

NEWS

Countdown started for 2011-12 “Great Read”, featuring “Rocket Boys”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 22, 2011

FOR INFORMATION, CALL
Tom Hernandez (District 202)
(815) 577-4008
Ceil Carey (Plainfield Library)
(815) 327-2524

Plainfield – The future of the American space program once again looms like stars on the horizon, as the United States transitions from the space shuttle program to whatever will come next.

What better time then, to enjoy a true story about the roots of the initiative that landed men on the moon and continues to explore the heavens?

“Rocket Boys” by Homer Hickam Jr., does just that.

This exciting, inspirational and funny memoir about a 1960s teen’s fascination with rocketry – by a man who became an actual rocket scientist for NASA -- is the featured selection of the 2011-12 Great Read community reading program.

The Great Read was created in 2004 to promote literacy, reading, conversation and community in the greater Plainfield area.

A program of special events tied to the book will launch in February 2012. Check the Great Read 2011-12 web site for more information at www.psd202.org/greatread

“Rocket boys” – the basis for the hit film “October Sky” -- is the story of 14-year-old Hickam’s youth in Coalwood, West Virginia.

Like most of the world, his imagination was captured by the launch of the Sputnik satellite in October 1957.

Hickam started building his own model rockets before hobby stores started selling them in pre-assembled kits.

He made his own rocket fuel (often dangerously) and learned aerodynamics (literally) on the fly as he and his friends perfected the engineering that would let his creations soar higher and higher with each flight.

If that was the only story that Hickam told, “Rocket Boys” would have still be a very successful, entertaining book.

Luckily for readers, “Rocket Boys” is much more.

It is also a heart-rending depiction of Hickam’s need to carve out his own life. It is a story of a boy’s dream, encouraged by his mother and many others in Coalwood who understood Hickam’s very real yearning to escape the coal mines – the only reality his father, the mine superintendent, seemed to understand.

“Rocket Boys” is also a realistic story of father-son relationships as hard and dark as the coal that generations of West Virginians dug from the ground. That honesty makes it a classic.

“The Great Read” is presented by the Plainfield School District 202; the Plainfield, Joliet and Fountaindale public libraries; Plainfield Township; and the Joliet-area Barnes and Noble stores.

“The Great Read” is supported by a generous grant from the Plainfield Foundation for Excellence (www.d202foundation.org); and additional funding from participating member organizations.