

President's Notes

At this time of year, thanks are in the air: gratitude for our family, friends, and the wonderful life we enjoy in our hometown of Maplewood. One of the special benefits we derive from living in Maplewood is the willingness of our neighbors to volunteer their time for the betterment of the community.

Over the years, Friends have been the lucky recipients of these volunteer efforts. This year has seen the passing of a number of these special Friends:

- **Marjorie Eiseman** was President for four years (1997-2001). Under her leadership, the Friends donated the circulation desk, refurbished the Bromberg Room, offered two book groups, and began the tribute program.
- **Zelda West**, also President for four years (2001-2005), began her tenure as Program Chair and was extremely good at it, with programs including one on Olympic Park, Maplewood's long-lost amusement park. Her major accomplishment was the refurbishing of Memorial Hall in 2004.
- **Margaret Heerwagen** revitalized the book sale committee in 1997 during Marjorie's presidency, introducing our wonderful rolling carts, and acted as Secretary.
- **Al Sobieski** was Treasurer for many years and devoted much energy to keeping Friends on the fiscal straight and narrow.
- **Elaine Blumgart** chaired the Afternoon Reading Group, but her real claim to fame was discovering the acoustic material so necessary to improve the sound quality in the refurbished Memorial Hall.



In addition, this summer not only Friends but all of Maplewood lost a special treasure with the passing of **Carol Buchanan**. Carol was appointed to the Library Board of Trustees in 1999, and her dedication to the Maplewood Library was ceaseless. When there was a threat to the Hilton Branch, Carol spoke up.

When budget cuts threatened services, Carol sprung into action, organizing lemonade stands and "Show Me Your Card" weeks at local restaurants. Carol was a very special Friend to us all.

I would like to give a big "Thank You" to my fellow Board members who devote many hours to Friends: Rae Paltiel, Nancy Denholtz, Martha Deephanphongs, Anne Smith, Donna D'Amato, Bernadette Albertson, Emily Bibbins, Mimi Fogel, and David Nial, as well as Brian Glaser, our intrepid newsletter editor.

Happy Thanksgiving!

-Laura Nial, President

FALL BOOK SALE: NOVEMBER 23-24

The book sale is coming—need we say more? Friends' sorting rooms are overflowing with wonderful books. Shoppers are sure to find a book or DVD or CD to pique their interest. Of course, we hope you'll find more than one...

Spread the word to your family, friends and neighbors: Great books & bargain prices for all!

- **Saturday, November 23: 10 - 5**
- **Sunday, November 24: 11 - 5**
(Bag of Books Sale: entry through back door by parking lot only.)

-Laura Nial and Rae Paltiel, Co-Chairs

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Maplewood Memorial Library is a vibrant community hub. Each day, close to 1,000 children, teens, adults, and seniors walk through our doors. In a community of 24,000, that’s a lot of people!

Not everyone can physically get to the library, and a growing number of our patrons are visiting the library virtually. Earlier this year we redesigned our website, www.maplewoodlibrary.org, to offer a user-friendly experience and easier access to our catalog, events, and digital resources. We now have as many daily visitors online (1,000) as we have coming into our buildings (1,000), which means over 2,000 people “visit” the Library each day.



Maplewood is a community of readers, and our readers read across formats. Many of our patrons who check out print books also read e-books and listen to e-audiobooks. While demand for our print collection has remained constant over the past five years (well over 200,000 items are checked out each year), we have seen a 60% increase in the circulation of our e-books, e-audiobooks, digital magazines, and downloadable movies.

Access to materials has never been greater, and as a member of the BCCLS consortium, Maplewood Library cardholders have over 5 million print and digital items available to them. Our patrons take advantage of this, and the breadth of our collective knowledge strengthens our community.

-Sarah Lester, Director

A UNIVERSE OF PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG READERS

The Friends are directly responsible for creating hundreds of eager readers and library users by supporting the Library’s Summer Reading Club: A Universe of Stories. 1,220 kids and teens participated in the reading incentive portion of the Club—and collectively they read and wrote for more than 26,000 hours in order to earn prizes. Many of these children are emerging or struggling readers.



Your help allows us to offer enticing prizes and exciting programs for all ages. This summer, Friends’ support meant we could offer 136 programs to more than 5,400 attendees! Programs such as Pearl Observatory’s giant inflatable planetarium; musical programs to stimulate early literacy such as Boogie Woogie Babies, Magical Melodies, and Music Together; renowned programs for special needs kids like Turtle Dance Music; a successful Moon Landing Party to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission; hands-on technology and maker programs for kids of all ages; an astronomer from the Morris County Museum’s Astronomical Society; Flamenco dancers; Storytime Yoga with Bendy Bookworm and Little Yogis; outdoor story times in the Maplewood parks; and to cap it all off, a bubble-filled finale party.

These programs create another generation of enthusiastic library users, readers, and writers. These programs change lives. Thank you!

-Jane Folger, Children’s Librarian

TRIBUTES

Friends’ Tribute Cards make wonderful gifts to honor a lover of books or the library. Stop by the front desk at Main or Hilton for more info.

ESL CLASSES AT HILTON BRANCH: YEAR 4

On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, before the Hilton Branch opens, adult students stream in for English language classes. The current session started on October 1, offering beginner and intermediate adult classes. The session runs for six hours a week over 12 weeks, totaling 72 hours of instruction. This was the first session of our fourth grant from the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Community Library Adult Literacy & Career Pathway program.



We are proud to help students like Ricardo accomplish their goals through CLALCP. Ricardo arrived in the U.S. earlier this year from Haiti. He was sad to leave family and friends, but he is able to remain connected through video calls. In Haiti, he attended college while also supporting himself with work. He began studying English while in high school but found the English spoken in the U.S. difficult to understand.

Ricardo enrolled in the class because he “wants to write and speak English very well.” His goals are to understand radio and TV programs and to attend college, where he would like to study medicine and become a physician's assistant.

Over the last three years, we have served over 590 adult students like Ricardo through the ESL classes. Fifty-four percent of students have a High School Equivalency and/or some college, but communicate in English at or below a 2nd grade level. We are thrilled to be able to provide this valuable service for the fourth year.

-Irene Langlois, Hilton Branch Manager

LIBRARY STAFF: HERE TO STAY!

We are so often made aware of things that go wrong, it's always nice to hear some positive feedback. Recently, a regular patron came in one evening and expressed concern about construction at the library. “How will this impact the staff?” he asked.

After being assured that no one on staff would lose their job because of construction, he asked the same about the self-check kiosks, which have been in place for just about a month. “This doesn't mean the staff is going away, right?” He was assured that, in fact, the self-check kiosks will ultimately free up staff to pursue other projects that benefit the public, and will provide more anonymity for patrons who value their privacy.

After expressing his relief, he said, “You know, you guys are really important. You helped me get my real estate license, and right now I'm here finishing my first contract. I just want to make sure you're not going anywhere.”

-Amanda Eigen, Head of Library Services



TEENS' SUMMER FUN

Our Teen Summer Reading program hit a great stride this year with 70 registrants and over 2,700 hours read between all of our participants. Our top four readers each selected a backpack filled with a variety of prizes, which they all agreed was a great incentive that pushed them to go above and beyond their usual reading habits.

We also continued our Create Camp tradition with six different hands-on STEM programs that Robert Nealon, our Head of Technology, and I planned and led with full registration for each session. We taught teens how to make a bipedal robot, a low-tech music box, a footstool, moon wall art, a magnetic spinning pen, and a mask that magnified their head up to 4x! These were some of our most complex projects to date, and the teens took to them with ease and thoroughly enjoyed each session.



Thank you to the Friends for their amazing support so we can offer the prizes and programs that get our kids and teens excited about reading and making outside of school.

-Emily Witkowski, Teen Librarian

(TAKE A) PASS OUT!

Be sure to take advantage of these Museum Passes sponsored by Friends:

- The Guggenheim
- The Intrepid
- Newark Museum
- Morris Museum
- Montclair Art Museum
- The Frick Collection

BOOKBAGS!

Did you know we have Friends of the Maplewood Library tote bags available for only \$3 each?
Stop by the front desk at Main or Hilton and pick one up for your books.

A PUBLIC HEALTH FELLOW

A public library can be a lot of things for different people. It can be their place for technological connection, for human connection, or their place to disconnect. It can be their place to get work done, to pursue new goals, or to unwind. For many it's also a place where they can connect with important services: the library offers health screenings, information, and programs that strive to serve our diverse community. So when I saw an advertisement for the Bloomberg Fellowship at Johns Hopkins University, it piqued my interest.

The idea of "Public Health" is about the health and well-being of populations, not just individuals. The Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins has a mission statement that explains this perfectly: Protecting Health, Saving Lives—Millions at a Time. This tagline really struck me and made me think about the work we do at the library. We work with individuals, but we're always thinking at the population level and want to do the most good for the greatest number of people. We ask ourselves questions like: What is our community interested in? What does our community need? How can we better serve our community?

The Bloomberg School of Public Health identified five key issues that they think are some of the most pressing for public health and the future of our societies, and risks to adolescent health was one of them. When I think about the Teen Zone each day after school, we can have upwards of 30 or 40 teens at a time, ranging from middle schoolers to high schoolers. These teens are waiting for working parents or other family to pick them up, they are using computers to finish homework because they may not have devices or internet access at home, and many are simply avoiding going home for as long as possible for any number of reasons. This is a captive audience with a variety of needs, and we often end up serving as de facto counselors, a job for which I have never felt super-prepared.

When I applied for this fellowship, I saw it as an opportunity to learn more about this age group and to better understand the role the library can play in improving their health mentally, physically, and emotionally. I'm not sure the school was expecting a librarian to apply, so when I received a call that they



had some more questions about my application and what the library does for adolescents, I was excited to share the different programming we do regarding mental and social health, college prep,

healthy snacks, and more. I told them about the types of questions teens ask me after school and how we work closely with the schools to better serve our youth.

This must have sold them, as I am one of 50 people selected for the Bloomberg MPH fellowship, and it inspired some of their staff to connect with the Enoch Pratt Free Public Library in Baltimore to see how they may be able to partner.

I love my job. I have always wanted to be a librarian and love the work I get to do here in Maplewood. I am hoping that a Masters in Public Health will only strengthen my love for what the library does at the community level and better equip me to understand and serve the young people I work with every day. They are members of our community just like everyone else, and deserve the best. I hope to be able to provide that for them.

-Emily Witkowski, Teen Librarian

Board

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- Vice President Rae Paltiel
- Secretary Martha Deephanphongs
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- Executive Board: Bernadette Albertson, Emily Bibbins, Donna D'Amato, Mimi Fogel, David Nial, Anne Smith
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- Newsletter Editor: Brian Glaser

BOOK REVIEWS

On Desperate Ground: The Marines at The Reservoir, the Korean War's Greatest Battle
by Hampton Sides

On Desperate Ground is the history of one of the greatest stories to come out of the Korean War. The Chosin Reservoir was the site of the first major engagement between the United Nations coalition force commanded by General Douglas MacArthur and the Chinese army. North Korea had started the war five months earlier when it invaded South Korea. UN forces pushed the North Koreans back beyond the 38th parallel, and MacArthur thought he could defeat the North Koreans decisively so as to reunite the country. But as the Americans got closer to the Chinese border, China decided to intervene.

MacArthur completely underestimated the Chinese army's fighting prowess and disregarded intelligence reports indicating that the Chinese had crossed the Yalu River into North Korea. General Oliver Smith, commander of the First Marine Division, was not so sanguine and did his best to prepare for the worst. Despite his concerns, he led 20,000 men to the Chosin Reservoir up in the mountains of North Korea, over a single unpaved road through the heart of very mountainous country in bitterly cold weather and blinding snowstorms. It was then that the Chinese attacked.

For over two weeks, the Marines were encircled and attacked by between 120,000 and 150,000 Chinese. The fact that Smith was able to lead a breakout from the encirclement (with heavy casualties) against daunting odds and make a (fighting) withdrawal to the port of Hungnam was nothing less than miraculous.

In addition to the overall description of the battle, Sides tells the story of individuals involved in this struggle. We hear from many different Marines who were there, and Sides lets them speak for themselves and allows readers to enrich themselves from hearing the facts from the original sources. The description of the ordeals that these men faced, and the amazing heroism that so many of them exhibited, is awe-inspiring and inspirational. You don't need to be a Korean War buff or even a military history buff to enjoy this book—all you need is an appreciation for a well-told, true-life story.

-Bill Donovan

Special Gifts

April through October 2019

We appreciate the generous gifts contributed by the following donors. Thank you all.

Shlomo Antika
 Peter Barnett
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 Sarah Lester & Chris Schabacker
 Marcia Zweig

-Rae Paltiel, Membership Chair

BOOK REVIEWS

Washington Black
by Esi Edugyan

Reminiscent of *Huckleberry Finn* and *David Copperfield*, *Washington Black* is a fictional memoir narrated by the main character George Washington Black, a young slave on a plantation in Barbados.

When the story begins in 1830, Washington Black, known as Wash, is 11 years old. He and his protector Big Kit are slaves on the Faith Plantation, owned by the Wilde family. When Wash's first master dies, the nephew Erasmus Wilde takes over. Wash's first reaction is terror. "I feared he must feed on blood to keep himself warm...I had already seen several deaths. I knew the nature of evil." Wash proves to be a perceptive child. Erasmus is indeed a heartless, cruel individual, who runs the plantation with an iron fist. Wash feels doomed; his only hope to be free is death.

The story takes a turn when Erasmus' brother Christopher, known as Titch, arrives from England. Titch is Erasmus' opposite—he is a man of science, an inventor, a student of nature, and, above all, an abolitionist. When Titch and Wash first meet, Titch is working on a contraption that sounds like a hot air balloon. He needs someone to help navigate this newfangled machine, which he calls a Cloud-cutter; and he gloms on to Wash because Wash's size and weight will not disrupt the balance of the flying machine. Erasmus refuses to let Wash go, but a horrific accident involving Wash convinces Titch to steal Wash away, and the two set out on their journey together. As Titch soon discovers, Wash is more than just the "right size." He has a prodigious interest in nature and is an excellent artist, talents that are precious to Titch as the two explore the world.

Through the course of Wash's and Titch's journey, they encounter many people and travel to many different countries, plagued at all times by a bounty hunter seeking to capture Wash and bring him back to the plantation. Much like a 19th century novel, their adventures are often realistic and at other times fantastical. As Big Kit tells him at the beginning of the story, "You will have a great big life, [a] life of many rivers."

This book offers the reader much to mull over. There are some one-dimensional characters who are good or evil, but there are also characters who are

more complicated. Even Titch, who appears noble, may have less-than-pure motives for helping Wash escape. It's a story of two people who come from very different backgrounds but share much in common. And ultimately, it's a story of Wash, who discovers himself and the world around him along the way.

-Rae Paltiel

Gateway to the Moon
by Mary Morris

Gateway to the Moon is a story told in two timelines: the contemporary story of the Torres family, who have lived in Entrada del La Luna, New Mexico, for four hundred years; and their ancestors, who fled during the Inquisitions, which began in Spain in 1492 and later spread to Portugal and Mexico.

The main character is Miguel Torres, a high school student and budding astronomer. He answers an ad for a babysitter for a Jewish family in Santa Fe, which will allow him to support and continue to practice his astronomy. Miguel is surprised to find many of the family's customs are like those his own family kept but never understood. His family, and all the residents of Entrada del La Luna, light candles on Friday nights, do not eat pork, and circumcise their sons.

The story of Miguel, his family, and the family he works for is interwoven with the powerful stories of the ancestors of Entrada's residents.

In 1492, Louis de Torres, a Spanish Jew, accompanied Columbus on his voyage as his translator. His journey is only the beginning of a long migration, across many generations. Louis de Torres and many others are known as "Crypto-Jews." They lived outwardly like Christians to avoid expulsion, torture, or burning at the stake during the Inquisitions, but they secretly clung to their way of life as Jews. Louis' story is the beginning of the history of the people in the remote New Mexico village.

This beautifully written novel, which moves seamlessly from the 15th century to the 20th century and back again, is a joy to read. Morris brings her characters to life, and it is not often you find a historical novel that is also a page-turner.

-Nancy Denboltz



Library Staff 2019



JOIN OR RENEW



A 501(c)(3) organization

Friends of the Maplewood Library support many of our wonderful Library's offerings and programs, and we rely on your help to do this! If you are already a member for 2020, thank you so much. If you have not renewed your membership or joined yet, please do so. We need you!

Please make checks payable to Friends of the Maplewood Library.

Mail to: PO Box 183, Maplewood, NJ 07040

Membership for calendar year 2020:

- Individual - \$15
- Family - \$20
- Contributing - \$25
- Special Gift - \$_____

Name: _____

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YES, I would like to help with Friends' Book Sales.