



library newsletter

winter 2010



609 Main Street, Shrewsbury, MA. 01545 ~ 508-842-0081 ~ <http://www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/library>

director's letter by Ellen Dolan



Home sick for a couple days in early October, I found an opportunity to work on my letter for the Library's winter newsletter. My topic would be the plans of Dr. James Tracy. If the name is unfamiliar, I only need mention his place of employment. Dr. Tracy is the Headmaster of Cushing Academy, the private school which decided to remove most of the books from the school's library and replace them with 18 Amazon or Sony e-book readers, four large flat screen TVs, and some high-end coffee makers. Dr. Tracy has been much condemned in postings to the Boston Globe's online article and various newspaper editorials. It is not my intention to add further criticism. In fact, I'd like to try to take a more balanced consideration of the digital versus print question. Much of the commentary thus far has been rather severe. The majority have seen the headmaster's decisions as shortsighted, lacking in balance—and to be as kind as possible—foolish. A much smaller portion of the commentary has commended Dr. Tracy as a trailblazer towards the inevitable death of print technology. Many defenders of the printed book have focused on the physicality and loveliness of the book and have highlighted the personal connection readers have with books. The e-book advocates have touted the convenience and storage capacities of the e-book.

One might assume that as Library Director I must be a book lover. (Before I write the next sentence, I send sincere apology to my dear friend Cush Bozenhard, who is a book collector and dealer. Forgive me Cush!) The truth is, however, that I don't love books for their physical attributes. I love books for what they hold - the stories and information that can transform our lives. While I appreciate a beautiful binding or a lovely gilded edge, my passion for books is based on the information and stories within. I believe deeply in the comfort, the inspiration, the power and the joy to be found in the stories and knowledge contained in books. I also believe that it makes sense to move some types of print information to digital format.

At the SPL, for instance, much of the reference information that was previously found in print format is now found in online tools. This allows library patrons to access free online content in the library, at work, or at school 24 hours per day, seven days per week. I invite you to look at our robust online tools, such as investing guides, resume and job search tools, broad newspaper and magazine article content, early literacy tools and

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much more. And of course, we offer e-books and audio e-books, available in CD, pre-loaded MP3 players or downloadable format. However, we still have many print books available. In fact, the largest portion of our collection and the largest usage of that collection are in the print format. Why is that? Why is the print format so persistent? Haven't we heard for decades about the great paperless society to come? Why has it not yet arrived? Are print readers just a bunch of sentimentalists, full of nostalgia for the past? Or could it be that readers continue to use books because the technology works?

I think functionality is the central issue when considering the print versus digital question. Print books are still the predominant format in the publishing world, and are still widely used, because paper is an incredibly successful technology. We often don't think of paper as a technology, because it's so simple, has been around for such a long time, and is ubiquitous in our lives. However, if you take some time to consider paper as a technology, you realize it's highly functional. So let's judge the technology on how well it serves our purposes, not on a desire to select one format over the other. It seems to me that both technologies have their place, and that we need the right tool for the given job!

As mentioned at the start of my letter, I was writing this letter at home, which limited me to use of my personal computer, as my laptop was back at the office. In addition, I was working without a printer, as an electrical storm had destroyed my old desktop computer and rendered my printer obsolete. Preferring to stay in bed, I took up paper and pencil and began my writing. I made good headway, but wished I had a printed copy of the Globe's article in which the Cushing article appeared. I dragged myself out of bed, powered up my PC and did a quick Google search to locate the September 2009 article.

Continued on next page...

adult programs

Films of War Series

Friday nights at 7 p.m., Dec. - Jan.

Free screenings and brief discussions on films which portray different aspects of different wars. Part of the Big Read.

DEC 4 - Casablanca (World War II) - PG

DEC 11 - M*A*S*H (Korean War) - R

DEC 18 - We Were Soldiers (Vietnam) - R

JAN 8 - Home of the Brave (Iraq) - R

Adult Computer Classes

PLEASE NOTE: Pre-registration and a \$5 CASH deposit are required for all classes.

Deposit is returned in full when you arrive at the class. Must sign up at least 24 hours in advance *at the library.*

Crash Course (90 Min) Size: 18

A beginner's workshop designed for those who have never used a computer.

Wed. Jan. 6th, 10:30AM or

Tues. Feb. 2nd, 2:30PM

Digital Cameras 101 (1 Hour) Size: 8

Bring your digital camera for an informative session on how to unlock its full potential.

(Choose one)

Thurs. Jan. 21st, 2:30PM

Wed. Feb. 10th, 2:30PM

Tues. Feb. 16th, 10:30AM

Genealogy Club

Fourth Monday of Each Month

All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. (new time).

Upcoming dates:

Dec. 28th - Jan. 25th - Feb. 22

friends' news

Holiday Open House

Saturday, Dec. 5th, between

10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

The Friends of the Library is hosting the Annual Holiday Open House. There will be stories, crafts, refreshments and merriment for all ages. Students from the Shrewsbury High School Music Department, under the direction of Michael Lapormardo, will be here to perform holiday music at noon in the meeting room. Drop in for any or all of the event.

director's letter *continued...*

It's hard to hold many points in memory for a long time. Instead, I settled on taking a few notes. Then I searched for another article entitled "Hamlet's Blackberry: Why Paper is Eternal" by William Powers. I recalled this study of the functionality of paper as especially relevant to the question at hand. The author provides a superb analysis of the changing role of paper technology from a storage device to the primary tool for successful access to intellectual content. But that article is over 75 pages long! At about 35 pages, my eyes grew tired of reading the computer screen. I really just wanted to print the article and return to my bed. I gave up at page 39, promising myself I would print and read the article in its entirety later. Clearly, the digital version wasn't working for me. I wanted a printed copy, which I could highlight, record some notes and refer to intermittently during my writing. I wanted to spread the article out and easily find what I needed.

The idea for the wrong technology for the purpose at hand got me thinking about my new Kindle 2 e-book reader. Before a business trip to Minneapolis for the orientation on our Big Read project, I downloaded a few of my favorite titles and took the reader on the plane. That night, after a busy day of travel and orientation workshops, I settled down to a Wendell Berry story on my Kindle. Hopping into bed, I powered up my Kindle, only to discover the battery was low. Great slapstick comedy could have been recorded of my desperate attempt to drag the hotel bed closer to an electrical outlet. Mercifully, there were no witnesses. I was able to move a bit closer to the outlet, plugged in and then propped myself up on the edge of the bed to read my e-book. The experience was less than desirable, but I persevered with my new Kindle. A few months later, in preparation for a trip to Washington DC with my husband, I downloaded a copy of Frommer's guide to D.C. I would have preferred Fodor's to Frommer's, but only Frommer's was available in Kindle format. This time I was more careful to keep my unit charged. I checked the Frommer's e-book as we prepared our sightseeing plans each day, but didn't carry it on our daytrips, as I was concerned about losing the costly device. When it came to finding the telephone number for a Belgian restaurant we hoped to visit, while I tried to navigate my Kindle, my husband quickly located the number in a printed guide. Again, it's all about functionality, and each tool has its proper place.

If we are to look at this functionality question in terms of library mission, I think we cannot overlook the role printed books have in early literacy development. The print book far outstrips the digital format in sharing books with babies and children. A child sitting on a parent's lap, with a book spread before them, is far more effective in teaching children the value of stories and reading. It encourages literacy far more successfully. The print book merits much credit for its cost, durability, and "share-ability" in the public library model. When our library purchases a print book, we own the title and can share it indefinitely, as opposed to acquiring the right to access the e-book under specific terms and conditions. E-book publishers are very concerned about the sharing models used in libraries, given the instantaneous ability to share digital copies with millions of users at once. They have licensed certain titles for the public library market and placed strict restrictions on that sharing. A quick review of the Terms of Contract restrictions of a Kindle eliminates any doubt as to the copyright and profit inclinations of e-book publishers. Moreover, one must also factor in the significant costs of maintaining current technologies and migrating collections to changing formats and systems through time.

One aspect of functionality that is considered in the library market is user preference. This is something that public libraries have always considered in deciding which emerging formats to acquire. Library usage still indicates a strong preference for printed books. Of the more than 429,000 items we loaned last year, less than one quarter of 1% of those were electronic books. Library patrons like books because they are easy to use, there's no downloading, no special equipment needed, and no need to plug in. Print books are a technology that serves users well. Digital technologies have their place in libraries too, as evidenced by the 1,500+ computer uses each month, the millions of hits the library website each year, and the thousands of retrievals from our online database. Library users want choices and options that will meet their varied needs and interests. The library patron who researches a company's financials and stock history through our online sources may be the same person who checks out an audio book on CD for the trip to their vacation spot, but also looks forward to relaxing with a print copy of a latest bestseller book once they arrive.

In closing, I would say the functionality of a technology should decide the appropriateness of a given format, and that libraries should stay focused on functionality. Returning to Dr Tracy's decision, if the function of Cushing Academy is to offer students a robust and rich education, I'd say he's missed the mark by betting his school's resources on one technology. I think professionals in any field of learning should ask, "How does the technology serve our users?" The answer to that question should be the guiding force in our technology and collection decisions. ♦

special event**OPEN
MIC
NIGHT****FRI. JAN. 15, 6:30PM***

Bring your poems, guitars, songs, comedy routine, spoken word performance, or any other talent you have for a special night of entertainment after hours in the Library. Open to adults and teenagers. No registration required - just stop by and shine!

*SNOW DATE: 1/22

library news**Toys for Tots Drop-Off**

The Shrewsbury Public Library will once again host the United States Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program. During the month of December, donations of new, unwrapped toys may be dropped off at the Library. All toys that are donated are distributed in the community in which they are collected.

Happy Birthday!

This newsletter marks the beginning of the 25th year of newsletters offered from the Library. Here are some interesting facts from the first newsletter in 1986:

- * It cost 15¢ to put an item on hold.
- * Patrons could sign up for 30 minutes of computer time on an Apple IIe machine.
- * The newsletter was titled "Something Special at the Shrewsbury Public Library."
- * We're open one-hour more per week now than in 1986.

New Databases

Two great new online resources have been added to our database collection. From the creators of World Book, you can now access "Green Living" and "Early Peoples" after logging into the World Book database with your library card.

English Conversation

Weekly sessions where non-native English speakers can practice speaking English in a safe environment. These informal meetings will be hosted by Children's Librarian Priya Rathnam. No need to register. Mondays from 5PM-6PM.

December: 7, 14, 21, 28
January: 4, 11, 25
February: 1, 8, 22

children's events (up to grade 4)

To celebrate 25 years of our newsletter, we have created a Library Search with a hidden message. Come to the Children's Room-December through February- find the 25 clues, decode the special message, and win a prize!

Family Gingerbread House Workshop

Tuesday, Dec. 8 - 6:30 p.m.
Come join us for a family night of fun and creativity building your own gingerbread house. This evening is recommended for children in grades K-4 and their families. One adult may work with up to 2 children. Please register in the Children's Room beginning Nov. 24th. Participants will be asked to bring some supplies and refreshments to share.

Magic Matt Tuesday, Dec. 29 - 10:30 a.m

Twenty year old Northboro native, Matt Goldenberg, will do a Magic Show appropriate for children ages 4 - 9. Free tickets will be available beginning Dec. 15th.

Winter Holidays Around the World

Wednesday, Dec. 30 - 10:30 a.m.
Embark on a journey of song, dance and story to learn the traditions of other cultures which all share one common thread-family. Space is limited. Free tickets will be available beginning Dec. 16th. This performance is generously sponsored by the Friends of the Shrewsbury Public Library. This is a Tunes 'n Tales presentation.

Music 'n Motion with Robin

Wednesdays at 10 a.m. in Dec. - 2, 9, 16, 23
Feb. - 3, 10, 17, 24
Music enrichment program including singing, dancing, instruments, and a parachute. For children ages 2-5 accompanied by an adult. No registration necessary. Sponsored by the Friends of the Shrewsbury Public Library.

Valentines for Vets The week of Jan. 25-29

Drop in anytime during this week and make a valentine for a Veteran. We will make sure someone receives your creation. Make one for your own special valentine too.

Bilingual Storytime Wednesday, Feb. 17 - 2:30 p.m.

Storytime in English and Tamil. All ages. No registration necessary.

Who will win the Caldecott Award?

The afternoon of Thursday, Jan. 14
Come see the titles in the running for the best illustrated children's book of the year. Vote for your choice and do your own illustration! Watch for the announcement of the Caldecott Award winner on Jan. 18th.

Teaching Creatures



Thursday, Feb. 18 - 10:30 a.m.
Story Stars - Rae Griffiths will read two books and introduced the living creatures starring in the books. Appropriate for ages 3 - 9 and their family. Space is limited. Registration will begin Feb. 4

Lovin' Lego® @ the Library

We hope to have a Lego® program for kids in grades 1 - 4, and we need your no-longer-used Lego® bricks. No donation is too big or too small. Donations are being accepted at The Children's Room. The program will be starting in the Spring...watch this space! Thank you for supporting the Shrewsbury Public Library Lego® Program.

Make checks payable to "The Friends of the Shrewsbury Public Library." Mail donations to 609 Main St., Shrewsbury, MA. 01545 OR simply drop this completed form and payment off at the library.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____
THIS IS A (CHECK ONE): NEW MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Mr. Raindrop's Edible Aquifer

Thurs., Dec. 31 - 2:30 p.m.
Mr. Raindrop is stopping by the SPL once again to offer his informative and delicious workshop on water conservation. Last year slots in this program filled up quickly, and this time it's limited to only 20 participants in **grades 3-7**, so register beginning Dec. 17 in the Children's Room.

youth events (grades 5-12)

Best Teen Chef 2

Tuesday, Dec. 29 - 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
The next installment of the popular event will feature the same rules, but new ingredients! Teams of two people - one of which must be a Shrewsbury resident, and both of which must be in grades 5-12, must register for their chance at taking home the mystery grand prize. **PLEASE NOTE:** Due to limited space, not all teams of two will get the chance to participate. We will do a random drawing at the beginning of the night to determine which teams will compete. Only teams that are preregistered will get the opportunity to be in this drawing. Everyone else will get to watch in the audience, as well as try and win a small prize in our food trivia game. Adults, friends, and family members are encouraged to be in the audience. Call 508-842-0081 ext. 5 to register or stop in at the library.

Mystery Craft Event

Friday, Jan. 15, 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
The perfect event for both guys and girls who like to work with their hands! Bring a t-shirt that will be transformed into our mystery craft item - everything else is a mystery and all other materials will be provided free of charge! There are only TEN slots for this event, so register by calling 508-842-0081 ext. 5 or stop in at the library.

Return of the Youth Trivia Showdown!

Friday, February 19, 6:30PM
Register now at the library for a fun night of trivia, pizza, prizes, and excitement as teens will face off in a variety of topics! Teens from all of Central Massachusetts are invited to compete and represent their community. Everyone who attends (if registered) will get free pizza and soda while supplies last. Parents are welcome to come and be in the audience. Register by calling 508-842-0081 ext. 5 or stop in at the library. Sponsored by Dunkin Donuts.

For more information on SPLAT, visit: <http://www.splatatspl.blogspot.com/>

The Friends of the Shrewsbury Public Library is a special non-profit organization dedicated to the support of our Library. Becoming a Friend of the Library is an excellent way to support one of Shrewsbury's most valued resources. During these tough economic times, the Friends of the Library can help soften the blow of harsh fiscal realities by providing so many of the extras that make the library an exceptional place.

Time to RENEW!
It's time to renew your membership or become a new member! Membership year runs from January through December, 2010.

LEVELS OF 'FRIEND'SHIP':

<input type="checkbox"/> FRIENDLY ACQUAINTANCE	\$5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE FRIEND	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> BEST FRIEND	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> VERY BEST FRIEND*	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS ASSOCIATE*	\$300.00
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER AMOUNT**	\$ _____

Shrewsbury Public Library
609 Main Street
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

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ECRWSS
Resident Customer
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Library Hours

Mon.-Wed. 10AM-9PM
Thurs. & Fri. 10AM-5PM
Sat. 10AM-5PM (Fall/Winter/Spring)
Sun. 1PM-5PM (Fall/Winter/Spring)

Contact Information

Phone: 508-842-0081
Fax: 508-841-8540
TTY: 508-841-8530
www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/library

sunday sponsorships 2009 - 2010 season

5 sundays

Dunkin' Donuts

4 sundays

Shrewsbury Federal Credit Union

2 sundays

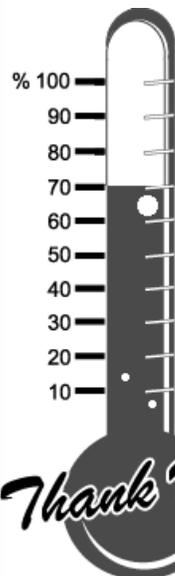
Shrewsbury Lions Club

1 sunday

Webster Five Cents Savings Bank
Shrewsbury Firefighters Association
Yu-Bin Liang & Wei Kong Yeoh
Gerald Isaacson
Amica Insurance
Shrewsbury Social Club
David & Johanna Musselman
Jeff and Priscella Billingham
The Polito Development Corporation
Julia Gallagher & Jon Grayzel
One Anonymous Donor

YOUR BUSINESS/NAME HERE!
Sponsorship info

7
Slots
Left!



Thank You!

Thanks to the generous sponsors who helped sustain Sunday afternoon hours at the library these past four years. Our 2009/2010 Sunday season began October 4, 2009, and we hope to have enough support to provide service through May 23, 2010. As of mid-November 2009, individuals, businesses and community groups have donated funds to keep the library open until mid-March. Additional sponsorships are needed to reach our May goal. The cost for sponsoring one Sunday is \$575. Please contact the Library Director, Elen Dolan, at (508) 841-8537 if you wish to provide a sponsorship or need more information.