

Library Foundation's annual benefit features Joseph Kanon

BY SUE ERWIN

More than 170 guests enjoyed the Johann Fust Library Foundation's annual benefit event with renowned author Joseph Kanon on Thursday, March 2 at the Boca Grande Community Center auditorium.

Kanon, an international best-selling author and publishing executive, spoke about his most recent book: "Leaving Berlin." His seven Cold War thrillers include "Los Alamos," which won an Edgar Allen Poe award presented by the Mystery Writers of America for best first novel; and "The Good German," which was made into a film starring George Clooney and Cate Blanchett.

Johann Fust Library Foundation President Candy Hooper introduced Kanon at the event.

She explained that Joe's first job was as a publisher, and that his wife, Robin Strauss, is a literary agent.

"This distinguished author is known to walk or take public transportation to the New York Public Library, where he has written several books," Hooper said.

Kanon spoke about the importance

of libraries and how they can serve as life-changing institutions. "A library is not just a cultural center; it is a culture. It's a teacher. It's a haven," he said.

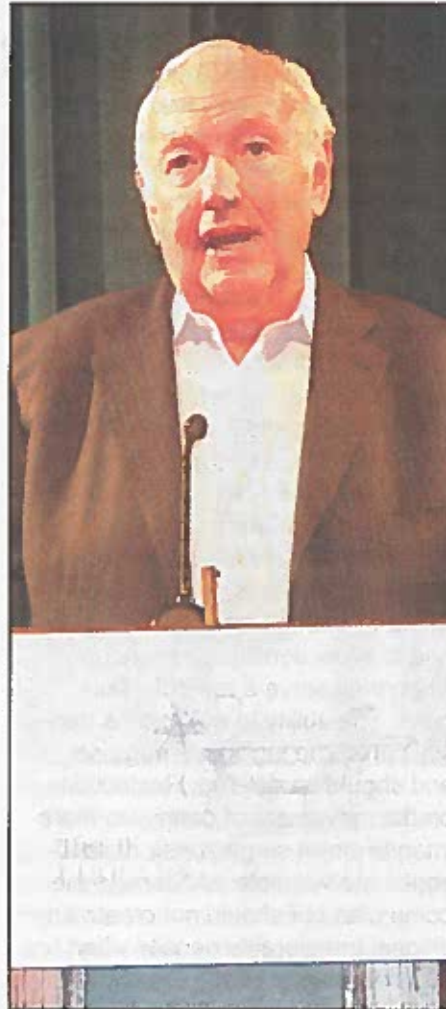
"Many people have said that when a writer gets his first book published from the press, it's like holding a new baby," Kanon said. "For me, that revelation happened the first time I saw my book on a library shelf and saw it listed in the card catalogue. And seeing it in a book-store was even more thrilling."

Kanon spoke about his experience writing "Leaving Berlin."

"Ideas come in blurbs and sometimes you forget them. Then another circumstance may come up, and it might trigger your memory back to that thought," he said. "For me it always starts with a place - you live there in your head, and you become fascinated with it."

Kanon said one book could easily lead to another one. "You journey down one road, then another path catches your eye, but you don't have time for it, so you make a mental note and come back to it later," he said.

He spoke about the time he spent exploring Berlin, visiting what were



once interrogation rooms and torture chambers.

"Berlin was a wasteland at one time; the city was in ruins during Hitler's leadership. People were starving. Everyone relied on the black market."

"Leaving Berlin" is about the exiled ones who find a way to come back. "I think Berlin is one of the most resilient cities in the world. It has survived so much, and it continues to endure," Kanon said.

His next book, "Defectors," is planned to come out in June. It is set near the end of the Cold War in Moscow, when Mikhail Gorbachev assumed the reins of power in the Soviet Union.

The Johann Fust Library Foundation owns and maintains the original library grounds, gardens, buildings and fine collections of artifacts and rare books. The Foundation sponsors free cultural and intellectual events for the Boca Grande community at the Library each year.

Ball Construction, Boca Blooms, Italiano Insurance Services and Northern Trust sponsored the event. For more information, visit josephkanon.com or jfcl.org.



Come, join the Green Flash Mob!

Perhaps you've noticed them on a Thursday evening just before sunset near the 4th Street sea wall. They show up in golf carts and work trucks, alone or with dogs, and often with children and houseguests in tow. No men in blue blazers or ladies wearing J. McLaughlin. No dress code, just whatever you happen to be wearing after a day of work or cooking for houseguests who have stayed one day too long. Someone suddenly distributes dog-eared copies of the Episcopal service of Compline. Passing tourists are invited to join in and, surprisingly, they often do. There's no organ, no flowers, no pews, no donations, no kneeling ... just people gathered to admire the sunset at the end of their work day, giving thanks for the day just passed and to ask for protection through the night to come.

The official name is the "Green Flash Mob." Some in attendance swear they've seen the green flash just as the sun sets into the Gulf of Mexico. It's been happening in Boca Grande for a little more than a year every Thursday. The idea sprang from the imagination of St. Andrew's Senior Warden Jay Whipple as a way to make St. Andrew's especially welcoming to people, no matter what they're wearing or who they are.

Come down and join them!

- Contributed by Regina Rockefeller



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