Sam Kean, popular science author, spoke to a large and receptive crowd at the Annual Friends of Dacus Library Meeting on October 5. His topic was “Brains, Genes, Spoons: The Stories of Science.”

Kean’s interest in science was sparked in the third grade by the strange behavior of mercury that he collected from broken thermometers. The substance had the qualities of both a metal and a liquid. Kean’s mother was able to clean up the mercury with a toothpick, which always fascinated him.

When Kean started college he originally decided to major in physics, but later decided lab work was not his forte, so he changed to English. Since then he has authored three popular science bestsellers The Disappearing Spoon, The Violinist’s Thumb and The Tale of the Dueling Neurosurgeons.

Kean writes and relates stories that feel spur an interest in science. Just three examples are: The forming the element gallium, which melts at 85°F, into a spoon and then using it to stir a cup of coffee. This is a popular prank that astounds persons when they stir the beverage and the spoon melts away.

Another story Kean told was of the unusual finger dexterity of Italian violinist Niccolo Paganini, who likely suffered from Marfan Syndrome, a genetic disorder of the connective tissue. The condition explained his great expertise with the violin.

Kean also indicated that the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition used mercury as a laxative. To this day, the trail the expedition took can be determined via mercury in the soil.

After his talk was over, Kean autographed copies of his books and chatted with members of the audience.
At the Annual Meeting on October 5, Dr. Ronnie Faulkner, secretary-treasurer of the Friends of Dacus Library, announced the official launch of the raffle of a one week stay at a beach house located at North Myrtle Beach. Said raffle was authorized by the Friends Board. The drawing will take place on March 1 and will be for the 2016 season (between May and September).

The beach house will sleep up to 9 persons and would rent for a week for up to $2000. The house has three baths, a screened-in porch, and other amenities. Tickets are being sold for $100 each and are available from Dr. Faulkner at the Dacus Library 103 (faulknerr@winthrop.edu or 803/323-2262), or from any member of the Friends of Dacus Library. More details are available on the web at: http://tinyurl.com/DacusFriendsRaffle.

All proceeds from ticket sales will go to the Friends of Dacus Library Endowed Fund, which was established to support funding of materials, services, and other library needs. The Fund currently has $68,444. The goal for the endowment fund as established by the Board is $100,000. The monies are under the control of the Board in consultation with the Dean. The Board will not authorize expenditures from the funds until that level has been reached. It is hoped that the raffle fundraising effort will bring us much closer to our goal.

As usual, the Annual Meeting saw the election of officers and some new Friends Board Members. Jane White will be continuing as chair and Janet Gray as vice-chair, respectively. The newly elected Board Members and their terms are: Marsha Bollinger (2016-18), Chair of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies; Nancy Davidson (2016-18), retired Dacus Reference Librarian; and Joyce Simpson (2016-18), Winthrop Class of ’65. Sandra White, Class of ’63, was elected to serve the partial term (2015-16) created by the resignation and move to Oregon of Ruth Webb. We very much appreciate each person’s willingness to serve in these vital roles.

Dr. Faulkner reported that the Friends had collected just over $10,300 in contributions over the past year. The organization currently had total assets of $73,090 and some 67 members.
Blew Out My Flip Flop!... Dean Herring

Political campaigns notwithstanding, it’s possible to resort to philosophy and find something other than eggheads scrambling gibberish to no effect. In this case, it is Kant, a favorite of mine for many reasons, but one not being his often inscrutability of articulation. I have found, however, one less obtuse and therefore far from otiose musing appropriate to relate here. “Beneficence,” he writes in the Doctrine of Virtue, “is a duty. He who often practices this, and sees his beneficent purpose succeed comes at last to really love him whom he has benefitted.” Kant goes on to say, “Do good to [your] neighbor, and this beneficence will produce in you the love of [mankind] (as a settled habit of inclination to beneficence).”

So, pretty heady stuff following a line from Jimmy Buffet’s “Margaretville,” isn’t it? How does it fit?

As most of you know by now—and if you don’t it’s elsewhere in this newsletter—we’re raffling off a beach house for one week, to be taken sometime between May – September 2016. Is there a connection between this beach house, Jimmy Buffet and Kant?

I rather think that there is. About three years ago, we began an ambitious plan to raise $100,000 for the Dacus materials and services budget. That budget includes everything from journals, to books, to ebooks, to ejournals, to digital offerings, laptops, iPads, Internet access—well, you get the drift. It’s really everything we have to have in order to connect students to information. Our materials budget is now over $1 million annually. This may not seem like much to those of you who went to research institutions where such budgets exceed five times that amount, but for Winthrop, it’s more than a chunk of change. It’s a formidable chunk of change. And frankly, it’s a struggle to get even that amount to cover everything faculty and students ask for.

The idea behind our endowment fund is help us include some of those items we cannot otherwise provide. The fact that we have never had such a fund made our ambitious plan even more of a reach than it might first seem. But after much good work by Dr. Faulkner and others, the goal is withineyeshot. We are about $30,000 from the end.

Since we are so close, some, might think, why not simply stop and use what we have. The wisdom of the Friends Executive Board anticipated that temptation and wisely forestalled it by placing an embargo on those funds until we reach our $100,000 goal.

Enter the beach house raffle. We hope by this raffle to put an end to the remaining goal. Hence, we are offering these raffle tickets for $100 each. If you are better at math than I, you can see that anyone who enters will have terrific odds as we plan to disburse no more than 250 tickets. And someone is going to win when March rolls around.

Now I get that $100 isn’t loose change for anyone these days. But if you see it as a beneficent for Dacus—ah, there’s Kant—then perhaps we have made it a bit more palatable. If you see this amount as too much, why not get together with a few friends and make a joint purchase? This fabulous house sleeps nine! What a great vacation this would be for a women’s week out, or a men’s get-away. It’s Christmas, so why not stuff a stocking, or make an additional gift by buying a raffle ticket? There are so many ways that this gift to us, and to you, could benefit more than just the two of us, even if you don’t win. Think of it: years from now, students will be enjoying the benefit—the beneficence—of this gift long after we’re all gone. Now that’s a gift that keeps giving!

Your ticket purchase will help this library move forward. No, it won’t put an end to all our problems but it will go a long way to help us now and in perpetuity. The great thing about giving to libraries is that your gift doesn’t help just one set of students, or only one discipline, but all students, and all disciplines. We hope you’ll see it this way and will rush to help us to achieve this most important milestone.

And while you’re at it, have a very Merry Christmas!
BOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 2015

On November 2 the Friends of Dacus Library Board met in the Library Conference Room.

Dean Mark Herring gave a report on the move of the library to the OCLC WorldShare Management Service (WMS), a cloud based library system, and the creation in the past year of the Winthrop University Digital Commons. The Digital Commons provides an avenue for faculty publications, Winthrop theses, and materials from Archives to be made available via the new website at: http://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/.

Following his remarks a number of issues were discussed, including volunteer recruitment for Homecoming to man tables at the DiGiorgio Campus Center and at Winthrop Coliseum in order to promote the Friends Beach House Raffle. Tickets were to be sold at these locations on November 13 and 14.

Dr. Faulkner reported that the overall costs of the annual meeting that was held on October 5 was $3,431, including meal, honorarium, and travel costs for speaker.

The question of speakers for the Spring and Fall of 2016 was taken up. A list of five possibilities were discussed. Dr. Ronnie Faulkner agreed to proceed with the list and see who could be recruited for future, starting with Ron Rash, a native of York County who teaches at Western Carolina University. The movie “The World Made Straight” (re-released in 2015) was based on one of his books. Several persons had recommended him as a potential speaker.

CURRENT FRIENDS MEMBERSHIPS 2016

IF YOUR NAME IS NOT BELOW, THEN YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2016 HAS EXPIRED. PLEASE RENEW USING THE FORM AT PAGE 6.

George and Ashley H. Barron
Dr. Roger Baumgarte
Dr. Marsha and Mark Bollinger
Rick and Kay Carlisle (LIFE)
Carolyn B. Carpenter
Rita F. Cater
Byrnes & Alice B. Coleman (LIFE)
Caroline B. Cooney (LIFE)
Nancy Cornwell-Daves (LIFE)
Dr. Kelly and Beth Costner
Gloria J. Crank
Ian and Nancy Davidson
Dr. Luckett Davis
Dr. Ronnie W. Faulkner
Edmund J. and Pat FitzGerald
Bob and Jane Gorman
Janet Gray & Russell E. Luke (LIFE)
Dr. Mark Y. and Carol Herring
Rick and Kim Lee (LIFE)
Simms M. and Doris Leitner
Lateshia Locklear-Theroux
David and Judy Lyon
Ray and Sherron Marshall
Dr. Antje Mays
Joann Woods McMaster
Randy & Kay McSpadden (LIFE)
Bessie Meeks
Paul and Cindy Nigro (LIFE)
Dr. Terry L. Norton
Louise Pettus (LIFE)
Joyce Plyler & Mark Horoschak (LIFE)

Dr. Marilyn S. and Roger Sarow
Kenneth & Mary Sheetz
Dr. Spiro J. Shetuni
Baxter & Joyce Simpson
Gale Teaster & Henry Woods
Dr. Jack W. Weaver (LIFE)
Ruth K. Webb (LIFE)
Dr. Jane & Bill White (LIFE)
Spratt & Sandra White
A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

My previous newsletter essays have been about my own reading. I am now reporting on my husband, Bill, who several months ago began to spend (what seemed to me) inordinate amounts of time reading his phone. Wondering if he had acquired a new burdensome workload or a new group of chatty friends, I finally asked, “Why are you reading your phone so much?” Bill explained that he had decided to take up a new project: reading the Charles Dickens novels in the order in which they were published. An English major in college, Bill has always read widely. He became interested in visiting (or revisiting) classic literature when he learned it could be downloaded to his phone for practically nothing. He re-read *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, then *Treasure Island*, and after encountering a Charles Dickens society, was prompted to start reading the Dickens novels.

Bill was not sure that he remembered any of Dickens besides *A Christmas Carol*. And not having any favorites or fond memories, he decided to begin at the beginning and read the books in the order that they became available to Dickens’ readers. This took him to Wikipedia (where else) where he saw a list beginning with *Sketches by Boz*, *The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and so forth. Each of these selections was available for free or in an illustrated edition for a dollar or two. Bill was much better able to deal with the convoluted 19th century sentence structures as an adult reader than as a high school student. What’s more, he had sufficient life experience to really appreciate the uncanny ability of Dickens to depict the relationships among people, particularly husbands and wives. Now that the works are available to him easily (on his phone) and now that it is voluntary, he finds that he enjoys reading Dickens immensely and has progressed as far as *Little Dorrit*. The thing he never got before is how hilariously funny Dickens can be. I can’t believe how readily he laughs aloud and insists on reading me a witty description of a character or an encounter.

Fascinated by this new penchant in his life, I turned to Wikipedia and read several biographies of Charles Dickens myself. I had no idea the author worked in a factory at twelve putting labels on jars of shoe black when his father and family were imprisoned in Marshalsea Debtor’s Prison because of his father’s inability to live within his means. For Dickens, being forced to leave school, wondering “how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age;” his rise as a court reporter, news reporter and then essayist and serial novelist; his marriage and ten children; followed by his disengagement from his wife and love for another woman helped me to begin to understand how he acquired his descriptive ability of the times and the need for reform. I can envision reporters on the New York docks crying out as another monthly edition was shipped across the sea from Britain, “Just tell us! IS Little Nell dead?”

Not being a linear person, I am going to start with *A Christmas Carol*, because of the season and because I want to see how much the film versions vary from the original. Then I will move on to *David Copperfield*, reportedly the most autobiographical Dickens’ novel, and then perhaps *A Tale of Two Cities*. I will use my Kindle which is a delight for me because of its large print functionality for people with poor eyesight.

But, now I am wondering how many of you just read “new” books or do you also return to the classics from time to time? Also, do you use the new technological devices or do you prefer hardback versions?

Write and let me know – and maybe I’ll quote you in my next chairman’s column.

Sincerely, Jane White
whitejanej@gmail.com
Membership Application: The Friends of Dacus Library (Mail to address in box below)

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Primary Email Address: ________________________________
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If you wish to make a gift ___ in honor of, or ___ in memory of someone, please indicate whom:

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