

Let's Talk About It

A Book Discussion Program for Adults

All programs are held at the Bridgewater Library. Discussions are led by guest faculty from Let's Talk About It is made possible through the support of the Friends of the Bridgewater Library and participating faculty from Raritan Valley Community College.

Participation is free and all adults are welcome to attend. Sign up is suggested, although walk-ins are always welcome provided there is room. To sign up visit or call the Adult Reference Desk: (908 526-4016, ext 105.) To sign up online click the "Programs" link at the top of any page and go to the "Calendar of Events."

Fall 2006 Schedule

Book: ***American Theocracy*** by Kevin Phillips

Guest Professor: Ronald Tyson

Discussion: Thursday September 21, 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Note: Be Prepared for a Lively Discussion!

"Former Republican strategist Phillips takes an uncompromising view of the political coalition, led by radical religion that is driving America to the brink of disaster. From Ancient Rome to the British Empire, Phillips demonstrates that every world-dominating power has been brought down by a related set of causes: a lethal combination of global over-reach, militant religion, resource problems, and ballooning debt. It is this same axis of ills that has come to define America's political and economic identity in the past decade. Military miscalculations in the Middle East, the surge of fundamentalist religion, the staggering national debt, the costs of U.S. oil dependence--together these factors are undermining our nation's security, solvency, and standing in the world. If left unchecked, the same forces will bring a debt-bloated, preachy, energy-starved America to its knees." --From publisher description

"... Kevin Phillips established himself as a powerful critic of the political and economic forces that rule - and imperil - the United States, tracing the ever more alarming path of the emerging Republican majority's rise to power. Now Phillips takes an uncompromising view of the newest stage of the GOP majority: an inept and weakly led coalition, dominated by religious zealotry, that is losing America the world's respect - and endangering her future." -- From Book Jacket

Book: ***The Things They Carried*** by Tim O'Brien

Guest Professor: Neil Warrence

Discussion: Thursday October 19, 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Based on the author's recollections, this is a collection of 22 short stories about the personalities and exploits of a fictional platoon of American soldiers in Vietnam. "O'Brien begins by sharing the talismans and treasures his select small band of young soldiers carry into battle." "Sometimes the author tells the same story from different points of view, revealing the lingering, sometimes consuming, effect war leaves on the soul." --School Library Journal

"Narrated by the writer 20 years later, the stories reflect his attempt through memory, imagination, and language to recover self." --CHOICE Magazine

Book: ***Sailing Alone Around the Room: New and Selected Poems***, by Billy Collins

Guest Professor: Wendy Rosenberg

Discussion: Thursday November 16, 7:30 - 9:00 pm

Sailing Alone Around the Room, by America's Poet Laureate, Billy Collins, contains both new poems and a generous gathering from his earlier collections *The Apple That Astonished Paris*, *Questions About Angels*, *The Art of Drowning*, and *Picnic, Lightning*. These poems show Collins at his best, performing the kinds of distinctive poetic maneuvers that have delighted and fascinated so many readers. They may begin in curiosity and end in grief; they may start with irony and end with lyric transformation; they may, and often do, begin with the everyday and end in the infinite. Possessed of a unique voice that is at once plain and melodic, Billy Collins has managed to enrich American poetry while greatly widening the circle of its audience. --Syndetic Solutions, Inc.

Book: ***Altered Carbon***, by Richard K Morgan

Guest Professor: Andrew Manno

Discussion: Thursday December 15, 7:30 - 9:00 pm

In the 25th century, it's difficult to die a final death. Humans are issued a cortical stack, implanted into their bodies, into which consciousness is "digitized" and from which—unless the stack is hopelessly damaged—their consciousness can be downloaded ("resleeved") with its memory intact, into a new body. While the Vatican is trying to make resleeving (at least of Catholics) illegal, centuries-old aristocrat Laurens Bancroft brings Takeshi Kovacs (an Envoy, a specially trained soldier used to being resleeved and trained to soak up clues from new environments) to Earth, where Kovacs is resleeved into a cop's body to investigate Bancroft's first mysterious, stack-damaging death. To solve the case, Kovacs must destroy his former Envoy enemies; outwit Bancroft's seductive, wily wife; dabble in United Nations politics; trust an AI that projects itself in the form of Jimi Hendrix; and deal with his growing physical and emotional attachment to Kristin Ortega, the police lieutenant who used to love the body he's been given. Kovacs rockets from the seediest hellholes on Earth, through virtual reality torture, into several gory firefights, and on to some exotic sexual escapades. Morgan's 25th-century Earth is convincing, while the questions he poses about how much Self is tied to body chemistry and how the rich believe themselves above the law are especially timely. --Publisher's Weekly