Baker



WHEN YOU SHOP AT THE REGULATOR YOU SUPPORT DIVERSITY

You wouldn't want your house to look the same as everyone else's. So why would you want your community to look that way, with nothing but the same chain stores you can find anywhere and everywhere? Independent, locally owned businesses add character to a community.

Shop Local First!

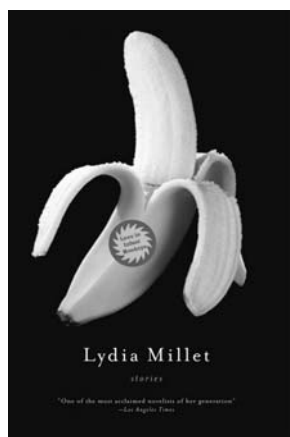
NEW GRAPHIC NOVELS ARE ENTERTAINING AND SMART

LOGICOMIX: An Epic Search for Truth by Apostolos Doxiadis, Christos Papadimitriou, and Alecos Papadatos (Bloomsbury, paperback) *Logicomix* is a book for thinkers—a new graphic novel, which details the life of Bertrand Russell. It is a history of logic, dealing with mathematics and philosophy, which follows "Bertie's" struggle for how we can know anything for sure. Continually concerned with not getting overly mathematical, the book uses metaphor to explain logical paradoxes and theories, and tries to remain in the realm of story, interweaving lines of poetry, scenes out of Greek tragedy, his critiques of post-war art and its uncertainty, and the moral dilemmas of life.

by Jamie Hills

THE CARTOON HISTORY OF THE MODERN WORLD, PART II: From the Bastille to Baghdad by Larry Gonick (Harper, paperback). It's done! The final volume in the Cartoon History series is here. Real history. Real fun. Serious, zany, opinionated, irreverent—perfect for getting up to speed on how we got to where we are now. You can start with this book and work back or start anywhere you like (there are six books altogether: *The Cartoon History of the Universe* Vols. I, II, and III; parts I and II of *The Cartoon History of the Modern World*; and *The Cartoon History of the United States*.) If only they could use these books in high school history classes! A perfect fit for ages 12 to 112.

by Tom Campbell



More fiction than you can shake a stick at

LOVE IN INFANT MONKEYS by Lydia Millet (Soft Skull Press, paperback) *Love in Infant Monkeys* makes a nice pair with *Eating Animals* (see **Non-Fiction**, page 3)—each short story in the collection centers around an animal and a celebrity, like Thomas Edison, Noam Chomsky, or Jimmy Carter. The story that really won me over was “The Lady and the Dragon,” which features the Kimodo dragon who bit Sharon Stone’s husband’s foot. The dragon eventually meets a Sharon Stone impersonator, who is held captive by an eccentric billionaire. Part of the praise of the book is the treatment of animals as characters (not as Disney figures) but real animals. The author works for a group devoted to protecting endangered species. But the stories also display quirkiness and a sense of humor when dealing with the human animal.

by Jamie Hills

ANCESTORS AND OTHERS: New and Selected Stories by Fred Chappell (St. Martin's Press, hardback) If this book has a problem it's that it takes too long to read. Each story is so good that when you've finished one, you need to take time to savor it and mull it over. Set mostly in the mountains of North Carolina, Fred Chappell's stories remind me of old fables. Fred is one of the grand old men of North Carolina fiction and poetry, and this collection showcases some of his very finest writing.

by Tom Campbell

SACRED HEARTS by Sarah Dunant (Random House, hardback) Author of two other Renaissance-era novels—*The Birth of Venus* and *In the Company of the Courtesan*—Dunant here explores the intricate world of convent life in 16th-century Italy. A new novice, 16-year-old Serafina, is brought to the convent against her will. While Serafina's enforced presence changes the lives of the nuns from the inside, the political ramifications of the Counter Reformation impact the convent from outside its walls. The driving force of this richly textured, multifaceted novel is passion—both of the flesh and of the spirit.

by Nancy Blood

EMILY'S GHOST: A Novel of the Bronte Sisters, by Denise Giardina (Norton, hardback), is an intensely readable, fictionalized story of the life of Emily Bronte and her two sisters, Charlotte and Anne. After I turned the last page I had that satisfying/vaguely discomforting feeling you get when you've just finished an exceptional book. All this, even when I never really paid all that much attention to the Brontes—until I read this book.

by Tom Campbell

I DO NOT COME TO YOU BY CHANCE by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani (Hyperion, paperback) In this humorous, lively, and provocative first novel, Nigerian writer Nwaubani takes us on a rollicking ride into the world of Nigerian e-mail scams. Engineering school graduate Kingsley Ibe can't find a job, and takes up with his notorious uncle, Cash Daddy, master of thousands of e-mail scams. As the story unfolds, we as Westerners can learn a lot—about Africa, about morality, exploitation, and ourselves.

by Nancy Blood

THERE ONCE LIVED A WOMAN WHO TRIED TO KILL HER NEIGHBOR'S BABY: Scary Fairy Tales by Ludmilla Petrushevskaya (Penguin, paperback) From Russia's premiere woman of letters is a new collection of her old short stories that

tend towards allegory, fable, and fairytale. Much like the Grimm fairytales of old, there is some matter-of-fact gore, plenty of widows and orphans, but also charming moments of description that create the feel of a fairytale. The characters don't live in castles—they have televisions, grow potatoes, clean their floors with bleach, and occasionally, with a little Soviet Russian flavor thrown in, someone will lose his Party card.

by Jamie Hills

DOG ON IT by Spencer Quinn (Atria Books, hardback) A mystery novel involving the inseparable Southern California PI duo of Chet and Bernie, told first person from Chet's point of view. Chet is a remarkable character, full of quirky insights, a strong sense of smell, and some impulsive, one might even say instinctive, behaviors that sometimes get the best of him. Chet, of course, is a dog. I laughed my way through many of the pages and now find that I'm looking at my own dog in a whole new light. *Dog On It* is a good mystery as well. What can be better? (For a non-fiction counterpart, see Chelsea Baker's review of *Inside of a Dog*, page 3.)

by Tom Campbell

LOOK AT THE BIRDIE: Unpublished Short Fiction by Kurt Vonnegut (Delacorte, hardback) For readers who have missed Kurt Vonnegut's brand of satire, humor, and compassion since he passed away two years ago, *Look at the Birdie* is an unexpected treat. The book contains 14 previously unpublished short stories from Vonnegut, along with his characteristically offhand line drawings. Compared to the two books of Vonnegut's writing published since his death (*Man Without a Country* and *Armageddon in Retrospect*), *Look at the Birdie* is more a deeply satisfying read. Especially for those who have read a lot of Vonnegut's work, this book feels like a re-introduction to a great author.

by Chelsea Baker



WHEN YOU SHOP AT THE REGULATOR YOU GET A GOOD VALUE

Only at The Regulator can you find new books, used books, and bargain books all in the same store. If you need to order a book, you don't pay a cent for shipping if you pick up your order at the store—and we can get most books in just a few days.

Shop Local First!

Upcoming events: November thru December

ART CHANSKY

Monday, November 30, 7:00 p.m.

Art Chansky will discuss and sign copies of his new book about UNC basketball, *Light Blue Reign: How a City Slicker, a Quiet Kansan, and a Mountain Man Built College Basketball's Longest-Lasting Dynasty*.

OMID SAFI

Tuesday, December 1, 7:00 p.m.

The editor of *Progressive Muslims*, UNC-CH Professor of Islamic Studies Omid Safi will discuss and sign copies of his new book, *Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet Matters*.

SAM STEPHENSON

Thursday, December 3, 7:00 p.m. (Doors open at 6:00 p.m.)

West End Wine Bar, 601 W. Main Street, Durham

Sam Stephenson will discuss and sign copies of his new book, *The Jazz Loft Project: Photographs and Tapes of W. Eugene Smith from 821 Sixth Avenue, 1957-1965*. Following the reading there will be music by Jazz Loft legend Ronnie Free and his trio, featuring guitarist Royce Campbell. (More about this event on page 3).

PETER'S PAJAMA PARTY

Friday, December 4, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for this popular, fun, engaging series featuring musician and songwriter Peter Holsapple, who will share books, stories and songs for kids from 2 to 10 to 110.

LEWIS SHINER

Tuesday, December 8, 7:00 p.m.

Local author Lewis Shiner will read from and sign copies of his new retrospective short story collection, *Collected Stories*.

JEANETTE STOKES

Wednesday, December 9, 7:00 p.m.

Durham author Jeanette Stokes will discuss and sign copies of her book, *Hurricane Season: Living Through a Broken Heart*.

WAYNE MARTIN AND THE PINECONE STRING BAND CD

Thursday, December 10, 7:00 p.m.

Wayne Martin, the senior program manager for communities at the N.C. Arts Council and a founding member of PineCone, has produced a new 2 CD collection, *Going Down to Raleigh*:

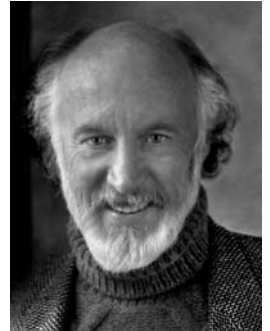
Stringband Music in the North Carolina Piedmont 1976-1998

Martin will discuss the field recordings that are included on the CDs and that highlight the distinctive music traditions of the Piedmont region and conclude with a live performance.

A SPECIAL HOLIDAY EVENING WITH ALLAN GURGANUS

Tuesday, December 15, 7:00 p.m.

In what is becoming a Christmas tradition at The Regulator, Allan Gurganus will reprise his classic yet continually evolving drama, *"A Fool for Christmas."* Originally commissioned by NPR's "All Things Considered" for broadcast on Christmas Eve, 2005, "A Fool for Christmas" has Gurganus channeling Verne, a heavyset pet-store owner who assists with a mystical holiday birth at his North Carolina mall workplace. Laughter and tears, are guaranteed. We'll add some mulled wine, hot apple cider, and holiday cookies to help round out the evening. If you've yet to hear Allan read/perform this marvelous tale, you have quite a treat in store. And if you have heard it, a repeat treat can be ever so fine!



PETER'S PAJAMA PARTY—A Special Christmas edition!

Friday, December 18, 7:00 p.m.

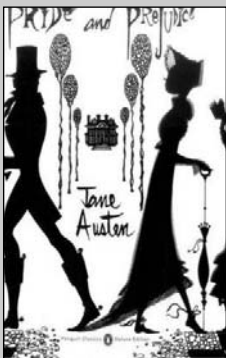
The last Pajama Party before Christmas! Get ready to sing along!



WHEN YOU SHOP AT THE REGULATOR YOU SUPPORT COMMUNITY

The Regulator contributes to the cultural life of our community by creating a space for authors—from the Triangle and from around the world—to meet with their readers. We host book groups, programs for children, and provide space for community meetings. We also contribute to dozens of local schools and community organizations. The taxes our business pays support everything from parks to police to fixing potholes. On-line businesses don't do any of these things.

Shop Local First!



PENGUIN CLASSICS DELUXE EDITION Yes, you could get your niece or nephew *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies* this year. But, especially if they've never read the original, why not get them a nice edition of it instead? The Penguin Classics Deluxe Editions, illustrated by renowned fashion illustrator Ruben Toledo, include *Wuthering Heights*, *The Scarlett Letter*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. The stylish and whimsical images on each extend creatively onto the back and French flaps of each cover.

PENGUIN CLASSICS HARDCOVERS Another beautifully designed set of classics comes in hardcover and is also by Penguin. The Penguin Classics Hardcover books consist of eight titles, each decorated with repeating motifs in beautifully complementary colors. The books covers are dust jacket free and cloth bound, which gives them a great library book feel. The books are also sturdy enough to last many re-readings, and beautiful enough to help inspire their readers.

Back to the real world

More and more, it seems, the (digital) world is too much with us. The Internet. Blackberrys. I-phones. I-pods. Cell phones. Email. Texting. Twitter. Facebook. Television. DVDs. DVRs. apps abounding everywhere. This is a list that could go on and on. Some days it seems like this stuff has completely taken over our lives.

But, for now at least, each of these digital toys still comes with an “off” button. Think about what life would be like if we turned all of them off for an hour a day, for a few hours a day, maybe even for a whole day once a week. It could be done—even though you may be hyperventilating and breaking out in a cold sweat as you read this.

Imagine some of the things you could do if you tuned out all life’s digital distractions. You could have a conversation with someone—face to face! If you’re in the mood for music—sing! Or play an instrument. Or learn how to play an instrument. Get together with some other folks and make some music.

If you’re in the mood for drama, go to a live local theatre performance. You can read a book (of course). You can read aloud to other people. Or be read to. You can join (or start) a book group. You can go to a local bookshop to hear and converse with an author. You can take a walk. Ride a bike. Garden. Take up meditation. Practice yoga. Dance. Cook a meal from scratch. Host a dinner party.

This list, too, could go on and on. And really, don’t these things sound more appealing than the things on that first list?

Not to sound too radical, but perhaps the time has come for a “Back to the Real World” movement. A movement where people go cold turkey on the virtual, digital, hyper-connected world and spend at least a few hours a week living solely in the here and now. The real world (you might still remember it?), where things move a bit slower, where the textures are richer, where the satisfactions can run deeper.

Join the movement: Back to the Real World! (An unlimited time offer. Not sold in stores. See your own life for details.)

by Tom Campbell

Thinking of buying one of those e-book readers?

You might want to consult the website www.ebookskeptic.net first. The site compiles academic research comparing reading on paper to reading on a screen in the areas of comprehension and long-term memory. Reading on a screen does not fare well. If understanding and remembering what you’ve read is at all important to you, the research shows that paper is still the way to go.

TWO BOOKS FOR THE FOODIE ON YOUR LIST

PÂTISSERIES OF PARIS by Jamie Cahill, photographs by Alison Harris (The Little Bookroom, paperback) Some books are for reading and others are for eating, and while I’m not technically recommending that you eat *Pâtisseries of Paris*, you will probably be tempted to. While organized as a travel book, it is also a perfect small gift book, with enough beautiful pictures, descriptions, and flavor sections on patisserie culture to be worth it for those alone.

by Chelsea Baker

THE WAY TO COOK: 2 DVDS AND 64 PAGE BOOKLET by Julia Child. Twenty five years ago, Julia Child recorded more than 6 hours of basic (well, basic for Julia) cooking instructions. Soup to nuts, as they say, with salads, main courses and deserts in between. Unavailable for many years, Random House is making this classic available once more for a mere \$24.95.

by Tom Campbell

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