



Friends of the
Brandywine
Hundred Library

NEWS

FEBRUARY 2006

We support, encourage and promote quality library services

Dear Friends,

When I offered to write this column, I thought back to my first exposure to BHL. This happened about two years ago when I responded to a notice in the News Journal about auditions to be held at the library for a play to be done at Rockwood Museum. Driving up the long driveway, I remember being impressed with the stone and glass library façade and the plantings. I thought to myself this library doesn't look like a "library."

Taking the elevator to the second floor, I was struck by the comfortable, spacious, naturally lighted second floor rooms. These rooms became our rehearsal space for the next two months. When I asked library staff about books to research the character I was playing (A.I. duPont), I was quickly and courteously shown to the duPont collection. I thought to myself what a gem this place is. It's an easy drive from Rockford Park, my home area, and there is plenty of parking. What more could I ask? For some reason, for years I had been driving into the center city Wilmington library where there was never any easy access parking and I would end up walking blocks just to return a book. When, a few years ago, I suggested in a letter to the city librarian that there should be short term 15-minute parking outside to allow for return of books, I never got a response. (Of course, I still receive requests for funds.)

I've seldom been to the BH Library that the parking lot hasn't been well utilized but always with space available... and at no charge. Several friends at Foulk Manor North, the senior residence next door, have expressed gratitude for the walkway connecting their building with the library.

Seeing the faces of patrons of all ages from the very youngest to the oldest going about their library business should give us all a special sense of pride in this great institution with its multitude of resources. I can't think of another community facility that serves such a varied population at so little cost. What a debt of gratitude we owe to those who had the vision and made it a reality.

For those of you who haven't been to the library for a while, or perhaps ever, I urge you to come and see what a treasure we have in our own back yard. Come use the resources, ask questions, tell us how we can improve our services to better serve your needs....and, if you have some free time, volunteer to help. There are lots of opportunities.

May your New Year be filled with peace, good health and happiness!

Jack Yeatman
Member, BHL Board

It's Your Turn to Help:

Join or Renew Your Friends of BHL Membership

Thanks to the warmth of this winter, you may already be wondering about spring and when the annual membership drive of the Friends of Brandywine Hundred Library will be held.

The drive will be held during National Library Week, April 2-8. Once again, the library lobby will be festooned with flowers, tables loaded with book bags and tasty loaves of bread. These are the thank-you gifts for people who enroll or renew during the Friends week-long membership drive week.

What is the Friends of BHL? It is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting our library. Membership in the Friends costs only \$12 a year. (See a surprising related story in FAQ in this newsletter.) Your dues go to supporting the library in ways that it otherwise could not afford. As a Friend, you will receive this newsletter six times a year.

BHL's patronage is still growing fast, with an average of 300 people a month signing up for library cards. During 2005, the total number of new cards issued was 4,540. The total number of library patrons, which is counted for the fiscal year ending in July 2005, is 44,967. Currently, the Friends of BHL has 724 paid members. We'd like to welcome many more!

An important way that you can help during the drive is to assist at our table by enrolling new members and renewing existing members. Two or three people are needed per two hour shift to staff the drive table, which operates most of the hours that the library is open. We need your help to staff the table!

If you can volunteer to work a shift to two, please contact Sally Kantzes at 478-7404 or stangl728@msn.com and use "BHL Friends Membership Drive" as the subject and remember to leave your name and phone number! Training will be provided. For experienced workers, why not ask a friend to join you in working a shift? Get your requests in early to try to reserve your favorite shifts. Sally will return your call around mid-March to put you on the schedule.

Whether or not you can spare a few hours to volunteer during the drive, please stop by to see what's going on and to learn more about the Friends and how this organization supports the library.



Volunteer Profile: Meet Edna Durborow

Editor's note: Our October newsletter featured a short history of the library that evolved into the Brandywine Hundred Library. It included the information that the library was once housed in the back room of Paul C. Tigue's Drug Store. (To review this story on page one of the October issue, visit the Friends web site at www.friendsbhl.org.) Several readers suggested the newsletter publish a story about the library in this unique location. And after that, one friend introduced us to her friend, Edna Durborow, who was instrumental in obtaining space for the library at the drug store.

By Marsha Henderson

Edna Durborow was recruited into local library service shortly after her arrival in Wilmington by Evelyn Young, an active leader in many community affairs at the middle of the 20th century. Edna was already experienced, having served as the Assistant Reference Librarian in Harrisburg, PA.

When our local library had to move from its West Brandywine Grange No. 1 setting, Edna called upon her brother-in-law, Paul Tigue, for some space in his Pharmacy, which he granted. The room at the back of the store housed about 200 books. There was a separate entrance to the library, although patrons could access it from the main entrance, too. However, the space was too small to allow any seating for reading or research. This library was strictly a step-in, step-out book exchange.

All who worked in the library in that era were volunteers. Edna remembers that payment came in the form of lovely, elaborate tea parties at the home of Evelyn Young or Mary Marsh, another major volunteer. "It was a wonderful time," reminisced Mrs. Durborow. "People used to dress up and do things up in an elegant way. We seem to have lost that today."

However, Mrs. Durborow is not one to sit around reminiscing about the old days – she is still too busy. This remarkable woman is a retired teacher who continues to volunteer at the A.I. duPont Hospital for Children, as she has done for decades. "They won't let me stop!" she exclaims. She still lives in the home she and her husband built in 1948 in Blue Rock Manor and it might interest you to know that she will celebrate her 100th birthday on November 14, 2006! Another inspirational volunteer connected to our library!

Thank you, Edna.

Illiterate literate?

"The person who does not read is no better off than the person who cannot read." This framed quotation was spotted in the office of Library Manager Tom Weaver.

New Computers, Lab . . . And WiFi Coming Soon

Library Manager Tom Weaver recently briefed the Friends' board about the status of BHL's popular patron-computers. The computers will be replaced soon as part of the County and State plan because they are nearing the end of their expected three-year life span.

Tom has requested eight new PCs for the setup of a computer training lab.

He provided statistics on the amount of usage that the adult and junior patron-computers received during a recent one-month period. He compared BHL to the Newark Public Library's usage of patron computers. (Patrons are allowed to use the computers for up to two hours a day.)

	Computers for Adult		Computers for Juniors	
	BHL	Newark	BHL	Newark
No. Users	1,082	1,225	331	238
Total Hrs	2,373	2,092	459	266

These figures indicate that providing computers is an important service of the library to the community. Tom explained that not everyone has a computer at home and those who do often will use the library's computers when their home computers break.

When WiFi service becomes available at BHL, it should reduce the demand for computers in the library since patrons can bring their own laptops and access the internet on the library's WiFi connection.

Free Tax Assistance

AARP will offer free assistance in tax preparation Fridays from 10 am to 1 pm at BHL in Study Rooms 228 and 229. The sessions will start Feb. 3 and end on April 7.

A sign-up sheet will be available in the lobby Fridays at 9:15. People will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis. Eight people can be assisted each day. AARP reserves the right not to do complicated tax returns.

Read and discuss Doctorow's "The March"

The adult Book Club at BHL will discuss *The March* by E.L. Doctorow at its meeting Feb. 15 at 7 pm. The group meets the third Wednesday of every month at the library. In this patron-run program, those attending suggest and select books to read and discuss at upcoming meetings. New members are always welcome.



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Friends of the Brandywine Hundred Library Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____

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Date: _____ Please check one: New Member Renewal

Membership Categories: \$500 (or more) Benefactor \$100 Good Neighbor
 \$50 Patron \$25 Sponsor, Organization, Business
 \$12 Regular Member \$ (write-in) Senior Citizen or Student

Contributions are tax deductible. Dues are renewable annually. If your company matches funds, please consider the Friends of Brandywine Hundred Library.

Make check payable to Friends of BHL

Mail to: Friends of BHL, 1300 Foulk Road, Wilmington, DE 19803

If you are interested in working with the Friends, please indicate below:

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