



Friends of the Newark Free Library

May 2022

Friendsofnewarkfreelibrary@gmail.com 750 Library Avenue, Newark, DE 19711

Editor – Patricia Rachek

Highlights of the Annual Meeting County-wide Efforts and Newark Capital Project Featured

Sue Peters, FNFL Vice President

On April 4, County Library Manager Diana Brown made time to speak with Friends, interested citizens and board members at the Friends' annual meeting, which was held on Zoom. County Councilwoman Lisa Diller and Newark City Councilwoman Dwendolyn Creecy also joined in to stay up to date on library events.

Diana reported on the capital project for the Newark Free Library. Although other options had been considered, she stated that the current site is now the only location under evaluation. A civil engineering and site study are underway with results expected in late May. As the site plans are more than 20 years old, bringing the facility up to current standards for stormwater management and other issues will need to be addressed.

Speaking on library activities across the county, Diana said she is "very proud of the way librarians kept working and creating virtual programming from day one of the pandemic shutdown." Book bundles were created after a grandmother asked the Brandywine Hundred Library for help finding books she could read to her grandchildren while their parents were busy working. Book bundles have since become a popular service throughout the county. Librarians at the Woodlawn library created a children's program on why people are wearing masks, which gained a large following from around the United States.

In the real world, libraries have become second responders during the COVID period. Library parking lots became sites for drive thru testing and vaccination as well as for food distribution. The county has also dispensed free at-home COVID test kits at the libraries.

Community partnerships have continued to grow. Libraries have begun making Vial of L.I.F.E. pill bottles available in a joint effort with New Castle County Emergency Medical Services. Blood pressure cuffs are now loaned through the Library of Things, courtesy of the American Heart Association. Diana noted that in Newark, through the library's strong relationship with the Newark Friendship House Empowerment Center, librarians are helping the homeless who find shelter at the library to connect to support services.

Diana stated that "communication should go two ways" as libraries find their new normal and the Newark capital project moves forward. She welcomes feedback from library patrons at djbrown@nccde.org. As libraries face the difficulties of winning patrons back to the library, she hopes the Friends will help promote the variety of resources available

Inside this Issue

- 3 President's Letter
- 4 New Board Members
- 5 Library News: Youth Corner
- 6 Music Programs for Spring 2022
- 7 I've Been Reading...
- 8 Interview with Peggy Griffin.
New Children's Librarian
- 10 Your Gift in Action

Annual Meeting continued

Check the fridge! Patient histories can be crucial yet hard to access in medical emergencies. The Vial of L.I.F.E. project helps responders quickly find this key information in one convenient spot—the kitchen refrigerator. Paramedic Christina Branca championed the county's participation. The project, which is geared toward seniors and disabled residents, provides a form to record medical history, medications, allergies, and emergency contacts. The form goes into an empty pill bottle that's placed in the refrigerator. A magnet on the refrigerator door alerts paramedics that the information is inside.



FNFL Officers and Directors

President: Barbara Jo German
Vice President: Sue Peters
Treasurer: Lori Hans
Recording Secretary: Deb Morehead
Correspondence Secretary: Katy Ferrero

Directors

Susan Gays
Catherine Germani
Mary Ann Gladnick
Roy Lopata
Carol McKelvey
Banjo Oriade
Patricia Rachek
Mark Rusinko
Polly Sierer
Lynne Wegman

Ex-Officio Member
Judy Taggart

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, Lilly: Urban Fiction

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!

OverDrive

President's Letter

Dear Friends of the Newark Free Library,



It is springtime and a lot of exciting things have been happening at the Newark Library. We recently had our annual FNFL Annual meeting via Zoom again this year. It was so nice to see many Friends and former board members attending. We thanked the board members who were leaving the board after many years of service and voted to unanimously approve the slate for eight existing board members and three new candidates for a two-year term.

Noreen Campbell and Kathie Davis who have served on the board for many years are stepping down. Noreen has done an outstanding job as treasurer and Kathie has been an excellent corresponding and recording secretary. We are very thankful for their hard work as officers and active participants on the board. We welcomed Susan Gays, Polly Sierer, and Lori Hans as new board members. All three of them come with a variety of experiences, skills, and enthusiasm.

Our guest speaker was Diana Brown who is the Library Manager for New Castle County. She gave an informative presentation detailing the programs and services that exist in our county library system. In addition to the various ways we can access books and magazines, the library continues to meet the needs of the community of all ages and backgrounds with ever-changing innovative online and in person programs. I am looking forward to taking my grandchildren to Glasgow, Carousel, and Rockwood Parks for story walks while also getting some exercise and enjoying the outdoors. Check out the Newark Free Library Website for more children's programs, suggested reading lists, online programs such as Creativebug (a resource for crafters) and a monthly calendar.

The FNFL continues to support the library with additional programs and materials.

Thanks for being a Friend.

Barbara Jo German



WEBSITES:

Friends of the Newark Free Library
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

NEW BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED

Roy Lopata, FNFL Board Member

At its April 4, 2022 annual meeting, the Friends of the Newark Free Library Membership approved three new Board members for two-year terms. Lori Hans was elected as new Board Treasurer. Susan Gays and Polly Sierer joined the Board as new Directors.



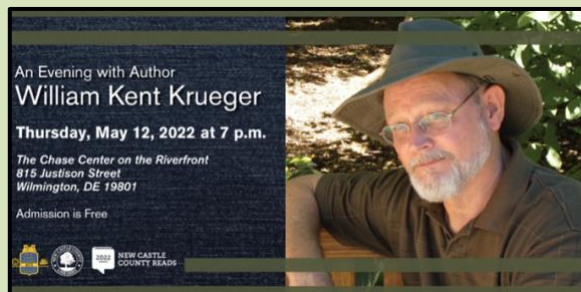
Lori Hans has worked at the University of Delaware for eight years and currently is a Senior Grants Analyst for the University. Lori has previous experience in accounting and auditing. She holds business and accounting degrees, an MBA, a Research Administrator's certificate and has worked as a certified public accountant. Lori has lived in Newark for 14 years and brings to the Board a love of reading and a deep appreciation for the activities and services provided by the Newark Free Library.

Susan Gays returns for another stint as a Friends of the Newark Free Library Board Director. Susan grew up in Newark and recalls fondly her many Saturdays and after school hours exploring the Newark Free Library. She worked at the Newark School for the Deaf following college graduation and raised her children in Newark. Susan has spent much of her adult life as a literacy advocate and brings to the Board a love of language and reading.



Polly Sierer joins the Board as a former mayor of the City of Newark and served as Newark's mayor from 2013 to 2019. She has lived in Newark for over thirty years. Polly has been an active member of various local non-profit boards including The Newark Partnership, the Friends of Fusion Foundation, the Newark Area Welfare Committee, and the Newark Symphony. She brings to the Board a life-long interest in providing services and assistance to the Newark community.

New Castle County Reads Scheduled for May 2022



For more information about this year's NCC Reads selection, click on the link:

<https://nccde.org/710/New-Castle-County-Reads>



Library News: Youth Corner

Peggy Griffith, Youth Services Librarian

It is hard to believe that Summer is just around the corner, but not for your library staff! We have been busy planning new and innovative programs, putting together displays, and creating decorations and crafts to support our *Oceans of Possibilities* theme for the 2022 Summer Reading Program.



If you have been in the library in 2022, you may have noticed many positive changes including the addition of themed display space to make browsing easier, more space for decorating, and the addition of new staff. We are excited to share with you what we are planning!

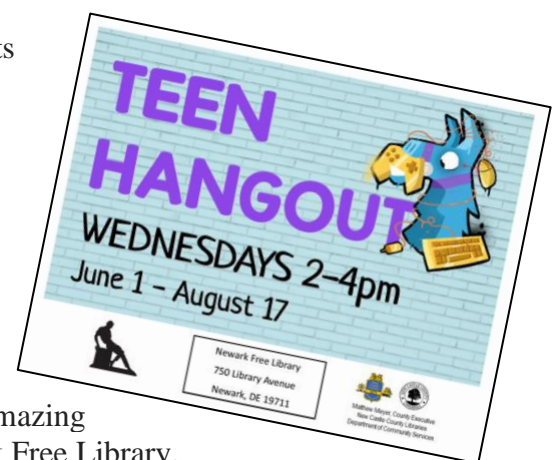


This Summer we will see the return of Family Films but with a twist. We will host monthly family-friendly interactive films such as the Little Mermaid and Finding Nemo. Patrons will become a part of the films with handmade props and provided materials. Open Mic will make an appearance this Summer giving kids and families a chance to showcase their talents. Story Time programs will come back into the library allowing both in-person and virtual patrons the opportunity to participate. If you have not joined us for Story Time Stars or Phonics Fun, this would be a great time to start! Our Ukulele Club will temporarily become a weekly program so everyone can

strum along with us. This summer we will also host the Delaware Symphony, Housel Fitness, Marshall Steam Museum, Iron Hill Museum, and more thanks to the generous support of the *Friends of the Newark Free Library*.

Teens, we did not forget about you! This summer the library wants to invite you to the Teen Cooking & Culture Club. This monthly cooking club explores food and cultures around the world while staying right here in Delaware with friends. As a nice addition to our popular cooking program, we will host teen craft programs. The best news is the addition of our Teen Hangout program! This special Summer program will include games, movies, activities, and snacks. Come hangout with us this Summer and have some fun!

For dates, times, and registration or ticket information for these amazing Summer programs please call (302)-731-7550 or visit the Newark Free Library.



Music Programs for the Spring of 2022

Pamela Nelson, Reference Staff



The Newark Free Library is fortunate to be able to offer two music programs in May. Pianist **Lina Maria Marin Diaz** will present a solo Piano Recital featuring works by Johann Sebastian Bach, César Frank, Frédéric Chopin, and Colombian composer Luis A. Calvo

on **Saturday, May 14th at 2:00pm**. Ms. Marin Diaz studies with Professor Christine Delbeau at the University of Delaware and appeared at the library last fall with the Armania Trio, a University of Delaware Graduate Chamber Ensemble composed of flute, clarinet, and piano. We are delighted to have her return to treat us to an exciting and varied program of music from the piano repertoire.

On **Saturday, May 21st at 1:00pm**, the Library welcomes back **First State Ringers** under the direction of **Ruthie Toole**. We are thrilled to host their **Patriotic Concert** just in time for the observance of Memorial Day and the upcoming July 4th holiday. In addition to the tried and true selections such as “The Star Spangled Banner,”



“The Battle Hymn of the Republic” and a Stephen Foster medley, a few other selections are included: “The Rainbow Connection” (Kermit the Frog’s Song) and “Londonderry Air” (O, Danny Boy). During the Patriotic salute, service songs for the particular branches of the military will be featured. This program is sponsored by the **Friends of the Newark Free Library**.

Please join us for our music programs this spring. Young listeners are particularly welcome.

One program that has continued remotely for the last two years has been **Open Mic**. The Newark Library in cooperation with the Brandywine Hundred Library (previously the Claymont Library) has been hosting the Virtual program. A small, but loyal group of participants – musicians and writers – have been sharing their talent on the third Wednesday of the month from 6:00pm – 8:00pm. Listeners are also most welcome.



I've Been Reading...

THE BORROWED YEARS: 1938-1941, America on the Way to War *By Richard M. Ketchum*

Random House; 1989; 896 pp.



Reviewed by

Roy H. Lopata

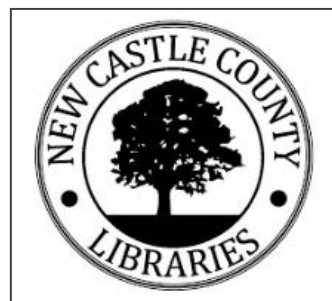
This engagingly written popular history of life and politics in America in the years immediately preceding World War II brilliantly captures the era's mood of innocence and at times willful ignorance as the nation faced imminent threats from overseas. Moreover, while Ketchum's volume was published years ago and, as a result, does not benefit from the most recent scholarship of the interwar years, his detailed research and episodic approach remains fresh despite traveling a now well-worn historical path. Beyond that, and perhaps most surprising, is Ketchum's weaving in his personal coming of age experiences as an upper middle class young man in Pittsburgh and later at Yale during the years he describes. This approach, while quite unusual for a standard history, adds personal and relevant details and richly painted color and depth that help explain what appears from our vantage point as such "obvious" naivety and blindness in the face of the twin threats from Nazi Germany and an expanding Japan.

Ketchum brings to life all the major international issues of the period including President Franklin Roosevelt's efforts to slowly turn the nation away from strict neutrality as the precursors to war began with the rise of Hitler in Germany, Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War, and the Japanese invasion of China. He also describes the American public's support for British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's

doomed policy of appeasement in the face of German demands in central Europe. He does an excellent job describing the woeful state of America's armed forces in the pre-war years. As international tensions grow and war begins in Europe in 1939, Ketchum does a marvelous job in describing the growing struggle between the isolationists lead by America's hero, Charles Lindbergh, and those who began to advocate aid to Britain and rearming this country in the face of Hitler's victories in western Europe. He notes how the tide of public opinion slowly evolved, especially as Americans listened to Edward R. Murrow's vivid live radio descriptions of the German Luftwaffe's air raids over London.

Ketchum also includes evocative descriptions of social and economic conditions in America as the Thirties ended. We learn how the nation continued to struggle with the lingering impact of the Great Depression despite the changes in the economy fashioned by Roosevelt's New Deal. He noted the battles between emerging and more militant labor unions and aggressive management and the impact of the entertainment industry e.g., the premier of *Gone with the Wind* and Orson Wells' *War of the Worlds* on American society. Finally, he exposes how in the background, nuclear physicists were working on experimental nuclear chain reactions that would culminate in Alfred Einstein's famous letter to Roosevelt that would lead to the atomic bombs that ended World War II.

In sum, this is a fantastic and brilliantly written volume worthy of the times it describes.



Making Introductions: New Children's Librarian Peggy Griffith

Sue Peters, FNFL Vice President

"Whether it's with books, technology, an eye-opening new hobby, or hydroponic plants, the library is a place for first experiences," said Peggy Griffith, the Newark Free Library's children's librarian. In her career, Peggy has brought many firsts to library patrons. She brought the popular STEM center to the Milford Public Library. At the Claymont library, she began a very well attended robotics club. At Claymont, she also developed the Halloween "Spookabration," which drew in local businesses to decorate a space and hand out treats in the library, while introducing their services. At its height, 650 people attended in one hour.

Peggy joined the Delaware Public Libraries in 2018 and before coming to Newark, served as children's librarian at the Claymont Library. She has lived in Newark for 15 years, transferring to our library in May 2021 and becoming children's librarian last fall.



Peggy loves puppets and occasionally performs pop-up puppet shows as a break from less playful paperwork.

Meeting Patrons Where They Are

Before patrons can reach new firsts, Peggy is very aware that libraries need to connect with their current interests. At Claymont, she created a monthly Harry Potter program that built on the hugely popular books and movies to give families experiences with new technology such as augmented reality.



Peggy in full Harry Potter mode with her son Joseph. They ran the highly successful First State Potion Masters (Harry Potter Alliance Non-Profit) for eight years helping libraries around the state raise funds for different projects.

For instance, during a treasure hunt, patrons could scan a poster with their phones to launch a movie clip that in turn would reveal a secret code word needed to get to the next stop. "Prizes created by the library's 3-D printer along with the hunt spots themselves helped patrons explore the various parts of the library," she said. Each month, a different community non-profit participated in the event, creating new connections with the 100 patrons who attended that month.

Building bridges is especially important now, when so many people have lost their library habit due to COVID. In some ways, COVID has simply accelerated the decline of library use; with information and entertainment easily available on their phones, many people never develop a library habit in the first place.

At the Newark Library, new children and families receive a welcome kit in a yellow bag. "When we see that bright yellow color," said Peggy, "our youth staff will talk with that person or family and take them on a welcome tour. We often do six of these pop-up tours in one day."

Peggy is also developing partnerships with local hospitals, pediatricians, and nursing mothers groups to promote the library to new parents. Through these organizations, she wants to distribute tote bags with

New Children's Librarian continued

library information and perks such as free board books, coupons for diapers, and dental kits donated by Delta Dental. Peggy would like to see the library add amenities for families such as:

- Spaces for nursing mothers
- Rest rooms for both children and adults in the Children's Room
- Kid-friendly workstations with attached play or rest areas for little ones

Introducing Technologies New, Old, and Hydroponic

"Bridging the digital divide is one of our most critical roles," said Peggy. The library was often the first place people encountered personal computers, and many in the community still rely on libraries for computer access. "Now we are introducing patrons to 3-D printing, coding, and robotics," she said. "Developing skills with these modern technologies is becoming necessary for daily life as well as on-the-job success."

Peggy and her team are also expanding current reading programs with music, puppetry, and motion, to make them as engaging as possible. During the shutdown, Story Time went online and remained one of the library's strongest programs, even reaching downstate audiences. This summer it will be back in the library in a hybrid form and will expand to include additional age ranges as well as dance, singing and crafts. See Peggy's article in this newsletter for more about summer plans.

Peggy grew up on a farm but realizes many families don't have space or time for a garden or raising farm animals. Her team has already brought hydroponics to the teen area of the library and worked with the University of Delaware to set up an incubator so kids can watch chicken eggs hatch and keep an observation journal. "In the future," she said, "I hope we can start a community garden and area for outdoor story time and nature walks."



Peggy plays the ukulele, flute, and guitar, often during Story Time.

The Right Staff

"I am so amazed by my teammates here," says Peggy. "Their talents for storytelling, developing educational programs, decorating, creating craft projects and communicating with families are just exceptional. "In fact, one of the first things I did was to add staff because I realized we could not keep up with our scheduled programs. Making sure our library is an enjoyable and encouraging workplace for staff is the first step in making it welcoming for everyone."

Peggy knows the value of a welcoming librarian first-hand as the first member of her family to be born in the US and to graduate from college. Her mother was from Germany and her father's family came from Russia and Ukraine. Growing up, English was not Peggy's first language, and hearing difficulties made it hard for her to fit in and an easy target for bullies.

Continued bottom of page 11

Friends' Funds Help Brighten Up the Children's Room

Your Gift in Action



Looking smart! Friends' funds paid for two of these kid-friendly computer stations.

At home with books. The Friends were awarded a grant that covered most of the costs of the Children's Book House. The grant was awarded by the New Castle County Council with the strong support of Councilwoman Lisa Diller.





Making Introductions continued from page 9

“Miss Connie, the children’s librarian in my hometown in Florida, really opened my eyes to the world through books, through technology and through her own love of learning about new things,” said Peggy. “I taught myself to ride a bike so I could be sure to visit the library every day. I want to be like her and to inspire others the way she inspired me.”



“The best advice Miss Connie—or anyone—ever gave me was not to become a librarian right away. She told me to experience the world because everything you do will make you a better librarian in the future,” said Peggy. Working from library books, she converted a bus into a camper and travelled around the US. She also worked with not for profits, a private investigator, in the medical field and helped others start businesses. She currently converts buses for fun and profit. A recent project is pictured to the left.

