

For Immediate Release

The Newburyport Literary Festival

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2007 Newburyport Literary Festival Launched

The Newburyport Literary Association announced today that the second annual Newburyport Literary Festival will begin Friday, April 27, and will run through Sunday, April 29. According to festival director Vicki Hendrickson, this year's festival will honor acclaimed author Peter Guralnick of West Newbury, Massachusetts, author of the prize-winning two-volume biography of Elvis Presley, *Last Train to Memphis* and *Careless Love*, and, most recently, *Dream Boogie: The Triumph of Sam Cooke*. Guralnick, who currently is writer-in-residence at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, will return to Newburyport for the festival. Three events on Friday evening and during the day on Saturday will honor his work.

Hendrickson reported that the 2007 festival has expanded from its first year. More than 70 authors will participate in over 60 panels, events, and readings. Events for children, teens, and adults will fill the downtown churches, theaters, and bookstores. Nearly 3,000 people visited Newburyport for the festival in 2006, and organizers expect bigger audiences this year.

Friday, April 27

On Friday, L. A. Meyer, the acclaimed author of the young-adult series *Bloody Jack Adventures*, will spend the afternoon at Nock Middle School in Newburyport. He will meet and talk with middle-school students from Newburyport and the Triton School District, all of whom have been reading the first book in the series, *Bloody Jack: Being an Account of the Curious Adventures of Mary "Jacky" Faber, Ship's Boy*, which has

been hailed as "... a memorable piece of historical fiction." Copies of *Bloody Jack* have been donated to the students through a generous gift from the Institution for Savings and the Newburyport Five Cent Savings Bank Charitable Foundation and with the assistance of Jabberwocky Bookshop.

Events move to downtown Newburyport on Friday evening with "A Conversation with Peter Guralnick." National Public Radio personality and film critic Elvis Mitchell will interview Guralnick. Their conversation will explore the experience of writing about some of the most important cultural figures of our time. The opening night gala will follow, welcoming authors to Newburyport and kicking off the festival with a reception and dinner. (Tickets are required for the gala. The festival web site has information on how to reserve tickets for this event.)

Saturday, April 28

Panels, readings, and other events will take place in downtown Newburyport all day Saturday.

Children and Teens: This year the program features more than 15 events for children, 'tweens, and teens. "We learned from the feedback from last year that people wanted more children's events," Hendrickson said, "and we've responded." Among the children's authors scheduled to appear are Ed Emberley, Wade Zahares, Anna Vojtech, and Grace Lin. Christopher Golden, a master of fantasy popular with both teens and adults, will read and talk about the genre. The poetry slam for teens was a smash hit last year, and this year's program features an encore.

Fiction: The festival program has much to intrigue adults whether they are readers of historical fiction, mystery, short stories, or literary fiction. Among the notable fiction authors are Jon Clinch, Anita Diamant, Junot Diaz, Andre Dubus III, Julia Glass, Aine Greaney, Jennifer Haigh, and Tom Perrotta, and Frank Schaeffer. Mystery writers Linda Barnes, Dana Cameron, and Archie Mayor round out the list.

Nonfiction: Nonfiction events from biography to history to nature, music, and film will run throughout the day. Bestselling authors who will take part in the festival include biographers Wil Haygood and Hazel Rowley; historians Diana Preston and Peter Nichols;

and science and natural-history writers Colin Woodard, Deborah Cramer, Donald Kroodsma, and Mike O'Connor.

Poetry: Poetry is celebrated at the festival again this year, and many members of the Powow River Poets will be reading from their work and welcoming poetry lovers new and old. Vermont poet Sydney Lea, author of stories, poems, essays, and criticism and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in poetry, will be honored by the festival this year.

Black and White and Blues: The closing event on Saturday night will be a grand finale of reading, music, dance, and tribute. Modeled in part on National Public Radio's popular *Selected Shorts*, actors will read from work by Peter Guralnick and others. Exit Dance Theatre of Newburyport and Boston rock/roots singer Dennis Brennan will perform as well.

Sunday, April 28

The Parker River National Wildlife Refuge will host an event with Rachel Carson's biographer Mark Hamilton Lytle, and the Joppa Flats Audubon Center will welcome children with an event featuring favorite nature books. On Sunday evening, Newburyport's Fourth Annual Favorite Poem Project will end the weekend at the Firehouse Center.

About the festival

The 2007 Newburyport Literary Festival (NLF) runs from Friday, April 27, through Sunday, April 29. A three-day celebration of reading, writing, and the love of books, this year's festival features more than 70 writers of distinguished fiction and non-fiction—including short story writers, children's authors, biographers, nature writers, critics, screenwriters, poets, novelists, and journalists—who will read and discuss their work in venues throughout Newburyport's historic downtown.

The vision of the Newburyport Literary Festival is shared by many individuals and organizations. The NLF is especially grateful for the generous support of our founding sponsors, the Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank Charitable Foundation and the Institution for Savings, who have made it possible for the festival to take root and flourish. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Newburyport Cultural

Council, a local agency that is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

All festival events are wheelchair accessible and open to the public. All events are free, except for the opening night gala. For complete information about the festival, including event times and venues, please visit: www.newburyportliteraryfestival.org.