

Local Author Visits North Portland Library

Renee Watson teaches students and educators about power of writing

By Kirby McCurtis
For The Skanner News

Writer Renée Watson spent time at North Portland Library last week week hosting two programs. Watson is on a fall book tour promoting her latest novel for young adults, *Piecing Me Together*. On Nov. 7, the Oregon Writing Project sponsored a two-hour writing workshop. The room was packed with participants, primarily educators, eager to

learn about teaching writing and making time for their own creative works.

The next morning, Watson returned to the library with fellow writers Brendan Kiely and Jason Reynolds for what we hope is the first in a regular series of author visits for students, in collaboration with Jefferson High School. This past summer, I approached Watson at a conference, and we discussed the lack of author events for teens in the North Portland area. Knowing

Watson is a Jefferson High School alumna, I asked her if there was a way we could get groups of students all reading the same book to come to the library to meet the author of that book. She was excited by the idea and made it happen.

Half of the freshman English classes at Jefferson read “All American Boys” by Kiely and Reynolds. In this raw and honest book, the two authors present a story of police brutality. Reynolds voices Rashad, the innocent Black victim of a police

beating; Kiely writes Quinn, a horrified White witness. The other half of the freshman class read *This Side of Home*, Ms. Watson’s 2015 book about two twin sisters growing up in North Portland and experiencing gentrification of their neighborhood. Watson’s nuanced portrayal of changes to the city and the impact it is having on the sisters’ community is both moving and a necessary read for anyone living in Portland right now.

During the event, the authors read from the



Brendan Kiely (left), poses with Renée Watson and Jason Reynolds at a Nov. 7 event at the North Portland Library.

books and took questions from students about their writing processes, inspirations, and how they talk about what is happening in the world. Many of the students, eager to improve their own writing, asked how to

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Film

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ulously managed to prevail against the best in an event he hadn't trained for.

“Chariots of Fire” was a critically acclaimed crowd-pleaser which landed a quartet of Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay. However, it took 36 years for someone to mount a sequel showing what became of the Olympic great in the wake of his glory days.

Co-directed by Stephen Shin and Michael Parker, “On Wings of Eagles” stars BAFTA-nominee Joseph Fiennes (for *Shakespeare in Love*) as Eric Liddell. At the point of



‘On Wings of Eagles’ picks up where ‘Chariots of Fire’ left off

departure, we learn that the unassuming athlete eschewed fame and fortune in favor of returning to China, the country of his birth, in 1925, to follow his calling to do missionary work.

He would settle down in Asia and start a family with the woman of his

dreams, Florence Mackenzie (Elizabeth Arends). However, their marital bliss would be irreversibly altered by the Japanese invasion of China in 1937.

During the occupation, the Liddells were afforded a brief opportunity to leave the country. The

dedicated minister decided to not abandon his flock, though he did send his pregnant wife and daughters, Patricia (Laura Justine Friis Lodahl) and Heather (Asta Friis Lodahl), to live with his in-laws in Canada. Sadly, he was subsequently interned in a concentration camp where he would suffer terribly before passing away in 1945, just months before Japan’s surrender.

A bittersweet tribute to a man of great faith who always opted to follow humbly in the footsteps of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Very Good ★★★
Rated

In English, Mandarin and Japanese with subtitles

Running time: 96 min.

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2017, 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2017, 7:30 PM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2017, 4 PM

Charles Floyd, conductor
Terry Davis, guest conductor
Northwest Community Gospel Choir
Gary Hemenway, music director

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| **Bridge Replacement and HOV Program**

SR 520 Montlake Phase

WSDOT will host a **Voluntary Submitters Meeting** for interested designers and construction contractors on **Thursday, November 16**.

This **Design-Build** contract is estimated to cost over \$400 million.

Meeting details:

Date: November 16, 2017
Time: 2-3:30 p.m.
Location: Seattle Central Library
Microsoft Auditorium
1000 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

For additional information, visit us at:
wsdot.wa.gov/biz/contaa/Contracts/Montlake.htm

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