

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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A Tale of Our City: Jersey City Joins the Big Read The First Annual Book Festival Celebrating Our Authors & Promoting Reading in Our Community

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, the Jersey City Municipal Council, the Free Public Library and the Division of Cultural Affairs present “A Tale of Our City,” Jersey City’s First Book Festival – “Celebrating Our Authors & Promoting Reading in Our Community.” This festival will run from **10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** on **Saturday, September 13, 2008** in **Van Vorst Park**, at the corner of Jersey Avenue & Montgomery Street.

The Jersey City Free Public Library’s first book festival, “**A Tale of Our City**,” promotes literacy and encourages the community to read. It is also a celebration of Jersey City authors and those who have written about Jersey City. Set in Van Vorst Park, the organizers of the event have created a dynamic literary experience that features a variety of literary-themed tents. The festival is free and open to the public.

“This is a cooperative effort by our City and the Jersey City Free Public Library to develop more interest in reading among all of our residents, especially elementary and high school students,” said **Mayor Healy**. “Reading enables an individual to gain insight into the meaning and workings of life while at the same time allows for cultural development and a sharpening of the mind that we can all benefit from!”

Major funding for the **A Tale of Our City: Annual Book Festival** has been provided by the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** under the federal agency’s **The Big Read** program, designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. It also attracts more than 200 communities nationwide. The Big Read brings together partners all across the country to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment.

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The *Jersey City Authors Tent* will showcase authors from Jersey City and authors who have written about Jersey City; at the *Library Tent* visitors will receive a free copy of *Fahrenheit 451*, if they show their Library Card or Apply for a Library Card at the Event; the *Hispanic Heritage Foundation Tent* will highlight Hispanic authors and, in cooperation with Biblioteca Criolla, New Jersey's only Hispanic library, will have Spanish-language books available for attendees; the *Sensory Tent (presented by Beth Cohen, of Cohen Arts Education)* will present local community leaders, including Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, who will read excerpts from best-loved children's books and will combine interactive literacy and music activities for special needs children;; the *Book Swap* will be an area where residents are encouraged to come & 'swap' actual books, magazines, etc. with their friends and neighbors. The *Cultural Affairs Fun Tent* will feature face painting and fun activities for children including free book covers and bookmarks.

The featured authors are:

Charles P. Caldes, author of *Jersey City's JOURNAL SQUARE* with McGinley & Bergen Squares, is a Jersey City-native who is involved in many businesses and wrote books about the railroads of South Jersey in his free time. *Journal Square*, a trip down memory lane, is also a personal tribute to where his grandfather once operated the Atlas Candy Store and an area in which he had many fond memories.

Sandra Catena, author of *The African Belly Dance*, says that her book is a belly dance murder mystery, is the only book of its genre anywhere in the world.

Danielle Coulanges, author of *Cads, Princes & Best Friends*, is a Jersey City-resident and native of Haiti, takes much of her prose from her diary writings, which chronicle her Haitian background, a combination of upper and lower class, and how the move to the United States gave her a chance to break free of Haitian cultural restrictions.

Teddy P. Goral, author of *Emergency Squad – 75 Years of Jersey City Police Emergency Services*, is a Police Sergeant in the Jersey City Police Department. *Emergency Squad – 75 Years of Jersey City Police Emergency Services* follow the historic actions of its police officers, traveling from its inception through the decades into one of today's most modern police emergency units.

Kenny Hall, author of *Billy & Me – Kenny's Gonna Ruin My Redneck Image*, was born and raised in Jersey City and even enjoyed a stint playing with Kool & the Gang. Hall befriended Billy Carter at his gas station and they became very good friends as a result of a fascination with each other's different backgrounds.

George Harris, author of *Sin For A Season*, creates a good mystery. His book also incorporates his expertise and love of the martial arts.

Tayari Jones, author of *Leaving Atlanta*, was born and raised in Atlanta, GA, where she spent most of her childhood with the exception of one year that was spent in Nigeria, West Africa. Her writing centers on the urban south. Her first novel, *Leaving Atlanta*, is a coming of age story during the city's infamous child murders of 1979-1981.

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Jay Eric Kanter, author of *Way Beyond Angkor – Exploring the Lost Temples of Cambodia*, currently lives in Jersey City for a few months, and then lives in Thailand for the rest of the year. A freelance travel writer, Kanter writes mostly about Asian countries for newspapers and magazines and seeks far-outside-the-realm temples that pose danger to him. The author has survived landmines, bandits, quicksand, ex-Khmer Rouge, forest fires, truck accidents, clueless maps, collapsing temples, ghosts, man-eating tigers and a wedding engagement.

Bob Leach, author of *The Home Ground*, has Irish great-grand parents who came to Jersey City around the time of the American Civil War. As a boy, he heard many family stories going back to those days and this whetted his appetite for local history and storytelling. Over a lifetime, he has collected a wide variety of folk tales dating back to the earliest local settlements in the 1630s. In addition to telling stories of hidden treasure, unsolved mysteries and colorful local characters of the bygone eras, Leach is an expert on the life and times of Jersey City's famous mayor, Frank Hague.

Johnnie Mae McCall, author of *The Embrace of the Father*, is an anointed multi-gifted inspirational, motivational and seminar speaker. McCall is very dedicated to prison, hospital, and street ministries in NJ.

June Ponte Rogers, author of *Fun and Simple Mid-Atlantic State Crafts*, is a multi-talented artist, June Ponte wrote and researched nine craft books for Middle Graders, illustrated children's books, wrote for magazines (Weird NJ, Parents, Architectural Digest, etc.) and for the Hudson Dispatch, designed lace, and painted stained glass for Charles Barone, formerly of Jersey City.

Helene Stapinski, author of *Five-Finger Discount – A Crooked Family History*, recounts the story of an unforgettable New Jersey family of swindlers, bookies, embezzlers, and mobster-wannabes. Stapinski tells an extraordinary tale that is heartbreaking and hysterically funny. Stapinski began her career at her hometown newspaper, The Jersey Journal, and since then has written for The New York Times, New York magazine, and People, among other publications.

Carlos B. Vega, author of *Our Hispanic Roots: What History Failed to Tell Us*, has devoted his professional life to fostering better relations and understanding between Hispanics and the US. His book, *Our Hispanic Roots*, is based on historical records to make us realize how this nation really came into being from 1513. He has lived in New Jersey for many years, and currently resides in North Bergen, in Hudson County.

Dustin Dumas Weeks, author of *Lessons From a Recovering Worker Bee*, provides 26 lessons to achieve corporate and life success, taken from her impressive career. Weeks' personal experiences demonstrate how to achieve success in the corporate environment and in life.

Norman Williams, author of *Homefront: A Collection of Short Stories*, is a native of Jersey City. A graduate of Lincoln High School, discovered that writing held his fascination and received his inspiration from watching television.

For all media inquiries, please contact Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.

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