

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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HEARD & SCENE

A Hamptons Party for the Literary Crowd



By MARSHALL HEYMAN



EAST HAMP-TON—Despite its reputation as a party destination, the Hamptons likes to think of itself as a literary haven, too.

The seventh annual Author's Night benefiting the East Hampton Library manages to combine both of these social and literary tendencies, with the persistent impulse to buy and sell things also mixed in for good measure.

For the meet and greet cocktail portion of the evening, more than 160 local authors sit behind tables underneath a big tent representing and signing copies of their books for sale. The titles run the gamut between relatively old ("The Wonder Spot" by Melissa Bank came out in 2005) to new (Knopf published "Ladies and Gentlemen," a book of short stories by Adam Ross, in late June); between children's ("Best in Show" by Karen LeFrak) and adult ("Stephen Petrow's Complete Gay and Lesbian Manners"); between well-known in literary circles (Martin Amis) and well-known in Hamptons publications circles (Katie Lee and Beth Ostrosky Stern were both there with their novel and animal information book, respectively). No Hamptons event would be complete otherwise.

Literary fiction aside, our favorite titles being peddled—and we're really talking just titles here—included "Reversing Gum Disease Naturally: A Holistic Home Care Program" by Sandra Senzo; "The Jewish Lady, the Black Man and the

Road Trip" by Carol Sue Gershan; "Trolls in the Hamptons" by Celia James; "Forts for Kids" by David Stiles; "Montauk Tango: From the Ashes of 9/11 to the Frying Pan of a Hamptons Restaurant" by Lewis Gross and "The Bra Book: The Fashion Formula to Finding the Perfect Bra" by Jene Luciani.

The adorable conceit of Author's Night is that once this bookselling portion of the evening is over, those who want to participate further can attend a dinner hosted at a private home. Johanna and Daniel Rose, of, for instance, the Rose Center for Earth and Space at the American Museum of Natural History, hosted a dinner for their son, Gideon, and his book "How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle." Jane Friedman hosted one for the writer Michael Connelly and his recent thriller, "The Fifth Witness." Ken Lipper threw a party for Ivana Lowell; Tom Twomey and Judith Hope hosted Dick Cavett and Alec Baldwin. Between the book fair and the dinners, the library raised approximately \$200,000 this year, said a spokeswoman.

About 35 people ended up at a dinner in Water Mill hosted by John Randolph Hearst Jr., a.k.a. "Bunky." This was for two of the bigger names at Author's Night: the soap star Susan Lucci, who recently released a memoir called "All My Life," and Nelson DeMille, who was pushing copies of his last novel, "The Lion," a sequel to "The Lion's Game." Mr. DeMille and Ms. Lucci may sound like an odd match, but they are actually friends from their teenage years and both now keep residences in Garden City.

"She called me and said she was thinking about writing a memoir," Mr. DeMille said. "I told her to take two aspirins and lie down."

Ms. Lucci explained that the impetus to work on the book came from her son. "He told me, 'All the girls I date know Erica Kane, but they don't know you,'" she said, referring to the character she has played for at least the last hundred years on "All My Children."

The future of that show, by the way, is still up in the air, she explained. The production company Prospect Park is having "genuine and earnest conversations" about putting it on the schedule of their online network. "It seems fitting to me that the show would be broadcast online," because Ms. Lucci explained, the soap opera has always played by its own rules.

Before dinner, Mr. DeMille was keen to survey the crowd about who reads real books, who reads on a Kindle and who uses another form of tablet. (Mr. DeMille and his wife prefer the iPad.) While the guests were chowing down on their pear salads, he spoke extemporaneously about his process. A few particular morsels worth sharing:

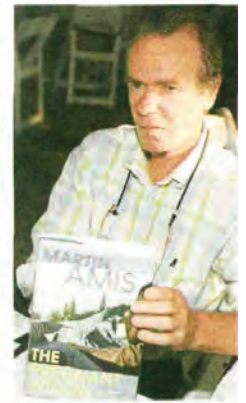
"I originally thought I was going to be the American John LeCarre," he said. "But then the damn Cold War ended."

"I like to go to the place I'm writing about, so the next book I've set is in Tahiti."

"I thought writing a sequel would be easy," he explained, "but it isn't. Sequels are very tough. The worst part is you have to go back and read your own book, which you don't ever want to do."



Far left, Michael Connelly signing books. Left, Robert Caro. Above, Nelson DeMille with Alec Baldwin at Author's Night.



Left to right, authors Karen LeFrak, Colson Whitehead and Martin Amis



Above, 'All My Children' star Susan Lucci signing her memoir and author Adam Ross