



JANUARY 2012

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

Take a look at our Winter Programs!

- United Way of Berks County—Volunteer Engagement: Connecting People with Opportunities. Feb. 21, 2012 at 6 PM. Sign up is required. Contact the library. See Page 2 for more information.
- Book Writing and Publishing. March 13, 2012 at 6 PM.
- Every Saturday all year round—Used Book Sale 12 to 2 PM. Now accepting donations all year round. Proceeds benefit the library.

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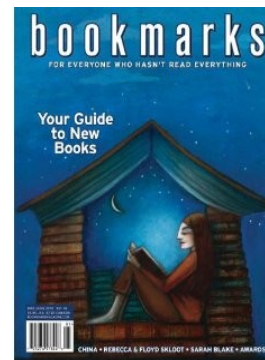
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The Director's Desk—May I Suggest? By Susan Davis

Read all the titles published by your favorite author? Looking for a change in your reading habits? Trying to find something for your book discussion group? Your library is here to help. In library land we call it "reader's advisory service"—fancy name that means we want to help. If you need some guidance, you can:

- consult the librarians on staff
- use our "What to Read Next" service on our website



- check out the magazine *Bookmarks*
 - check out our newest magazine subscription *Mystery Scene*
 - consult best seller lists
- Your next great read may be a book, an ebook, or an audiobook. If we do not own it at Muhlenberg, we can draw from members of Berks County Public Libraries and even outside the county. There is a world of resources just waiting for you!

Library Matters—Working Together for the Betterment of the Community By Marcina Wagner

The Muhlenberg Community Library and the Literacy Council of Reading-Berks began its partnership in the fall of 2010 when Marcina Wagner, public services librarian and English teacher, began teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) two afternoons a week at the library. Susan Davis, our Director, provided space two evenings a week for another ESL class taught by Lori Mentzer, an employee of the Council. Lori is also a library volunteer who does our monthly bilingual story time.

The partnership enabled us to obtain grant money for two language learning computers which will inaugurate the library's Lifelong Learning Center.

The newest collaboration is the Multi-Level ESL class starting in February. The class is designed to give individuals in the community a chance to join an ESL class without the need to register or take an assessment. This introductory course will teach listening, reading, writing and speaking skills for daily living. Individuals who contact the Literacy Council between January 15 and March 8 will be referred to this class.

Happy New Year from Muhlenberg Community Library's Mystery Group, "Le Chat Noir."

By Helene Stephens

And *HOW* do mystery-devotees celebrate the start of 2012? Well, by giving a nod to Sam Spade as he makes his famous toast: "Success to Crime!"

Our sentiments exactly, Mr. Spade, because successful crime fiction is what captivates us; even a "swell yarn" from the 1930s gets our attention.

Yes, the first book of this year is *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett, a mystery-noir classic replete with shadowy menace, strange characters, "sweethearts" and "angels," and an illusive treasure that grabs our interest even as the body count mounts.

For the last entry of 2011, we discussed the ingenious Mr.

Poe and his power to frighten us. The group bared some impressive first-hand encounters with fearful elements, and a great discussion of Poe-and-us ensued! One of us lives in a genuine haunted house? Yes, and this was the perfect touch for our discussion of gothic scares.

Coming up are plans to touch on all aspects of the contemporary and classic whodunnits, everything from noir chillers to cozy thrillers. Dame Agatha is expecting us, I believe!

So many mysteries - so little time? No, we always have time for a good mystery. We are all crime-time readers, and members informally (but stealthily,

of course) share recommendations about favorite authors. And speaking of which ... We might even become authors ourselves and collaborate on an original mystery tale at some point....

And what would make this group more excited than even a dash across the moor? That's elementary: we're hoping for more suspects and sleuths, of course! So here's an invitation to all mysterious strangers: come in and plot with us - Every 4th Tuesday - 5:30 to 6:30 pm. You will seeMystery at Muhlenberg? It's to kill for!

Answer to last month's quote: Mark Twain

Who said this? "At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better."

The United Way Presents "Connecting People With Opportunities"

Have you ever seen an article in the newspaper about someone who is volunteering and thought, "I could do that, but maybe for a different group. I wonder how to get started." Well, be sure to attend this program on February 21 at 6

PM at the library. Michelle Gettel, Volunteer Engagement Program Manager, will discuss how you can live the United Way without committing to a schedule, and how to search for volunteer opportunities. She will also discuss the United Way's

commitment to volunteering focusing on education, income, health and safety net services. Sign up is required. Call the library at 610-929-0589 and tell them you'll be there!

Three Ways Public Libraries are Good for the Country

1. Libraries level the playing field. Libraries make their resources available to everyone in the community, regardless of income or social status.
2. Libraries nourish creativity. By providing an atmosphere that stimulates curi-

osity, libraries create opportunities for unstructured learning and serendipitous discovery.

3. Libraries animate young minds. Children's and young adult librarians offer story hours, book talks, summer reading activities,

career planning, art projects, gaming competitions, and other programs to spark youthful imaginations.

Taken from *The Librarian's Book of Lists*, edited by George M. Eberhart.

New Faces!

You may have noticed two new faces at the library lately. We asked each to answer some questions so that you could get to know them a little better.



Name: **Arleesha Yetzer**
 Position: Library Assistant
 Where and when born: Cleveland, OH; September 1, 1991.
 First job: Madison St. Produce.
 Accomplishment I'm proudest of: Maintaining a 4.0 GPA.
 When I have spare time, my favorite thing to do is: Listen to classical music and crochet.
 Dream vacation: New Zealand.
 How I plan to spend my retirement: Traveling.
 Favorite TV program: *Doctor Who*.

All-time favorite book: *Beast* by Donna Jo Napoli.
 The habit I just cannot break: Eating unhealthy food!
 The craziest thing I've ever done: I ate a deep-fried grasshopper when I was 12.
 Proudest moment of my life: Marrying my husband.
 Job I would like to have for one day: Zookeeper.
 People may be surprised to know that I: Have a twin brother.



Name: **Leslie E. Bowen**
 Position: Library Assistant/Storyteller
 Where and when born: Harrisburg, PA July 23, 1960.

First job: Babysitting.
 Accomplishment I'm proudest of: K-12 Library Science Teacher's Certificate.
 When I have spare time, my favorite thing to do is: Read, watch movies and play guitar/sing.
 Dream vacation: A summer in an ocean-front house (that I own).
 How I plan to spend my retirement: Reading and caring for grandchildren.
 Favorite TV program: Northern Exposure (all-time), Tremé (current).
 All-time favorite book: *Middlemarch* by George Eliot.
 The habit I just cannot break: Watching movies.
 The craziest thing I've ever done: Moved to Lunenburg, MA to join a theatre company in early 80's.
 Proudest moment of my life: Birth of my son, John.
 Job I would like to have for one day: White House Librarian.
 People may be surprised to know that I: In addition to guitar, I also play banjo, mandolin and ukulele.

"The internet is marvelous, but to claim, as some now do, that it's making libraries obsolete is as silly as saying shoes have made feet unnecessary."

~ Mark Y. Herring ~

"Libraries are like a frosty glass of milk for the American soul—tasty, wholesome, mother-approved and more importantly, a necessary part of a healthy intellectual life."

~ Editorial, Georgetown Voice ~

Children's Corner—Helping Children Get Ready to Read – Part 2

By Lisa Nuss

In the last newsletter, I started a series of articles sharing skills that children can develop before attending school that are the building blocks for reading and writing. The first skill was an interest in and enjoyment of books. The second skill is letter knowledge, which includes knowing that all letters have their own shape, name, and sound. This is the most basic building block for learning how to read, so how can you help your child acquire this skill?

Here are some tips:

- Sing the alphabet song. This is a great first step to learning the names of letters.
- Match the name of the letter to its shape. Using alphabet puzzles, books, food labels, or anything with writing on it to point out and name letters is a great way to practice.
- For infants and toddlers, point out shapes such as circles and triangles, which are used to make letters.

- For preschoolers, have them practice writing letters in the sandbox or on a piece of paper. If you're feeling adventurous, try using fingerpaints or even pudding on wax paper! It may be messy, but it makes learning fun! Also for preschoolers, start teaching the sounds that letters make. Ask them if they can think of words that start with the different sounds.

Check the library catalog to find alphabet books that will help your child gain letter knowledge!