



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Groundbreaking Kickoff to Summer Reading at Hartford Public Library –
*Step Right Up and Read All About It!***

Hartford, Connecticut (June 21, 2013) —Hartford Public Library, in collaboration with The Mark Twain House, will celebrate the kickoff to its Adult Summer Reading Program, “Groundbreaking Reads,” on Saturday, July 6, at 2 p.m. in the Center for Contemporary Culture at the Downtown Library (500 Main Street). This event is free and open to the public.

The circus-themed event, moderated by MaryEllen Fillo, Java columnist for *The Hartford Courant*, will feature Michael Daly, author of *Topsy: The Startling Story of the Crooked Tailed Elephant, P.T. Barnum, and the American Wizard, Thomas Edison*, and Bruce MacNab, author of *The Metamorphosis: The Apprenticeship of Harry Houdini*. Daly’s *Topsy* tells the fascinating true story behind the electrocution of Topsy the circus elephant by legendary American inventor Thomas Edison. MacNab’s *The Metamorphosis* is a captivating account of Houdini’s years with the Hartford-based Marco Magic Company, fronted by the loveable Edward James Dooley, who was among the first to recognize the extraordinary talents of the revolutionary escape artist.

At this event, Hartford Public Library will launch a year-long memory collection to honor the victims and survivors of the tragic Hartford Circus Fire. Guests can participate by bringing in circus fire mementos, photos, writings, drawings, etc., and these memories will be collected in a scrapbook that will be archived in the Hartford History Center for next year’s 70th anniversary of the devastating fire on July 6, 2014. The scrapbook memory collection will circulate at all Library branch locations throughout the city and will serve as a community-wide effort to honor those who lost their lives and the men and women who fought to save them.

Hartford Public Library’s Adult Summer Reading Program will run until August 23. The more you read, the more chances you’ll have to win great prizes, including two-day passes generously donated by The Mark Twain House for guided tours of the home of America’s favorite author! Sign up at any HPL location or online at www.hplct.org.

About Hartford Public Library

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 865,000 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of

materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information and enrichment to the people of Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. According to a recent editorial in *The Hartford Courant*, "Indeed, the Library has established itself as the center of the community in Hartford." To learn more about the library, please see www.hplct.org.

About Hartford History Center

Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library, collects, preserves, and makes available three centuries of materials and information relating to the history, literature, and culture of Hartford. Located on the third floor of the Downtown Library, 500 Main Street, the Hartford History Center is open 1:00 – 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. For more information, please call the History Center at 860-695-6297 or visit online at <http://hhc.hplct.org/>.

About The Mark Twain House

The Mark Twain House & Museum (www.marktwainhouse.org) has restored the author's Hartford, Connecticut, home, where Samuel L. Clemens and his family lived from 1874 to 1891. In addition to providing tours of Twain's restored home, a National Historic Landmark, the institution offers activities and educational programs that illuminate Twain's literary legacy and provide information about his life and times.