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Library News

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Director's Column

by Chad Leinaweaver

"What a year this month was!" That phrase was on a popular social media meme early in 2025

and it certainly applied to us here at the Library. We are always busy throughout the year but traditionally the beginning of the year is a bit quieter. However, a frozen fire sprinkler pipe burst in the Library on January 22 and our already busy January was flooded with problems, pun definitely intended! The Library building suffered minor damage on all three floors and we lost approximately 2,000 books, mostly fiction and mystery novels for adults, as well as other supplies. Our phenomenal staff came together quickly to mitigate the disaster and with the help of the amazing Morristown Fire Department, the response to save our collection was as fast as possible. A clean-up crew was here immediately to remove the water and help dry out the building and a restoration company came to remove historical archival materials to be safely restored. We are currently assessing and repairing the damage from the flood but the inconvenience to our patrons was minimal, thanks to our wonderful staff and the crews of our contractors. We appreciated the understanding of our patrons during this difficult time.

Spring Concert

Join us for a special Friday Night Concert at 7:00 pm on April 4 with Morristown native, Rio Clemente. Mr. Clemente, a virtuoso jazz pianist, has performed around the world with the best in the music business over the course of his long jazz career. The program is free and open to all. Doors open at 6:30 PM and light refreshments will be served.



Virtuoso jazz pianist Rio Clemente

President's Message by Linda Muse-Deo

This is a good time to visit the library. The weather has been cold and wintry, but you can come and stay warm in the library and participate in one of our many programs or book clubs. Or, you can browse the shelves and borrow something of interest.

In the month of February, the Friends of the Morristown and Morris Township Library will be renewing their commitment to the library. Letters have been sent to all current members of the Friends to remind them to recommit for the year 2025 by sending in their annual dues. If you have not thought about becoming a Friend, now is a good time to consider it. You can do so by going to the website at Friends@MMT.Mainlib.org or by stopping in and requesting an application.

We were able to contribute a substantial amount of funds during 2024 due to the enthusiastic response to our weekly used book sales. The sales are held every Tuesday of the month and the first and third Saturdays of the month (excluding July and August). We continue to receive donations of many used books in very good condition, and our patrons are happy with their purchases. Many of those books are returned to us as donations a second time. If you are able to donate some of your used books, we will be happy to accept hard copies and large trade paperbacks (no small paperbacks, please). We also accept CDs and DVDs.

In addition to the sales on the library's lower level, we have placed Norma's Cart in the Circulation department. The cart is named in memory of one of our former long-time members. It is stocked with CDs and DVDs and books of special interest for which you can pay at the Circulation desk.

Every month we offer some books for half off the marked price. For the month of February, it is books about US presidents and slavery/Black history; for the month of March, it will be history and vintage books. That's a real bargain!! We look forward to seeing you.

Stewards of the Building by Mary Lynn Becza

Our beautiful MMT Library building is a source of great pride to the staff and our community and the reason many patrons choose to visit us here. There are multiple activities which go into running a building of this size, most of which are invisible to our visitors, such as: maintaining the extensive heating and cooling systems; masonry and plaster repairs; landscaping work; and updating plumbing, drainage and sewer systems. In 2024, we embarked on a maintenance project sponsored by the Library Foundation and a grant from the NJ Historic Trust. This project will be completed by the end of 2025. In 2024, we also received a gift of a portrait of Hannah Parker Willis from her descendants. She was the grandmother of Grinnell Willis who donated the money to build the 1917 and 1930 wings of our building. The portrait now decorates our Circulation Room along with other works of art. Library staff continues to improve and enhance the experience of our visitors. Watch for more capital projects in the next several years!

Local contractor Sergio Gomez hangs art in the Library.



Farewell! You will be missed!

Three of our well-loved staff members are retiring this year. Here are their stories. See page 3 for a photo of them.

My Years at the Library

by Stephen Brunskill

It's been a little more than 33 years when I first started here. But this spring, I have found that it is time for me to retire.

There were times of just "business as usual." Then I moved to Morristown, and I could just "commute" by walking a few steps away from my South Street apartment. Circumstances changed: I moved out few years later, and the Library pushed ahead to complete its 2006 expansion. A workmate was a friend of a woman I dated, and she spoke highly of me to that woman. That woman now has been my wife of nearly 20 years!

There were occasions which were a little more personal. Being in the hospital on two occasions for weeks, and the Reference staff would cover for my absences. Many of us came to the Willis Wing's 100th anniversary "speakeasy" party, where we had a good time with period music, dance and laughs. The Reference staff has been like a second family to me to the point that I invited them as guests to my wedding reception dinner!

It's been amazing to work with a professional and dedicated team; we would pull together to help the place that faced smoke, floods, implosions, and even recent earthquakes! Those aside, I still cherish all the years I've had here.

I will have memories of the patrons here. Some of them just briefly smile or say "hi" in the direction of me at the Reference Desk when they come to look around at the stately Willis Wing. Others became regulars at my annual Russian film presentations and also at the travelogues I presented, where I shared photographs and personal experiences of the overseas destinations I love.

Which leads to one of my reasons for retirement: as many staff members and some patrons know, I look forward to traveling more and spending time at a more leisurely pace. Thank you all for being part of my experience here.

A Loving Farewell to The Children's Room by Arlene Sprague

Spring always brings changes and this spring brings a personal change for me. After working for 38 years in the Children's Department, I will be retiring. Many things have changed at the Library since I first started, yet many things have stayed the same. When I started in 1986, construction on the 1987 addition was underway. Collections were closed to the public, because the addition did not have a Certificate of Occupancy. Staff had to bring requested materials to patrons in the Reference Area. Watching staff members carry boxes of books from one side of the building to the other, I witnessed the staff dedication to serving Library patrons. Throughout the years, this dedication to providing quality service never wavered. Whether we persevered through another addition or we worked remotely in a storefront, or a church basement after an explosion, our intention and efforts always went into helping our patrons find what they wanted or needed. While staff members have changed over the last three decades, the Library's mission never wavered.

When I first began working here, we still used a card catalog. One of my responsibilities included maintaining it by filing the new cards, and removing the outdated ones. I fully embraced the electronic catalog when we switched to it in the late eighties, and I never had to file another title, author, or subject card. VHS tapes were the hot item. We belonged to a rotating circuit to help share the cost of in demand movies. These transitioned to DVDs, then Blu-Rays, until now, when young children ask "what's a DVD?" Book and cassette packages are now Wonderbooks, with the audio built in. We went from one game PC in the department to providing Launchpads, which are portable, educational tablets that children can take home. The Children's Department moved from the first floor to the second, giving us more room, more natural light, and the space to add graphic novels and a Spanish book collection. As public interests and technology changed, we tried our best to keep up.

Originally, I was hired as a reference librarian, but after six months the opportunity to manage the Children's Department presented itself. I took the job and never looked back. After countless story times, school visits, and book clubs, I can honestly say it will be the families I will miss the most. They invited me into their reading journey and into their lives as we watched their children find the magic of books. I will always be grateful to Barbara Rice, the Library Director who hired me, for letting me learn on the job and trusting me with the children's position. Working here at the Library has truly been the job of a lifetime.

So Many Changes! by Anne Ryan DelloRusso

After working here at the Morristown and Morris Township Library in the Circulation Department for 29 years, it is time for me to retire.

So many things have happened in the past three decades here at 1 Miller Road. I have been here for a variety of updates and changes to the Library building itself, including, but surely not limited to: the 2006 expansion, the 2010 explosion, the 2014 and 2025 frozen pipe floods, the 2020 lucite pandemic screens, and various other building issues both good and bad.

I have worked under three different Directors but just one Department Head! I have had dozens and dozens of wonderful coworkers over the years.

The Library has changed our computer catalog and circulation system four times. I think? Could it be five?!? That's a lot of new buttons to click on and computer forms to fill out.

I have watched many of our patrons come in first as babies in strollers and now they come in with children of their own!

While I will no longer be here on a day-to-day basis, I will not be a stranger to my many friends who will still be working here.

It has been a true privilege to be able to work at the Morristown and Morris Township Library.

ON THE SHELF



New Fiction & Memoirs in All Formats by Mary Lynn Bezza

These books are new this spring and available in both standard and large type editions. Most will also be available in Libby as of the publication of this newsletter. There are sure to be many readers waiting for these in demand titles, so get on the Main holds list now!

Elphie by Gregory Maguire

The prequel to the *Wicked* series of novels tells the origin story of the Wicked Witch of the West. For all of the many fans, new and old, of the perennially popular musical, movie and books.

The Love We Found by Jill Santopolo

The long-awaited sequel to *The Light We Lost*, a *NYT* bestselling novel and a favorite Reese's Book Club pick. A tear-jerking romance for readers who enjoyed the Jojo Moyes *Me Before You* series.

Show Don't Tell by Curtis Sittenfeld

The second book of short stories by the critically acclaimed author of *American Wife* and *Romantic Comedy*. Sittenfeld's work is witty, poignant and unexpected. This collection features a follow-up story to her much-loved novel *Prep*.

Dream Count by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Possibly the most-anticipated literary novel of 2025. Award-winning author Adichie ponders the roles of love and happiness in the lives of modern women in Nigeria and the US.

Lethal Prey by John Sandford

Virgil Flowers and Lucas Davenport join forces in the 35th(!) *Prey* series novel. Fans will be thrilled for the excitement which ensues as the two characters race against time and social media to catch a killer.

Battle Mountain by C.J. Box

Another long-running series is also back with the 25th novel starring the Wyoming game warden Joe Pickett. This time he's struggling to save an endangered species whilst helping the governor solve a crime.

NONFICTION by Stephen Brunskill

Superbloom: How Technologies of Connection Tear Us Apart by Nicholas G. Carr
With curious insights and vivid examples drawn from history and science, this book explores how social media has warped our sense of self and society. The author warns that it may be too late to change the system, but it's not too late to change ourselves.

Everything Must Go by Dorian Lynskey

A rich, humorous book — featuring fascinating stories and surprising facts from film, literature and more — on our perennial obsession with the end of the world as we know it.

The Way of Play: Using Games and Little Moments of Connection To Raise Calm and Confident Kids by Tina Payne Bryson

Some parents let kids play time be their own time, but recent science covered in this book shows how specific, deliberate, playful interaction is the key to future confidence, emotional development, and resilience, too.

100 Tactical Patterns You Must Know: Learn To Recognize Winning Chess Moves by Frank Erwich

Grab this book, and then come to join our Library's twice-monthly Chess Club! Making your way through this clear and easy-to-follow book, you will learn to recognize patterns of imminent threat and tactical wins.

The Forbidden Garden: The Botanists of Besieged Leningrad and their Impossible Choice by Simon Parkin

This book about the 872-day siege of German troops in Leningrad features the story of the world's largest collection (250,000 hand-collected samples) of seeds, derived from more than two decades of worldwide exploration. Should the collection be saved? Or themselves? The amazing story of the botanists and their remarkable sacrifices in the name of science is all here. An acquisition brought from our Library's annual "Max Willsky" memorial grant.

Dinking All Day by Jamie Miller

Appropriately subtitled as "a handbook for the truly obsessed" pickleball player, this is a fun take on this new pastime. Written with humor and a refreshing style, you can laugh and revel your way through this book of tips and trivia.

FAREWELL! You will be missed! (See their stories on page 2!)



Anne Ryan DelloRusso, Arlene Sprague and Stephen Brunskill . . . these three well-loved staff members of our Library will be retiring this year. See their stories on page 2. Stop in to wish them farewell and thank them for their many contributions!

Placing holds in the library catalog and the Main app will be temporarily unavailable starting February 14.

We appreciate your patience as we prepare to update our computer system.

You can start placing holds again on March 26.



MORRISTOWN &
MORRIS TOWNSHIP
LIBRARY



The Morristown & Morris Township Library

One Miller Road
Morristown, New Jersey 07960

HOW TO REACH US:

Library email: info@jfpl.org

General: 973-538-6161

Reference: 973-538-2592

Local History: 973-538-3473

Visit the Library's website for more information

MMTLibrary.org

Follow the Morristown
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Research News from The Caroline Rose Foster North Jersey History and Genealogy Center

by James Lewis

The CRFNJHGC provides free access to a number of genealogy databases. Did you know that Morristown and Morris Township Library cardholders could access some of them from home? Here they are: **MyHeritage** (a database that provides access to records from across the globe — not just the good old US of A!); **Heritage Quest** (an Ancestry.com product that provides access to American and Canadian resources including history books and U.S. Freedman's Bank Records; NOTE the **Research Aids** for those getting started); **ProQuest's Historical Northeast Newspapers** with coverage dating from 1785 to 2010 from all over New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and a few from Delaware; **Heritage Hub** (a collection of obituaries but also includes a keyword search you can use to search for regular news articles from across the country — a great help to students!); and for those interested in the War Between the States, there's **Civil War Era** (provides access to newspapers from Union states Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Confederate states, Kentucky, Louisiana, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia from 1840-1865). If you do not find what you are seeking in these databases, we provide access to a few more in the CRFNJHGC in the Library's lower level. We are happy to help you with your research!



Just for TEENS! by Abigail Hsu

Young Adult Read-alikes: Then and Now

If You Like...	Then Try...	Here's Why:
 <p><i>The Westing Game</i> by Ellen Raskin (1978)</p>	 <p><i>The Inheritance Games</i> by Jennifer Lynn Barnes (2020)</p>	<p>The death of a wealthy man and the question of inheritance kicks off these two character-driven mysteries. Readers will relish the intricate plots and puzzles in these bestselling novels.</p>
 <p><i>Howl's Moving Castle</i> by Diana Wynn Jones (1986)</p>	 <p><i>The Maid and the Crocodile</i> by Jordan Ifueko (2024)</p>	<p>"Beauty and the Beast" gets a unique twist in these fantasy stories, which examine popular conventions of their particular genres while weaving a compelling romance narrative between a plucky protagonist and her melodramatic love interest.</p>
 <p><i>The Thief</i> by Megan Whalen Turner (1996)</p>	 <p><i>The Merciful Crow</i> by Margaret Owen (2019)</p>	<p>These two immersive fantasies feature clever protagonists who are taken on an adventure with higher stakes than is initially revealed. Shared themes include in-world mythology, hidden identities, and an engaging background cast.</p>
 <p><i>Hatchet</i> by Gary Paulsen (1987)</p>	 <p><i>I Am Still Alive</i> by Kate Alice Marshall (2018)</p>	<p>In these wilderness survival tales, teens fight to stay alive with the resources at hand while grappling with familial upheaval that indirectly led to their predicament.</p>



Become a **FRIEND** of the
Morristown & Morris Township Library!



Please join us as we work to help YOUR Library! NEW RENEWAL

Individual: \$15 Family: \$30 Patron: \$60 & up Benefactor: \$100 & up

Please make checks out to "Friends of the Morristown & Morris Township Library"

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Volunteer With The Friends! YES, I would like to volunteer with the Friends! Please contact me with more information!

For more information about the Friends and opportunities to participate, email Friends@MMT.Mainlib.org.

Please leave this form at the Library Circulation Desk or mail to:

Friends of the Morristown/Morris Township Library, 1 Miller Road, Morristown, NJ 07960-5234

Find this form on the Library's website at mmtlibrary.org. Click on "ABOUT US" and then on "JOIN THE FRIENDS."