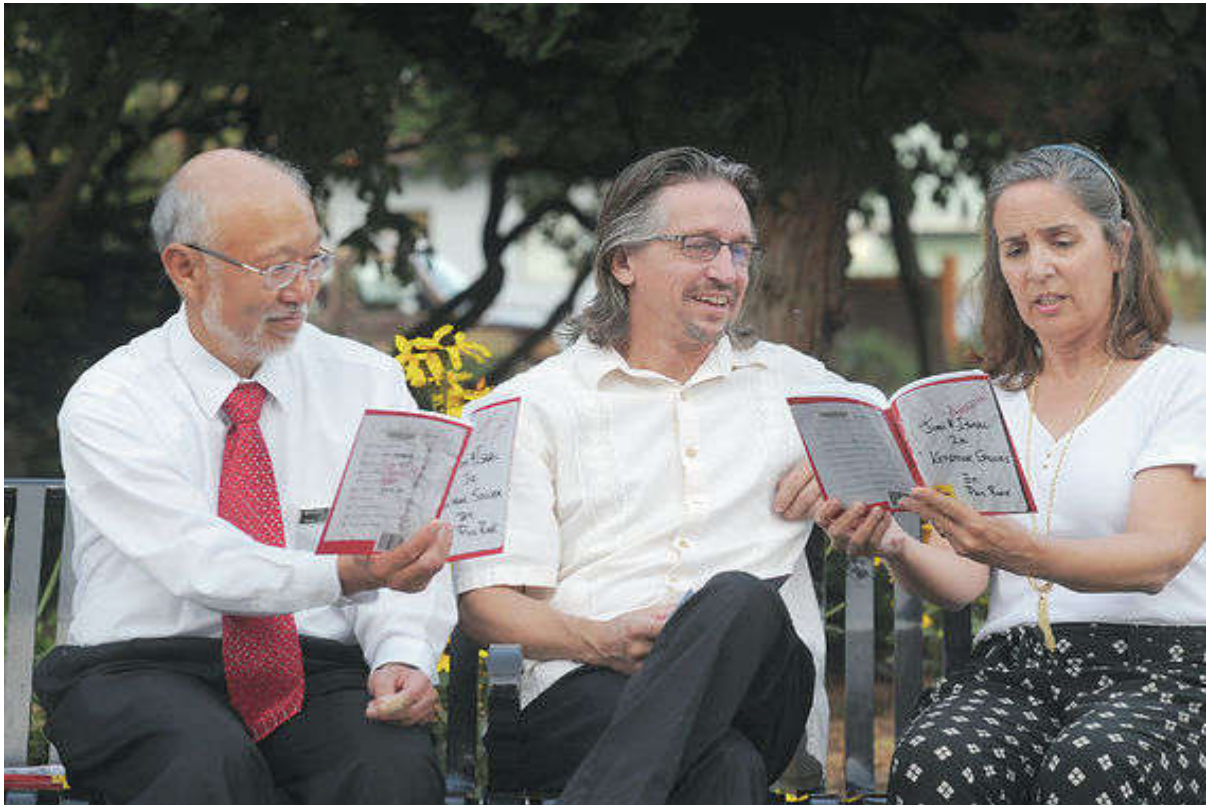


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## Mount Vernon library brings in author to honor donor

By Shannen Kuest Aug 29, 2015



Author Phil Rink sits between Mount Vernon Library director Brian Soneda and Mary McGoffin of the Skagit Community Foundation as they read a passage from one of Rink's books. Scott Terrell / Skagit Valley Herald

**MOUNT VERNON** — The Mount Vernon City Library featured children's author Phil Rink on Thursday night to honor a donor who bequeathed about \$400,000 to the library, and the estate attorney who helped make it happen.

Frank Bichler was a regular at the library, and after his death in Dec. 2010 he left an endowment with the Skagit Community Foundation, said Mount Vernon City Library Director Brian Soneda.

“He liked to read quietly here, and he apparently liked the way he was treated,” Soneda said. “When he passed, we were approached by the estate attorney and told that the endowment was to go to support the book budget of the library.”



Most of Bichler’s bequest was in silver bullion, Soneda said, and estate attorney Robert Cole was responsible for selling it and converting it into funds the library could use.

The attorney sold the silver during spikes in the silver market, and with the help of Mary McGoffin of the Skagit Community Foundation, created an endowment for the library’s use. The library receives about \$20,000 a year to add to its book collection, Soneda said.

When library staff asked Cole how to honor the donation, Cole mentioned bringing in the author who inspired Cole’s child to read, Soneda said.

Enter Phil Rink.

Rink is the author of the “Jimi & Isaac” books, books Rink said he wrote when his own children had trouble finding “books with substance.”

The books address morality and integrity in a way kids can understand, Rink said, and the books don’t shy away from raising real questions.

“When kids don’t have content to read, they just don’t read,” said Rink’s wife, Nancy Rink. “We hope these will break kids away from the computer screen.”

The Mount Vernon library has already added Rink’s books to its shelves.

The funds from Bichler have made a big difference for the library, Soneda said.

“It’s been really significant,” he said. “Our 2015 book budget was about \$55,000, down from more than \$100,000 in the early 2000s. The Frank Bichler money has been crucial.”

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