



# Friends of the Newark Free Library

May 2021

Editor – Patricia Rachek

## Post Pandemic Libraries and the Roaring 2020s

Ideas from Annual Meeting Guest Speaker Annie Norman, EDD, the State Librarian of Delaware

Sue Peters, FNFL Board Member

“Crises have a way of highlighting underlying issues,” said Dr. Norman, introducing her theme of the libraries’ role in helping citizens recover from the pandemic.

First Dr. Norman described the many ways the state libraries had impressed her with their pandemic response. Library parking lots became hubs for curbside book delivery, printing on demand, Wi-Fi access, and at times COVID testing and vaccine distribution. Existing library programs moved online, and new virtual offerings were launched. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library was an ideal adaption as it provides books by mail. Use of eBooks zoomed, and Dr. Norman expressed thanks for the Friends’ \$10,000 gift to purchase electronic media.



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And the evolution continues. After months on back order, Chromebooks and MiFi’s (WiFi-hotspots) have arrived and are expected to be available to patrons next month. Loan of these devices will help make up for lack of access to computers during the shutdown.

Dr. Norman especially noted that Delaware libraries kept up their partnerships with social workers and employment specialists during the past year. Patrons who wanted those services could easily make appointments for phone consultations via social media.

As the recovery from the pandemic unfolds, Dr. Norman expects the libraries to play a major role. “Literacy is the foundation of equity,” she said. The Delaware libraries are leading a 3-year “communities of excellence” project that focuses on literacy through a structured collaboration with other organizations and agencies.

This new program builds on the libraries’ increasing involvement in community partnerships. For instance,  
*Continued page 2*

### ***Post Pandemic Libraries continued***

the library has joined Unite Delaware, a referral platform that connects people in need with organizations that can help. Library staff uses the program to link patrons who want support to relevant organizations. Unite Delaware is modelled on the successful Unite US and was started by Christiana Care. A fall 2020 issue of *Delaware Public Health*, guest edited by Dr. Norman, focuses on the many ways libraries are supporting consumer health, improving children's well-being, disseminating critical health information and more. You can read the issue by clicking on the link: <https://bit.ly/3dPPs3N>

Begun in 2020, the literacy program uses the "communities of excellence" framework, which is modelled on the well-known Baldrige quality process used in the business world. Dr. Norman sees this as an opportunity to bring stakeholders from different sectors together in a disciplined way to address a specific problem.

As the libraries cover "all subject areas," they often serve as a connector for organizations that don't typically work together. Over the past decade, the libraries have partnered informally with dozens of organizations. Now using approaches like "communities of excellence" they seek to develop these relationships with their natural partners in the community in more structured and impactful ways. The libraries of the future seek not only to restore pre-pandemic services, but also to play a role in addressing inequities the COVID period has exposed.

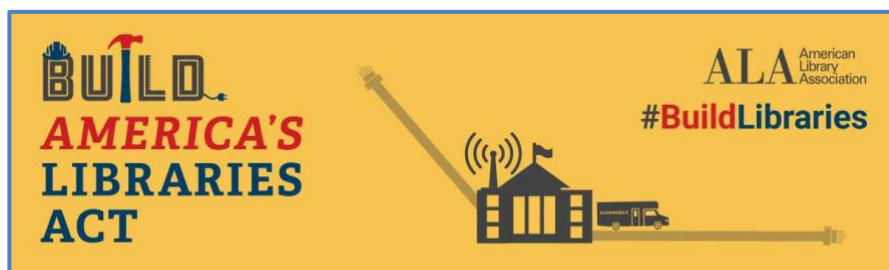


Annie Norman, EDD, is State Librarian and Director of the Delaware Division of Libraries. Under her leadership, the Delaware Library Catalog was established; currently 74 participating libraries are sharing 2.5 million items for the benefit of Delawareans. Annie is the first librarian to be inducted into the *Hall of Fame of Delaware Women*.



### **Advocates Wanted**

Sue Peters  
FNFL Board Member



Dr. Norman asked the Friends for help in supporting the Build America's Libraries Act. According to the American Library Association, this bill "would fund upgrades to the nation's library infrastructure to address challenges such as natural disasters, COVID-19, broadband capacity, environmental hazards, and accessibility barriers. This groundbreaking legislation would pave the way for new and improved library facilities in underserved communities across the country." Funding for libraries has so far not been included in President Biden's infrastructure plan. This issue is of particular concern for the Newark Free Library as the library is under consideration for extensive facility renovations.

To find out more, including how to send a message to President Biden and your representatives, visit the <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/buildlibraries>.



## President's Letter

Judy Taggart, President

As I have been reading about libraries of the future, I realize that even before COVID, libraries were offering more digital content, such as ebooks and audio books. (Be sure to take advantage of FREE ebooks and Audio books through Delaware Library Overdrive or Libby. If you are not sure how to use this technology, contact your library for assistance). As we become more accustomed to virtual library services, the demand will increase, and our library is adapting to change.

As our libraries reopen, they will be different, but it doesn't have to be a "bad" different. Library staff have been constantly reinventing themselves to even better serve our community.

Dr. Annie Norman, Delaware State Librarian/Director, spoke at the Friends April Annual Meeting on the future of libraries. Friends Board member, Sue Peters, has written a beautifully written summary of her talk. Let us know your thoughts on the future of libraries. Simply email the Friends at:

[info@friendsofthenewarkfreelibrary.com](mailto:info@friendsofthenewarkfreelibrary.com)

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Each of our Friends board members is a treasure!

They quietly and expertly complete their responsibility and the Newark Library patrons are the beneficiary of the board members' time and talent. We are very appreciative of their service. The Board members are:

Vice President—Barbara Jo German who coordinates and assists with special activities

Recording Secretary—Deb Morehead

Treasurer—Noreen Campbell

Corresponding Secretary—Katy Ferraro

Newsletter Editor—Patricia Rachek

Web Master—Adebanjo (Banjo] Oriade

Membership—Roy Lopata

Public Relations—Carol McKelvey

Fund Development—Sue Peters

Author Talks—Cathie Germani

Kathie Davis is completing her last term. She has faithfully served as Recording Secretary followed by Corresponding Secretary and is now assisting with special assignments.

Mary Ann Gladnick has just completed serving as Vice President and is now assisting with special assignments.

Mark Rusinko and Lynne Wegman are our two newest board members who are assisting with special projects.

### Binge Box DVD Collection



Search the catalog and place holds using this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/y7je5x2h>

## Highlights of the Annual Meeting

Sue Peters, FNFL Board Member

This year's meeting took place on April 6 via Zoom. Special guests included library advocate and **State Representative Paul S. Baumbach** and **State Librarian and Director of the Delaware Division of Libraries Annie Norman** who joined a group of about 20 friends and library staff.

### Changes on the Board

The board approved new appointments and additional terms for several members. Barbara Jo German was voted Vice President, while Katy Ferrero became the new Corresponding Secretary. Their predecessors, Mary Ann Gladnick and Kathie Davis, returned to the board to serve 4<sup>th</sup> terms as directors. Deb Morehead was approved to continue as Recording Secretary in her 3<sup>rd</sup> term on the board. (For a complete list of officers and board members see **The President's Letter** by Judy Taggart).

The board appreciates Mary Ann's and Kathie's service as officers. Among her contributions, Mary Ann organized the annual spring meeting, finding entertainment, volunteers, and catering that converted the library into a welcoming brunch destination each year. As Recording Secretary and Interim Correspondence Secretary, Kathie composed meeting minutes, acknowledgment letters, and more with characteristic care and style.



Click here on the link to register.

<https://delawarelibraries.libcal.com/event/7564399>



## Library Manager's Report

Pat Birchenall  
Library Manager

It's hard to believe it has been 17 years since I first came to the Newark Free Library as Manager. One of my early impressions was that it was the most vibrant library in the system, and I still feel that way. It's a combination of a very engaged, diverse community, a supportive and effective Friends group, and a great staff, some of whom have been here longer than I have. I am proud that many staff people who started at Newark have been promoted to other positions throughout the system, so our Newark staff family has a wide reach.

So much has changed in our library system during my years as library manager. Perhaps most obvious is the change in computer technology, which has given patrons access to more services and information at faster speeds and has given staff more tools for helping patrons. We have continually learned new skills so we can help our patrons to learn them too.

During this time, libraries nationwide have evolved to become community gathering places, with meetings, classes, performances, tutoring and other activities taking place in all of our available spaces. At the Newark Free Library, this has certainly been the case. We have been fortunate to have innovative, creative staff members at Newark who continually rise to the challenge of developing programs and initiatives, and who are willing to try something new. These activities attract new people who become regular library users.

Cooperative partnerships with other organizations including social services and other state agencies, job help, volunteer tax help and the summer lunch program have expanded in the last several years. The library provides a welcoming and familiar



*Library Manager's Report continued*  
environment for people who may initially feel intimidated about using these services. Our staff has worked creatively to make space available so that these activities can happen.

In the last year, so much of what we do was put on hold because of COVID. It did not take long for our staff to learn how to make the switch from in-person to virtual programs, as well as starting curbside service for library materials, free printing and book bundles. Some of these changes proved to be so popular that they will remain in place once we fully reopen, but we will also return to the more traditional services, and the library building will once again become a gathering place for our community.

Our talented staff members are our # 1 asset, and close behind them is the Friends group. They have been consistently proactive in asking what the library needs and have been willing to fund a wide variety of programs, services and furnishings to make the library a more enriching experience for everyone. Think of our music programs, new furnishings, children's summer reading activities, and you will probably see Friends' support making it possible.

We are now starting to bring back some of our in-person services, and we look forward to welcoming you back into the library in a way that is safe and comfortable for everyone.

Thank you to everyone for your ongoing support and your love of the library. It makes it a truly special part of our community.



## Friends Receive \$2,500 Grant to Launch Library of Things

Sue Peters  
FNFL Board Member

The reopening of the Newark Free Library will include a brand-new borrowing program thanks to a grant from the New Castle County Council.



In recent years, leading-edge libraries have started **Libraries of Things** to lend items such as home tools, musical instruments, technology, scientific equipment and puzzles and toys. These libraries give patrons access to items they may not be able to afford, and that support the application of knowledge gained through the library and continued learning at home.

The Newark Free Library staff has created a list of purchase suggestions they believe will benefit the community including a microscope; a moisture meter for drywall; wood and masonry; a music keyboard; podcasting and other audiovisual equipment; puzzles; and indoor and outdoor games.

The Friends and Newark Free Library staff believe that creating a Library of Things now will help attract current and new patrons to the library as reopening begins. The Library of Things is intended to be an innovative way to benefit all patrons that should be especially relevant to residents of underserved communities. The grant was awarded in April – stay tuned as plans unfold.



## Thank You and Farewell, Pat Birchenall

Biography Reprinted with permission of the Newark Library

Pat Birchenall, Library Manager at the Newark Library, will retire in May 2021. She has been a dedicated librarian and advocate during her career as well as a supporter of the Friends of the Newark Free Library.

Pat knew from a young age that she wanted to be a librarian because of her Uncle Ben Powell, who was the library director at Duke University for 28 years. When she was a child, her family occasionally visited him on campus, and she remembers him serving her lemonade and cookies in the Rare Books Room. Pat had great admiration for her uncle, and that's all it took for her to make the decision, at such a young age, to become a librarian.

In December 1977, Pat received her MLS from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her first professional position was at the main library at Penn State University, where her husband was in graduate school. After returning from two years in Germany where her husband did his post-graduate work, she made a career change and began working as a library director at a small public library in South Carolina. Pat later worked as a Reference and Serials librarian at Augusta College in Augusta, Georgia, before moving to the Delaware area in 1993.

Pat spent her first year in Delaware working for Bob Wetherall as a Reference librarian at the Dover Library. Next, she took a position with the New Castle County Library Systems as the Manager of the Appoquinimink Library in Middletown, which had just transitioned from a contract library to a county branch. While at Appoquinimink, it merged services with the new Middletown High School library as the only combined public/school library in the state. In May 2003, Pat moved to the Kirkwood Library as manager and then came to Newark in January 2004.

During Pat's years with the New Castle County Library systems, she had the pleasure of working with a great team of managers and administrators and feels they have helped to achieve significant improvements in their services over the years. In addition to managing the day-to-day operations of their branches, the managers have all had responsibilities for various systemwide committees. Pat is particularly proud of her involvement with the New Castle County Reads committee, which has brought well-known authors to speak during the last 12 years and has also allowed the libraries to engage with independent book groups throughout the county on an ongoing basis. When asked which of the NCC Reads authors have been her favorites, Pat named Ann Patchett (2010) and Walter Moseley (2015).

We wish Pat all the best and thank her for her service to our community.



*Pat Birchenall and Rep. Osienski at Legislative day*



*Many Thanks from the Friends*



*Pat Birchenall at the kick off for curbside service*

## New members Join the Legacy of Reading Society

Sue Peters, FNFL Board Member

Promising to put their money where their mouths are, three board members and their spouses have joined the **Legacy of Reading Society**:

Carol and Jim McKelvey

Judy and Bob Taggart

Sue and Ray Peters



The **Legacy of Reading Society** recognizes donors who are including the Friends of the Newark Free Library in their estate plans. These planned gifts are unrestricted and will be spent on additions to the collection, cultural and educational programs, literacy efforts and other library priorities.

Joining is straightforward. First you need to name the Friends as a beneficiary in your will, living trust or estate plan or in a financial instrument such as your insurance policy or retirement account. Then notify the Friends via email that you have done so.

However, updating your estate plans or beneficiaries of your funds is not as easy as writing a check. You will probably want legal and financial advice, whether from online sources or from your lawyer or financial planner. You will need to find and complete the proper forms. Witnesses and notaries will most likely be involved. Fortunately, in Delaware, beneficiaries are usually able to serve as witnesses, and notaries are readily available at many banks.

Making these updates is not a moment's work. But as Carol McKelvey says, "We are the ones who **MUST** keep libraries important parts of our society." If you're reading this newsletter, the library is important to you, and we hope you will consider remembering the Friends in your estate plan to help future generations enjoy the library too.

All of the information you need is provided below and on the friends of the Newark free library web site under How Can You help: <https://www.friendsofthenewarkfreelibrary.com/howcanyouhelp.htm>

Our full legal name is: Friends of the Newark Free Library.

Our legal address is: 750 Library Avenue, Newark, DE 19711.

Our Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN) is 23-7098836.

Our email address is [info@friendsofthenewarkfreelibrary.com](mailto:info@friendsofthenewarkfreelibrary.com)

## What's New at the Library...

Sherri McCarthy, Adult Services Librarian



### INSTAGRAM

NFL now has an Instagram account that you can follow!

Log in from your desktop (<https://www.instagram.com/accounts/login/>) or use the Instagram app on your device. For now, the IG postings are often the same as our Facebook postings, but we are working on developing a separate personality for IG. We just launched our 'Gram in March 2021, and we already have almost 120 followers. Our Instagram handle is **newarkfreelibraryde**

### NEWARK FREE LIBRARY OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE

NFL launched its official Facebook page a year ago in April 2020. We now have nearly 500 FB followers. It's nice if you "Like" us, but better if you "Follow" us – which will ensure that more of our posts make it into your News Feed. Or you can check the page directly each day so that you don't miss a thing. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/newarkfreelibrary> The Friends of the Newark Free Library FB page is being phased out and is no longer updated. We are grateful to the Friends for allowing us to use their page until we were able to get our own official page.

### MYSTERY BOOK CLUB

Love a good mystery? Join the Mystery Book Club! Newark Free Library is launching an online Mystery Book Club on May 19 at 1pm. The first book to be discussed is "A Better Man" by Louise Penny. On June 16, the group will discuss "Blood Oath" by Linda Fairstein. The group will be hosted by library specialist Susan Lipsy.



The group meets via Zoom on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 1pm. Click on this link to register: <https://delawarelibraries.libcal.com/event/7658259>

New Castle County offers virtual book groups several days a week, from noontime to nighttime. Find one that fits your schedule and your reading preferences. These groups require registration to receive the Zoom link. Book group descriptions and registration forms can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ym4ruyuw>

### STAY CURRENT WITH NFL PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND NEW MATERIALS

Every other week, NFL sends out an email newsletter highlighting programs and services. This appears in your inbox as "**Newark Free Library – Stay Connected!**" On alternating weeks, you receive the Book Browsing Bulletin of Newark Free Library. The NFL's **Book Browsing Bulletin (BBB)** has photos of newly received fiction, nonfiction, and biography for adults, as well as a broad collection of other materials ... CD books, DVDs, music CDs, and teen items ... whatever has arrived recently. Each has a link to the catalog for your convenience in placing holds.

The newsletter and the BBB are created by library specialist, Sue Menz. It is a time-consuming weekly task, but one that has been an important link during the pandemic for keeping in touch with our patrons about our



*What's New at the Library continued*

programs and services and letting them see newly arrived items. In fact, with the BBB – because all items are photographed before being checked in – you get to see more than you would have browsing the shelves in person ... because so many items go out immediately on holds!

If you do not already receive the NFL email newsletter and the BBB, sign up here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yceh4ax7>

## **EVEN MORE WAYS TO SEE NEW MATERIAL**

Sue Menz is also involved in creating new selection lists that allow our patrons to keep track of New Fiction (recently received titles by debut and lesser-known authors) and Upcoming Fiction (a five-month look ahead at highly anticipated titles by well-known authors). Along with the New Nonfiction (recently received titles in six popular subject areas), these tools for readers are updated monthly. Also updated monthly is the Staff Picks newsletter, which Sue compiles to create a curated selection of fiction and nonfiction titles recommended by staff from across the library system. Staff Picks features titles off the beaten path that patrons might not see in the other bulletins. Links to these four lists are included in each email newsletter we send and also appear regularly in our Facebook posts.

\*\*\*\*\*NEW FICTION -- [https://padlet.com/upcoming\\_and\\_new\\_fiction/z14hjkqu398q86dx](https://padlet.com/upcoming_and_new_fiction/z14hjkqu398q86dx)

\*\*\*\*\*NEW NONFICTION -- [https://padlet.com/new\\_nonfiction/c4cc88x7dsc2pft6](https://padlet.com/new_nonfiction/c4cc88x7dsc2pft6)

\*\*\*\*\*STAFF PICKS – <https://www.nccde.org/374/What-Do-I-Read-Next>

\*\*\*\*\*UPCOMING FICTION -- [https://padlet.com/upcoming\\_and\\_new\\_fiction/fotroifndqsxv3zw](https://padlet.com/upcoming_and_new_fiction/fotroifndqsxv3zw)

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### **WEBSITES:**

**Friends of the Newark Free Library**

[www.friendsofthenewarkfreelibrary.com](http://www.friendsofthenewarkfreelibrary.com)

**Newark Free Library main page**

<http://www.nccde.org/Newark>

**New Castle County Happenings library page**

<http://www.nccdecs.org> and click on libraries and then Happenings Guide



Friends of the Newark Free Library



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and much more.  
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...or visit [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)



## Music Programs at the Library

Pam Nelson, Reference Staff

There is nothing to truly replace live music programs, but we have managed to fill the gap with a successful on-going monthly **Virtual Open Mic** held the third Wednesday evening of the month from 6pm – 8pm. Click on the link:

<https://delawarelibraries.libcal.com/event/7476950>



The program is hosted by both the Newark and Claymont Libraries and has had a steady following of about a dozen in attendance each session. Each participant either plays or sings a selection of music or recites a poem or work of prose. In most recent months, we have selected a theme for the month Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Spring, etc. to give focus to the program, but participants are welcome to offer a selection of their choice. To enliven the session, either an icebreaker question or trivia question is posed to each person before their performance. Audience members are also welcomed to attend; so, please join us. The next scheduled dates are April 21, May 19, and June 16.

Over the years, one of the library's regular performing groups has been the **First State Ringers**. We have missed their concerts, but as they did for the holidays,



the ensemble has arranged to record their newest program, **Old Time Religion** with the broadcast beginning on May 16th, at 3pm. The program will be announced on the Newark Library's Homepage and Facebook page. Please look for it there as well as on the First State Ringers' site under videos, [www.firststateringers.org](http://www.firststateringers.org) or on the Newark United Methodist Church YouTube channel.

The program, under the direction of Ruthie Toole, will include a couple of spirituals, *Down by the Riverside*, and *Bound for the Promised Land*, as well as the standards, *The Old Rugged Cross*, *Joyful, Joyful* and *It is Well with My Soul* with guest violinist Gabriela Salvador-Riera. How wonderful to make another music program available to our community.

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## Chromebooks and Hotspots

Pam Stevens

Library of Things (LOT) Librarian

Libraries across the nation have expanded their collections beyond books to include household tools, musical instruments, and technology equipment. Delaware libraries are following suit by offering Chromebooks and Wi-Fi hotspots to our patrons in an attempt to bridge the digital divide in Delaware.

**Chromebooks** are lightweight laptops that run on Google Chrome's operating system. For greater access to all Google's suite of applications, such as



Docs, Sheets, Drive, and Meet, patrons will need a Gmail account, but the device is accessible without a Gmail account. Some patrons may not have access to the internet to use a Chromebook, which is why hotspots are also available to borrow. **Hotspots** are compact, lightweight, and portable internet connectors through Wi-Fi. Any device with Wi-Fi capability, such as a laptop,



desktop, phone, tablet, or gaming console, can connect to the hotspot. There can be up to 15 devices connected to the hotspot at one time. For patrons having technical

difficulty with either device, library staff are available at **Ask a Librarian DE** and at local branches.

*Chromebooks continued*

Patrons can take home one Chromebook per library card and one hotspot per household. The items have a one-week loan period with up to three renewals. There are nine Chromebooks and five hotspots at the Newark Free Library (NFL) available for checkout. Approximately twenty-six libraries in the state of Delaware will have the same service, but quantities at each branch will vary. Within our first week of offering these items, one Chromebook from the NFL is currently on loan ... and this was without advertising! Patrons are seeking and finding great services like this and other offerings beyond books at the NFL.

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## I've been reading...

### **THE GATEKEEPERS: How the White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency**

*By Chris Whipple*

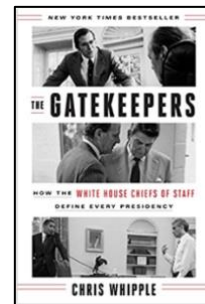
Crown, 2017; 365 pp.



*Reviewed by  
Roy H. Lopata*

For longtime political “junkies” and those more recently transfixed by the former Trump White House’s management style, Chris Whipple’s history of the establishment, operations and importance of presidential chiefs of staff is the book for you. According to Whipple, presidents going as far back as Franklin Roosevelt had rudimentary White House office managers of one kind or another. It was not until the reign of Richard Nixon’s H.R. “Bob” Haldeman that we would find a recognizable chief of staff office controlling the flow of information and access to the president and ensuring that the president’s

executive branch directives were carried out. Whipple is, of course, aware that the Haldeman “model,” was not the one to follow in all circumstances since he and many of his “worst and the dumbest” colleagues ended up in Federal prisons. And one minor quibble here, we could certainly go back as far as Woodrow Wilson’s confidant and key assistant, the aptly named Col. Edward House, to find precursors to the position of White House chief of staff.



Through in-depth interviews with all seventeen living and now retired former chiefs, two presidents (George H.W. Bush and Jimmy Carter), and multitudes of other retired White House officials and politicians, Whipple describes with detail and interesting anecdotes the evolution of the chief of staff office beginning with Haldeman’s tight knit and hard-nosed management style.

Whipple then portrays President Carter’s initial and disastrous decision to essentially do the job by himself. He next outlines Reagan’s first term successes skillfully managed by James Baker. This was followed by a second term of upheaval and Iran-Contra “guns for hostages” controversies that Whipple partially blames on Baker’s successor, Don Regan.

From here, we learn of the dictatorial and largely unsuccessful tenure of John Sununu, under the first President Bush, coupled with the return of Baker to the chief’s role as a rescue operation for the Bush presidency.

Next, Whipple explores the early first term Clinton stumbles related in part to the ill-suited tenure of Mack McLarty, with another rescue maneuver for a dysfunctional White House, performed by Leon Panetta; this was followed by the successful efforts by Chiefs Erskine Bowles and John Podesta to avoid Clinton’s removal from office by the Senate following the House of Representatives impeachment vote.

*Continued on page 12*

### *The Gatekeepers continued*

Then in the George W Bush administration, Whipple describes the unique tenures of Andrew Card and Joshua Bolten whose roles were circumscribed in the foreign policy arena by Vice President Dick Cheney, to what most agree resulted in disasters that linger today in Iraq and Afghanistan. Finally, Whipple concludes with portrayals of the President Obama's chiefs – Rahm Emanuel, William Daley, Jacob Lew and Denis McDonough -- each with their own styles and, Whipple notes, with mixed report cards.

Whipple's "hero" here, who may be obvious from these thumbnail descriptions, is James Baker – the only man (and they have only been men) to serve in the chief of staff position twice. Baker clearly understood how to let his presidential boss shine; how to say "no" when necessary; and how to ensure that the White House he served functioned smoothly from both a political and policy standpoint.

In sum, this is a lively, well-written account that, as noted at the outset, will have a special appeal to those with a keen interest in recent presidential politics and White House personalities.

## **Becoming Dr. Seuss**

Brian Jay Jones



Reviewed by  
Robert Taggart

It seems that everyone is familiar with Dr. Seuss books, but few know the author, Theodore Seuss Geisel. This book informs us with extensive details about Geisel, the man, as well as his work. From an early age, Geisel loved to draw and add clever words. Even in his Dartmouth college days, his doodles crowded out his classroom notes. He spent many hours illustrating for the college

humor magazine. At Oxford, his drawings overwhelmed his indifferent class notes, but he met his future wife Helen Parker there, who not only encouraged him in his eventual career but worked closely with him as his favorite critic.

There are many details about the man and his craft that make for fascinating reading. As a young man, he illustrated for the liberal journals *PM* and *Judge* and several magazines. But most of his income came as an illustrator for commercial enterprises, the bug spray Flit and a marine oil during the 1920s and 1930s. During WWII, he worked with Frank Capra as illustrator in propaganda films and pamphlets, making the mythical Private Snafu famous. However, his real passion was to replace the boring *See Dick Run* readers for young children. He considered them pointless and destructive of children's imaginations. He believed such books demeaned children, talking down to rather than engaging them.

After many rejections, Geisel began his quest to entertain kids with the publication of his 1937 book, *And to Think I Saw it on Mulberry Street*.

Geisel's books offered whimsical drawings of strange characters and situations devoid of straight lines, accompanied by clever rhymes that delighted children and parents alike. The books were meant to be read over and over, with silly plots that children loved because they were so ridiculous. Geisel hit his stride in the 1950s with titles such as *Horton Hears a Who*, *The Cat in the Hat*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *The Lorax*. Though he denied having moral messages, he admitted later that some books did. For instance, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* was really an attack on selfish commercialism, though some detractors believed he was attacking Christmas itself.

One might have the impression that Geisel found it easy to write or illustrate his books. Not so. He agonized for hundreds of hours over the themes, drawings, and especially the rhymes, with strict limits of a couple hundred vocabulary words. He worked at his top floor studio atop a large hill



*Becoming Dr. Suess continued*

in La Jolla, California eight hours every day, chain smoking like a fiend. Lucky for him, he had his very loyal wife Helen as well as the Random House chief, Bennett Cerf, who published much of his work. Sadly, Helen committed suicide in 1967, due in part to his affair with a married friend, Audrey Dimond. A year later, he married Audrey and they worked together for the rest of his life until he died of throat cancer in 1991.

As Day reports in great detail, the Geisels had a very active social life during both of his marriages. They hosted and attended many large parties, dinners, and community events. The Geisels were excellent philanthropists, providing a lot of time and financial support to the local San Diego arts community and to San Diego State University. They always travelled to New York to read out loud his latest book, an annual event loved by all attendees. Beyond that, they travelled to more than 30 countries with their ever-increasing wealth.

Geisel could be very hard to work with, but his productivity was amazing. He wrote more than 60 books in three series: his famous Big books, Beginner books, and preschool books. Additionally, he has sold more than 700 million books, produced 5 films, 11 TV specials, 4 TV series, and a Broadway musical. He amassed 2 Academy Awards, 2 Emmys, and 2 Pulitzers. Children love him, as do parents, teachers, and librarians. Day does notice the recent attacks on his books due to perceived racism. The earliest books had Chinese characters with pigtails and conical hats, for instance, but even Geisel noticed this and modified his early works to counter this problem

The major irony of Geisel's life is that he had no children of his own, and was uncomfortable around large crowds of them. He answered this conundrum with his statement in an interview "You make 'em, I amuse 'em." That is how he viewed his work, because he always took children's intellect and sense of wonderment seriously. "One talks to children, never at them".

## Looking for something new?

# BOOK GROUPS

OF NEW CASTLE COUNTY LIBRARIES

For more details go to <https://tinyurl.com/y4c6yma8>

## MONDAYS

1st Monday, 5:30pm, Well Read  
2nd Monday, 6:30 pm, Walk-a-Mile

## TUESDAYS

1st Tuesday, 2:30pm, Hoopla selections  
2nd Tuesday, 6:30pm, Spruce Avenue Bookies  
2nd Tuesday, 7pm, African American Authors  
3rd Tuesday, 7pm, Evening Book Group  
3rd Tuesday, 7pm, Tuesday Evening Book Group  
4th Tuesday, 7pm, Urban Detectives

## WEDNESDAYS

2nd Wednesday, 12pm, Noon Book Group  
2nd Wednesday, 4pm, Black Expressions  
2nd Wednesday, 7pm, Bear Fiction  
3rd Wednesday, 1pm, Mystery  
3rd Wednesday, 5:30pm, Adult Discussion  
3rd Wednesday, 7pm, Bear Nonfiction  
3rd Wednesday, 7pm, Chick Lit

## SUNDAYS

Last Sunday, 6pm, Litty: Urban Fiction

Book group descriptions and registration forms  
can be found [here](#).

Make, sell, and  
collect unique items

# Etsy Intro

May 17 & 24  
@ 6:30pm

You heard it right...  
**hoopla**  
is happening at Delaware Libraries!

get the app & check something out today!

**Flipster**  
Flip to your favorite  
magazines from any location!



## So Many Bookstores, So Little Time

Judy Taggart, FNFL President

Patricia Rachek, Newsletter Editor, and I were emailing back and forth about interesting and fun bookstores to visit either in person or virtually. I thought it would be fun to share a few of the bookstores with you in case you want to add them to your travel plans as we begin to venture out again.

Nancy Lonie, a member of the Friends, suggests **The Bookplate**, one of her favorite stops when in Chestertown, Maryland. There are thousands of rare and used books to choose from all arranged and sorted by topics. The owner, Tom Martin, and a small staff are extremely helpful in finding books that you may be searching for---all reasonably priced. There are cozy spots in the store where you can sit and enjoy browsing through your selections. Their website is <https://www.thebookplate.net/>



Pat Rachek recommends visiting **Bethany Beach Books** when you are at the beach. It has an extensive book selection and is nice way to spend part of a warm afternoon. It is located one block from Bethany Beach. Their website is: <https://www.bethanybeachbooks.com/>.

Another beach bookstore is **Browseabout Books**. It has been in Rehoboth since 1975 and is about two blocks from the beach on Rehoboth Avenue. It has a wonderful book selection as well as unusual gifts. Visit their website at: <https://www.browseaboutbooks.com/>

Both beach bookstores are open year-round, and both have excellent book selections as well as virtual events throughout the year.



Pat also suggests **Mystery Loves Company**, a bookstore that started in Fells Point in Baltimore, MD in 1991 and is now in Oxford, MD. It is a full-service bookstore offering books about the Eastern Shore, local Chesapeake authors and fiction for all ages. It specializes in thrillers and mystery books (new and gently used) by well-known US and international authors. There are stacks of books everywhere, and if you can't find something, the staff will know exactly where it is. MLC hosts author events and publishes a month newsletter. Their website is: <https://www.mysterylovescompany.com/>

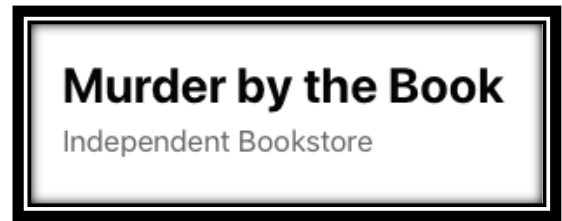
Every place Pat visits she looks for a bookstore that carries English language books or is well known for some reason. In Porto, Portugal, the **Livraria Lello** is so well known there is a line to enter and you must purchase a ticket. It is known for its interior design, architecture and of course, the books! Unfortunately, the line was too long the day Pat visited so she only got a glimpse of the interior and a stack of books on the table near the door. Click here for more information:

<https://www.livrarialello.pt/en-us/>



*Bookstores continued*

**Murder by the Book** (Where a good crime is had by all) is an independent bookstore in Houston, TX. I have not visited but have listened to many of their wonderful author talks and can't wait to visit. You may wish to subscribe to their email newsletter which is quite informative. Their website is: <https://www.murderbooks.com/>.



If you have an interesting and/or favorite bookstore, let me know ([info@friendsofthenewarkfreelibrary.com](mailto:info@friendsofthenewarkfreelibrary.com)) and we can share the information with the Friends.

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## Coming Soon... A Little Free Library in Newark

Patricia Racheck, FNFL Board Member

What is a Little Free Library? A Little Free Library (LFL) is a free book exchange – take a book/leave a book. They are often made of wood and resemble a small house. They are stocked with different types of books ranging from children's literature to cookbooks.

In January, the New Castle County Government purchased 100 Little Free Libraries to be distributed throughout NCC. Individuals and groups were invited to apply for a Little Free Library, which they would then install in their communities. Judy Taggart, FNFL President, applied on behalf of the Friends and the application was accepted. The Little Free Library was picked up in late February. It came neatly packaged with step-by-step directions and all the materials and hardware were included.



With the help of Friends Michael Cox and Richard Waibel (pictured left), the little library was assembled in late March. Katy Ferrero, FNFL Board Member (pictured right), painted and decorated it. Judy Taggart, FNFL President, found a location for the LFL in the Brookside community on the grounds of the Kingswood Methodist church near the corner of Marrows Road and Brookside Blvd. We are planning to install the LFL by mid-May.



Following the installation, the Friends will stock the Little Free Library with gently used children's books donated by members of the community and will continue to monitor it regularly. If you would like more information about Little Free Libraries, click on the link: <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>

We are excited for this opportunity to share our love of books with the Newark community.

