Georgia State University
ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

University Library Faculty Publications | Georgia State University Library

2010

My Own Private Library: A Peek Inside the Personal Library of a Librarian

Jason Puckett
Georgia State University, jpuckett@gsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/univ_lib_facpub

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
Puckett, Jason (2010) My own private library: A peek inside the personal library of a librarian. *Georgia Library Quarterly, 47*(1), Article 2. Available at: http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol47/iss1/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Georgia State University Library at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Library Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

My Own PRIVATE LIBRARY

A peek inside the personal library of a librarian

by Jason Puckett

My library — at least this part of it — occupies a space the size of a credit card, replenishes itself automatically with new fiction, surprises me constantly and costs nothing.

I'm a huge fan of podcast fiction. I rarely leave the house without my portable media player in my pocket, and at any given time, I usually have several different podcasts loaded onto it. In case you're not familiar, podcasting uses RSS (Really Simple Syndication), the Web mechanism that powers blogging, to automatically deliver audio files to listeners as they're published. Many authors, aspiring and famous and in-between, are using podcasting as a tool to publish free audio versions of their work.

I subscribe using a free "podcatcher" program, and every time a new chapter is published, it turns up in a folder on my computer. Authors like Scott Sigler, Seth Harwood and Cory Doctorow simply use their own blogs to self-publish, and podiobooks.com has hundreds of titles available. I'm an enthusiastic fan of science fiction and fantasy, and I'm happy that authors in these genres seem particularly willing to experiment with this new form of self-publishing.

The fiction magazine, dying out in print, is undergoing a renaissance in podcast form. I'm always happy to see a new episode of Escape Pod (science fiction, at escapepod.org), Podcastle (fantasy, podcastle.org) or Pseudopod (horror, pseudopod.org) appear in my podcast feed. These three are the cream of the crop for podcast genre fiction. They publish fiction by authors ranging from the unknown to the legendary. Escape Pod is the world's second-largest market for short science fiction.

If these podcast magazines are the Beatles and Rolling Stones (or at least Pearl Jam or Coldplay) of podcast fiction, then Drabblecast (drabblecast.org) is perhaps the equivalent of King Missile: brilliant but confusing and sometimes disturbing. Their tagline is "strange stories by strange authors for strange listeners," and they deliver. Some of my personal favorites have centered around pie hunters, clown eggs and demon oranges. Some of my real favorites I'd have trouble summarizing in this space, and a few of them are too rude for this venue.

Cory Doctorow, one of my favorite authors of both science fiction and nonfiction (as I hope all librarians know, he writes brilliant commentary on technology, copyright, information access — and libraries, among other things), has been podcasting his own fiction for years via his blog at craphound.com/podcast.php. I first discovered this fact, to my delight, just before a long solo car trip.

Mur Lafferty (murverse.com) publishes a startling number of podcasts. Her fiction is fantasy of all kinds; I'm a fan of her recently completed epic series *Heaven*, which starts with the death of the protagonists and ends with a war among the gods. *Playing for Keeps* is a fun superhero novel about a group of friends with superpowers that aren't useful enough to make them heroes. In addition to Lafferty's fiction, I also sometimes listen to her *I Should Be Writing* podcast for fiction writers (the motivational and technical advice is sometimes useful even for aspiring writers of nonfiction, and I've discovered authors I like from her interviews).

Seth Harwood's (sethharwood.com) crime novel *Jack Wakes Up* is a pulp noir loser-in-over-his-head thrill ride that I enjoyed start to finish. It reminded me of Elmore

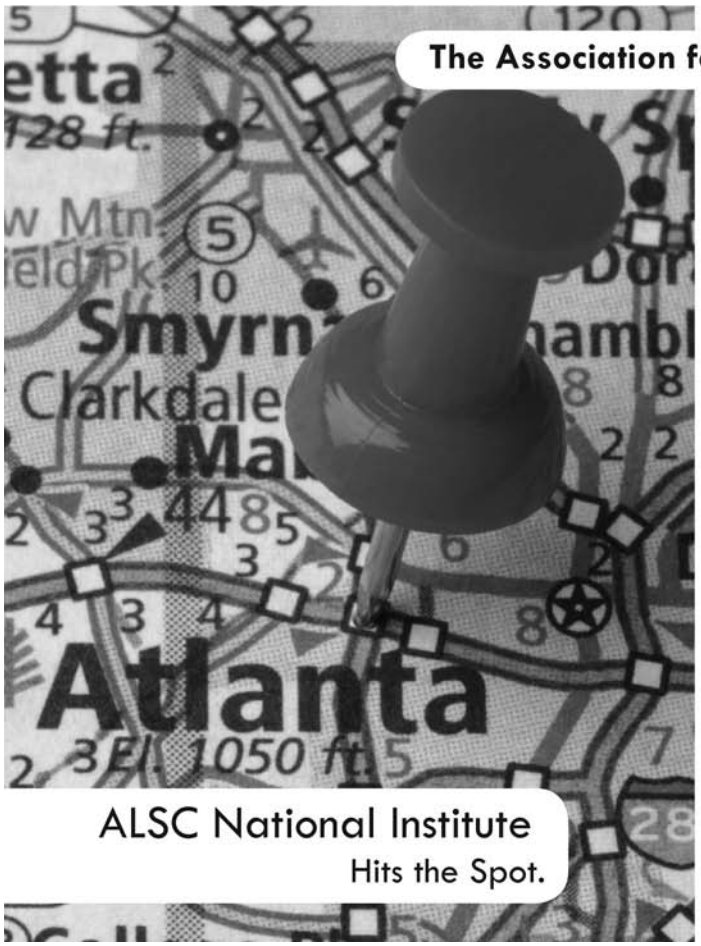
Leonard or maybe a San Franciscan James Lee Burke. His semiautobiographical *A Long Way From Disney* surprised me by showing Harwood's range; it's a short story collection that follows his fictional alter ego as he grows up in Boston.

These are samplings of some of my favorite indie artists of the podcast fiction world. Podiobooks (podiobooks.com) is a great repository of these and other works; it's organized by genre and includes staff recommendations. One of the nicest features of Podiobooks is its custom RSS feeds, allowing you to set up autodelivery of chapters at regular intervals or on demand.

Librivox (librivox.org) does offer a fiction podcast, but is really more useful as an online library of audiobooks. Their collection is all in the public domain so it's freely shareable, and their goal is to record audio editions of ***all*** available public domain works. Earlier this year, a group of friends and I all agreed to read *Moby Dick* together (a book I'd never managed to finish before), and I participated by listening to the Librivox audio version on the train and at the gym.

My public library offers free downloadable audiobooks, but I have to admit I don't use them much. We — "we" being libraries in general — are stuck dealing with vendors that provide audiobooks in proprietary formats that only work with particular devices, which makes them harder to use and far less useful. I'm a lot happier just following the indie artists. ⏭

Jason Puckett is librarian for communication and educational technologies at Georgia State University Library. He blogs at jasonpuckett.net and is co-producer of the Adventures in Library Instruction podcast (adlibinstruction.blogspot.com).



The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)
2010 National Institute

Two and a half days
on some of the most important
topics surrounding library service
to children and young adults.

Speakers include
Ashley Bryan, Carmen Agra Deedy,
John McCutcheon, Brian Selznick, and
Walter Dean and Christopher Myers.

Visit the ALSC Web site to learn more
www.ala.org/alscevents

ALSC
Association for Library Service to Children
September 23 - 25, 2010
Emory Conference Center in Atlanta, Georgia
ALSC is a division of the American Library Association (ALA).