



Friends of the
Brandywine
Hundred Library

NEWS

FEBRUARY 2007

We support, encourage and promote quality library services

New Year's Resolutions

Dear Friends,

The Friends began 2007 by moving on a variety of commitments:

- The board pledged up to \$20,000 for new shelving.
- New board member Evelyn DeJohn gathered no moss at her debut meeting, stepping up to be chairman of our annual membership drive. She needs an assistant and many volunteers to help.
- New board member Sharon Riddick, no slacker either, assumed the role of volunteer coordinator, a position that is continuing to be defined.
- Promotional bags will be developed to give to new patrons when they receive their library cards. The bags will include information about the Friends, our newsletter, BHL's news and information, and more.
- The publishing of profiles of staff members is being resumed, starting with this issue featuring BHL's very own virtuoso Quoc-Anh Nguyen.

As a Friend or patron of BHL, what resolutions are you making to support our favorite library? Please commit to as many of the following as you wish:

- I will volunteer to help during the Friends membership drive.
- I will join the Friends or renew my membership.
- I will donate extra money to the Friends to help the library during this year of budget shortfall.
- I will buy a Brick to commemorate a special family member and/or event.
- I will consider donating my grand piano.
- I will be a cheerful, patient and quiet patron, understanding that at times the staff will be short-handed.

Kristie Moore
BHL Friends Board Member

Friends Bridge Budget Shortfall with \$20k Pledge

Due to the shortfall in real estate taxes and the ensuing tightening of the New Castle County budget, BHL Manager Tom Weaver asked the Friends to pledge up to \$20,000 for much needed new shelving, which otherwise the library could not afford.

The board members attending the January Friends meeting voted unanimously to approve this expenditure.

The shelving is required for the library's growing print resources. The "weeding" project, explained in an article in the December issue (page 3), continues with staff removing books that are outdated or in poor condition. Even with the weeding, the resource requirements for BHL's level of library service mandate more shelves.

Tom had looked into custom-made shelving, but that cost \$25,000. Not liking that amount, he researched less expensive avenues. He explained to the Friends board that library shelving is very expensive for two reasons: there are very few manufacturers of this type of shelving; and the shelving has to be made to certain high standards for public use. More information was not available at press time.

It's Your Turn to Help: Join or Renew Your Friends of BHL Membership

You've probably enjoyed a variety of activities at BHL in addition to borrowing a multitude of items. It seems like the bounty of free entertainment and educational programs is ever increasing with the launching of the new computer instruction lab, Adult Night at the Movies, Wellness Wednesdays, and too many more to list here.

It's now time for you to give something back and an easy way to do that is to join or renew your Friends of BHL membership. What is the Friends of BHL? It's a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting our library. The annual membership fee still costs only \$12.

Your dues go toward supporting the library in ways it couldn't otherwise afford...see story above. You may join or re-up anytime, but the week-long membership drive, always held during National Library Week, will run April 15-21. The lobby will be festooned

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Attn: Larry Nagengast You Are The Winner

As announced in the last newsletter, the Friends sponsored a month-long contest to see who could submit the guess closest to the actual number of energy-saving compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFL) that were distributed for free at BHL during October.

Larry Nagengast's entry was the very first received and was far and away the closest. His guess: 13,108. The actual number: 13,888. Congratulations, Larry. For prizes, he will receive a free year's membership to the Friends and two CFLs.

The lightbulb distribution at public libraries was part of a statewide campaign, Delaware Energy An\$wers Program, held during National Energy Awareness Month. With this many bulbs given out, you can understand why members of the Friends worked weekends distributing bulbs to ease the burden on the library staff.

For BHL bragging rights, there's more news. BHL gave out more CFLs than any library in the state. The next closest was the Kirkwood Highway Library, which distributed 11,826. And, Delaware beat Hawaii, the other state in this competition.

The participating libraries were awarded 10 cents for each bulb distributed. BHL was awarded \$1,388.80, which is earmarked for expanding the adult literacy section.

The 142,608 bulbs distributed in Delaware for this program are expected to save consumers \$6-9 million over the life of the bulbs.

HELP WANTED NOW

Three ongoing volunteer positions are available now: editor and desktop publisher for the Friends newsletter, which is published six times a year; and an instructor to teach Microsoft Access in BHL's computer lab during the day or night. For more details about the editor and paginator positions please leave a message on the Friends' Office telephone, 477-1945; and, for the computer instructor opportunity, call Tom Weaver, library manager, at 477-3150.

Membership Drive . . . continued from page 1

with flowers from Friendly Gift Shop, tables loaded with book bags and tasty loaves of fresh bread from Big Sky Bakery. You may select one of these items as a thank-you for joining in person during this special week.

There are two additional ways that you are needed. One is to help at the membership table by enrolling members. We need two or three people per two-hour shift to staff the table, which operates most hours that the library is open. This means we need more than 50 people to help! Also, Evelyn DeJohn, chair of the membership drive, needs an assistant chair to help in a variety of ways.

If you can volunteer to work a shift or two or want to assist in other ways, please contact Evelyn at 302.762.0498. Get your requests in early to reserve your favorite shifts.

Volunteer Profile: Meet Sonum Singh

By Molly MacMillan

When your schedule is usually packed from 7:35 a.m. until late evening, what do you do? If you are 17-year-old Sonum Singh, the answer is: More. In her spare time, the Concord High School senior volunteers in the children's section at the library, and, occasionally, she has time left over to be a typical teenager.

Most weekends, Sonum can be found at the children's section of the library supervising the desk, re-shelving books, or helping patrons find the correct librarian to get the information or books they need. She began volunteering at the library in October to fulfill service requirements for the National Honor Society. But Sonum says she has benefited in other ways from her continued work at the library. "I get to know the library a lot better, and now I have a better understanding of the system. It all makes sense now," she says of the re-shelving and book maintenance she does in addition to supervising the children's desk.

Her favorite aspect of her volunteer work is the children at the library. Though working with people is something she already enjoys, the friendly North Wilmington native says the kids at the library make her job fun.

When Sonum has the chance to read for pleasure (increasingly infrequently as her workload at school increases), she enjoys travel books. "I like reading about other countries, and other cultures," she says. Most of her reading, however, is predetermined by the syllabus she receives for each class she takes.

In addition to her volunteer work, Sonum belongs to a group that teaches students leadership skills. As a part of this group, she goes on retreats to build group unity and focus on being a better leader and building those skills. She is also a member of the math league and the class board, which plans events such as homecomings and proms.

Sonum plans to attend the University of Delaware this fall and major in biology. Afterward, she plans to continue schooling to become a physician. She admits, "It is hectic keeping my grades up and getting ready for college." Despite her reservations, Sonum gives the impression that she'll have no problem keeping up with all the endeavors she plans for her future.

Free Tax Assistance

AARP will offer free assistance in tax preparation Fridays only, Feb. 2 through April 13 at BHL.

A sign-up sheet will be available in the lobby Fridays at 9:30 am. At 10, the sheet will be taken up stairs to the waiting area by the fireplace. People will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis. Only eight people can be assisted each day. Preference will be given to low- and middle-income individuals with special preference to those 60 and older.

AARP reserves the right not to do complicated tax returns. For more information, see the promotional information on the bulletin board in the lobby.

FAQ How many books can I donate at one time?

The new guidelines are two grocery-size bags of books a week or two medium-size boxes a week. Additional guidelines regarding the kinds of materials accepted are posted on the sale shelves near the return desk.



Staff Profile: Meet Quoc-Anh Nguyen



By Seth Pauley

Helping you check out items at the circulation desk is an intriguing man of exceptional talents. He is a musician with a Carnegie Hall debut and a professional opera singer; a student of languages and a former deputy register with Delaware's Court of Chancery; a son of a South Vietnamese war

hero/musician and a refugee at age 13; a father and a husband; an humanitarian and a storyteller. Meet librarian assistant Quoc-Anh Nguyen.

Nguyen's job at BHL includes working the circulation desk, organizing materials for replacement on the shelves, and updating and verifying contact information for library cardholders who have recently moved. He also orders all the supplies for the library—from paper clips to furniture; collects information on account holders who have accrued a significant total of unpaid fines; and leads musical storytelling programs for children.

Quoc-Anh was working for the Chancery Court when he decided he wanted a job with less pressure. About five years ago, he joined the staff at the former Concord Pike Library, excited about its upcoming move to the new library (BHL).

Away from BHL, Quoc-Anh gives piano lessons at his home and teaches ESL classes for the Christiana School District's adult and community education program. He writes articles for the Vietnamese language magazine *Lua Viet* (Flame of Vietnam--website: www.luaviet.org). This publication's evolving mission initially was to raise funds and deliver school books to Vietnamese children living in refugee camps. The mission has shifted to providing edu-

cational opportunities for children in poverty or living on the streets in Vietnam's cities.

Seemingly tireless and obviously multi-talented, Quoc-Anh enjoys his work and the people he knows through BHL, both colleagues and patrons. The library, he says, "is like a treasure house," a place where one can "drink in knowledge." He feels privileged, he says, to have the opportunity to help a resource like BHL operate as well as it does—it is not as simple as checking books in and out. Since beginning his job at BHL, Nguyen has come to appreciate the amount of behind-the-scenes effort that goes into making the library—really "a complicated system" of processes—a convenient and user-friendly resource.

As a child in Vietnam, Quoc-Anh was lucky enough to have two library cards. His first card, acquired in fourth grade, one of the "most exciting" moments of his life, gave him the rare (for the time and place) ability to check out books from his school library—a small affair—and gave him membership to a film club where old movies—Laurel and Hardy and Chaplin films were memorable—were shown on a blank wall inside the library.

His second card, received in the eighth grade, gave him access to the National Library of Vietnam. Had there not been the war, he says, he would have loved to have used that library. Instead, he saw the library from the outside one time before he and his family fled the country. According to Quoc-Anh, that national library—which to him was a source of amazement and pride—a research library as well as a general borrowing library serving the entire nation, was only about twice the size of BHL.

Asked what one thing he would like say to people who use BHL, he says this: the library has "much more to offer" than just books. Nguyen is right—he himself is one of the most valuable resources of our library, its dedicated staff. One other thing, he says, "Read for enjoyment...read for pleasure...open up your imagination."

Wanted: Your Grand Piano

Quoc-Anh Nguyen envies the Newark Library. It has a grand piano donated by a patron. This library hosts concerts featuring highly accomplished musicians.

Quoc-Anh dreams of similar concerts in BHL's own Carnegie Hall (the second floor conference room). He envisions the concerts being coupled with art displays to create a salon-like atmosphere.

Our mobile electric piano, he explains, is fine for sing-alongs and musical storytelling but for ultimate musicality, pianists of virtuoso caliber require a superior instrument.

Not only will Quoc-Anh perform for us, but he has a list of other musicians as well since he helps secure top-talent to play at the Newark Library.

To anyone down-sizing or who has an idle grand piano, please give BHL patrons and staff the joy of appreciating top-class performers – please donate your piano.

Friends Election Results

At the annual meeting of the Board of the Friends of Brandywine Hundred Library in December the following officers and board members were elected:

Officers:

Vice President Eileen Lynch 2007-2008
Treasurer Marcia Dillon 2007-2008

Officers continuing in office with terms expiring in December are:

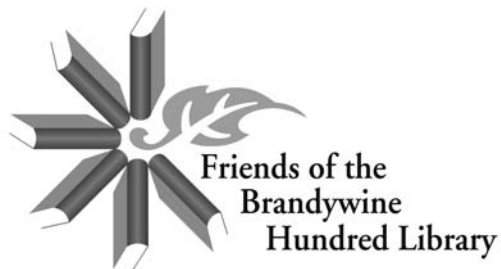
President Cecilia McCormick Secretary Joy Naquin

Board Members:

Evelyn DeJohn 2007-2008 Ann Hitchcock 2007-2008
Lois Myoda 2007-2008 Sharon Riddick 2007-2008
Jack Yeatman 2007-2008 Kristie Moore 2007
(to fill an unexpired term)

Directors continuing in office with terms expiring in December are:

Mary Bowler Shoqui (Joyce) Li
Kathy MacDonough John Stevenson



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Friends of the Brandywine Hundred Library Membership Renewal Form

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ email: _____

Date: _____ Please check one: New Member Renewal

Membership Categories: \$500 (or more) Benefactor \$100 Good Neighbor
 \$50 Patron \$25 Household, 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:

newsletter mailings shelf reading check AV equipment (for damage)
 annual membership drive artwork/posters writer (newsletter, website)