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Memorial Library's Phillip Lee, far right, accepts one of the books donated by Tyrone, Okla., writer Sherrilyn Polf, while her fellow authors, Jennifer McMurray, C.L. Collar and Lynn Donovan, wait to give him their books. L&T photos/Robert Pierce

By ROBERT PIERCE

• Leader & Times

Book signings are a common sight at libraries and bookstores all across America, and another practice that is becoming regular is when libraries themselves host a group of authors for a signing.

Liberal's Memorial Library had one such gathering Saturday morning, as two local writers, and two others, joined forces to sign copies of their books and donate copies of some of their books

to the library.

Jennifer McMurrain from Bartlesville, Okla., along with her mother, C.L. Collar of Darrouzett, Texas, Lynn Donovan of Liberal and Sherrilyn Polf of Tyrone, Okla., came to the library to do just that. McMurrain said the event, entitled Authors' Day, was designed in an effort to provide encouragement for each other.

"Writers should support one another," she said. "Very seldom does a reader pick up a book from Nora Roberts and say, 'That's it. I'm only reading Nora Roberts from now on.'"

McMurrain said there are enough readers for everyone in the group, and having an event such as Authors' Day pulls in more people.



"Somebody might want to come and see Lynn, and somebody might want to come see me and actually sell a book to Lynn," she said. "Writers should always help each other out. I'm a big believer in writer karma."

Saturday's event was Donovan's brainchild, and as a writer of Christian fiction, she believes supporting her fellow writers is "planting seed."

"By helping other people, it helps you, and God blesses you for what you've done for someone else," she said.

Collar, who writes children's fantasy, said she feels the event is a great tool to get her books into the hands they were designed for.

"These are children's books, and that is the best way that I know to get them in the hands of kids," she said.

McMurrain said the majority of her books are meant for adults, but they can be read by all ages. She added she writes in a variety of genres.

"My first novel is historical fiction set during the Great Depression," she said. "That's 'Quail Crossings.' 'Winter Song' is a paranormal romance about ghosts, not vampires. The sequel to Quail Crossings will be out in the fall."

In addition to writing, McMurrain has also worked in libraries, and that experience has taught her about the tight budgets the facilities have.

"We want to give back to our readers and to our libraries," she said. "We know that they can't necessarily purchase our books, especially when a lot of us independent authors aren't in the big book sellers."

After getting the idea for Authors Day, Donovan e-mailed Memorial Library's Phillip Lee, and after exchanging messages, the two decided to give the event a go.

"Today was the day that we chose," Lee said of Saturday. "Unfortunately, we didn't realize that everything was together. We thought it was a really good idea. Maybe we'll do this once a year. We'll definitely have more book signings. A lot of libraries do this."

Donovan initially met McMurrain at a Christmas arts and crafts event and introduced herself as a local author who wanted to meet other writers.

“She gave me her name and another author’s name who couldn’t come today,” Donovan said. “I got with them, and we did some other book signings. It all comes from that. We need to help each other, and it’s more successful when there’s more than one author.”

McMurrain called writing a “lonely profession” and said authors need to find other writers who understand a plot twist.

“Other writers will be excited for you,” she said.

Collar said unlike writers themselves, readers don’t seem to understand how hard it is for an author to do things like kill off a character in a story.

“They mourn that character’s death,” she said.

“There’s a saying, ‘No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader,’” McMurrain said.

As for what’s next for the group, all of the writers have stories in the works.

“My sequel to Quail Crossings will be out in the fall,” McMurrain said.

“Katie McCory and the Dagger of Truth, it’s a stand alone book, but it does have a follow up,” Collar said. “There will be two more books, and I’m working on the second book now. I’m trying to put out another anthology of magic. The stories will all be a little different, but they all involve magic.”

Donovan has a sequel to her recent novels, “The Wishing Well Curse” and “Thorns of Betrayal,”

that should be coming out at the beginning of 2015.

“I also have another ghost story, ‘The Rocking Horse Shadow,’ where I’ve already signed a contract with a small publisher,” she said. “It’ll be out later this year, and at Christmas, I have a Christmas novella called ‘Christmas Grace: Signing Seeds.’”

Polf, who writes historical fiction, has the final segment of her “Engineers of Flight” series coming out soon, and she is already working on a new set of books.

“My next one, the first book is pretty well put together,” she said. “It’ll be a Middle Age group of young people. It’ll be a time slide. Kids will slide into different history places, and they’ll learn about history.”

Donovan and Lee both said they are looking at making Authors Day an annual event, and although the writers themselves may have only been at the library for one day, the books they have written are now amongst the many stories on shelves for patrons to enjoy.

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