

AUTOGRAPHED OCC T-SHIRT IN AUSTRALIA!



In September, OCC held its first eBay auction with one of the "Got OCC?" orange t-shirts donated by Michelle Thorne, and autographed by 56 authors, many at the 2006 Literacy for Life booksigning at the RWA Conference in Atlanta.

The winner of the auction was Juleigh Start, a librarian,

who had read about our auction on Susan Elizabeth Phillips' message boards. (THANKS, SUSAN!)

Juleigh works for Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation and will be running a two-month campaign from her branch at Doncaster Library to promote romance novels, and their authors, to the library patrons. Situated in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne the seven library branches provide library services to two large suburban municipalities, Whitehorse and Manningham.

Officially titled Summer Lovin': Ways To Find Love @ Your Library, the romance reading campaign will begin on Saturday December 8th 2007 and over the following two months of the Australian summer we will include these activities with displays and promotional materials to promote all genres of romance to our patrons:

1. "Orange you up to the challenge?" – A display of the OCC/RWA orange t-shirt showcasing signatures of 56+ romances authors. The plus refers to the additional Australian romance authors who have also signed the shirt, thanks to Juleigh's efforts. The shirt display will be accompanied by a bookmark listing all of the authors on the shirt to encourage patrons to read at least one title from each author who has signed the shirt.

2. Author talk by Stephanie Laurens – This event will be used to launch the romance reading campaign on Saturday December 8th and will be advertised on the Corporations website. Stephanie will

speak upon the differences between Australian vs American genre fiction and will include Q&A and book signing.

3. Vote for their favorite romance novel – Patrons will be asked to vote for their favorite romance novel, with all submissions being eligible to go into the draw to win a copy of the newly released *Sizzle, Seduce & Simmer*, a romance anthology from top Australian romance authors. Thirteen of the contributing authors have signed this copy.

4. Bookmarks will be produced with Top 10 suggested reads for romance sub-genres including: contemporary romance, romantic suspense, regency & historical romance, paranormal romance and romantic series.

5. Blind Date with a Book – A romance book wrapped in plain paper with only its library barcode on the cover. Patrons will be encouraged to take their Blind Date home, and enjoy!

6. Romance Book Group discussion to be held mid-January 2008, with patrons coming to the library branch to discuss their favorite title/author and to hear reviews of new releases and new authors.

7. It is hoped to have a Readers' Developed Romance Page added to the Corporation's website, with links to all authors from the shirt along with numerous other romance authors, and including links to popular romance novel based websites and organizations. This plan, however, is still pending approval and an implementation time-line.

8. The Summer Lovin' campaign will conclude on Saturday February 9th 2008 where Joleigh hopes to have other visiting authors present a talk. The presenter is still to be confirmed. (They are completely open and willing to host a guest OCC/RWA author or any other RWA author who may happen to be visiting lovely Melbourne, Australia during our Aussie summer in January/February 2008!)

Authors have shown enthusiastic support for the campaign when contacted regarding promotional materials to use during our summer romance reading promotion. Some American authors have already sent their bookmarks or cards, while others have promised to send promotional bookmarks of new releases as they become

available and one author has promised to send signed bookplates. Dymock's Bookstore in Melbourne City has given Joleigh material to advertise the launch on November 30th of their new Romance Reading Group.

NOVEMBER 21ST UPDATE FROM JULEIGH! ---

I have managed to get Stephanie Laurens signature on the Orange t-shirt!! Along with twelve other Australian romance authors! They loved your idea of having visiting authors sign a shirt (or an apron as they had at part of their book launch I attended) and then auction it off to raise money. I'm hoping that one or two of them will also agree to come speak at the library during the Summer lovin' reading campaign, if at all possible. The more publicity we can get for romance novels, the better!

We are about to print the bookmarks for 'Orange you up to the challenge?', based entirely on authors listed on the shirt (both the original authors and the additional Australian authors). We could only include those authors for this one event of the campaign whose books were either already represented on our catalogue or, for those who weren't represented, those we were able to source supplies and therefore have order copies which will now be added hopefully by early December.

We have a total of 45 authors listed on the bookmark for the reader challenge part of the campaign! Even if we only had one of their titles, they were included! We're challenging patrons to read at least one book from each author, so all we needed was just one book title in the library catalogue to be able to include them! ;-) And if patrons like them we'll be asked to buy more titles, which is the whole idea!! There will also be a poster printed which will accompany the shirt display. The authors represented in the reader challenge, with authors in **bold** being the Australian authors added to the shirt after I received it, are: **Amy Andrews**, Shari Anton, Jennifer Archer, **Keri Arthur**, Lori Avocato, **Ally Blake**, Beverly Brandt, Kylie Brant, Terri Brisbin, Rita Clay Estrada, Caroline Cross, Jenny Crusie, Geralyn Dawson, Janelle Denison, Christina Dodd, Eileen Dreyer, Judy Duarte, Lisa Gardner, **Anne Gracie**, Laura Lee Guhrke, Linda Howard, Shirley Jump, Beth Kendrick, Kathleen Korbel, Ruth Ryan Langan, **Stephanie Laurens**, **Marion Lennox**,

Marjorie M. Liu, Susan Mallery, **Carol Marinelli**, **Nicola Marsh**, Bob Mayer, Barbara McCauley, Jenna Mindel, **Trish Morey**, David Morrell, Diana Palmer, Valerie Parv, Sandra Paul, Kate Perry, Susan Elizabeth Phillips, Nora Roberts, Teresa Southwick, Susan Squires, Roxanne St. Claire, Vicki Lewis Thompson.

I'm excited by the plans so far and the support the Corporation has given for my desire to promote romance!

Who would have guessed that the purchase of a t-shirt on eBay, simply because it had the signature of Susan Elizabeth Phillips (let alone all of the other authors!) to add to my SEP book collection, could have inspired and given birth to an entire romance reading campaign!!

Take care,
Juleigh

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December 17

All is well down here. We're getting more coverage on the Orange Shirt challenge! Anne Gracie, author, who is president of RWAust has agreed to come present a talk AND she has given details on the talk on her website and included a picture of Stephanie Laurens holding the shirt. She will also write about the program we're running in her president's column in their newsletter and will see about including it on the RWAust website, to encourage other libraries to take the initiative to promote romance!
<http://www.annegracie.com/books/sizzleseducesimmer.htm>