

Library Corner: Long-held dream nears reality

Thursday, January 26, 2012

By Sydelle Zove

President, Jeanes Board of Directors

As I gathered my thoughts for this column — my first as president of the board of directors of the William Jeanes Memorial Library — I realized how lucky I am to be at the helm, steering, during this most exciting period in the library's 79-year history.



Over the past few months, I know that many of you have been wondering when the building on Joshua Road would be opening. Finally, I am delighted to report that, barring unforeseen complications (or a late snowstorm), the doors will open on Monday, March 5. Not a grand opening, mind you — that will come a bit later — but a return to our beloved home, which has been made even more welcoming through a major renovation and expansion.

But first, we have to get the house in order, and that means shutting down operations at the Harts Lane building — tossing, packing, and getting settled into the new digs.

Although library services will be suspended for four weeks — from Monday, Feb. 6, through Sunday, March 4 — patrons will continue to have access to the library's 24/7 website. From there you can download titles to your e-readers, search the catalog, place a request and even have items delivered to a nearby library for pickup.

As a courtesy to our patrons, the lending period for all items being checked out now will be extended through March 5, and all fines will be waived.

We want you to make our move easier by borrowing lots of materials. The more you borrow, the fewer boxes we have to fill. We don't want any of you to feel deprived of books, DVDs, CDs, Nooks, Playaways, or Wii games during the temporary closing.

Back in December, we mailed a townshipwide letter to let you know that the construction work on the Joshua Road building was entirely funded through a gift from a magnanimous Whitemarsh family. We added, however, that the dollars for furniture and equipment must come through donations from the community — from you. With the help of many generous neighbors, we have raised more than \$350,000 in gifts and pledges toward our initial goal of \$625,000.

We look forward to recognizing these donors, and will do so at a formal ribbon cutting, but we also want to include your name on this donor honor roll. We invite you to support the library's capital campaign.

Making a gift is easy — just visit the library's website to access the secure giving gateway. Of course, an old-fashioned check would be fine, as well.

Getting back to where I started, I want to offer a few words

about the board of directors. After four years as president and another 16 in other capacities, including treasurer, Donald Mattson relinquished the gavel to me, but he will remain active on the board, advising on financial matters. We thank him for his service and ongoing commitment. I will do my best to fill his shoes.

My own affiliation with the library began in 1996, soon after I moved into the township and registered for a library card. In 2006, the board of supervisors appointed me to the library's board of directors, to which I have brought fundraising, public policy, and nonprofit management experience.

I hold a fundamental belief in the essential role of public libraries in our education system. I also regard my own role on the board of directors as one that carries a responsibility to serve as a steward of the public trust.

As for my vision, I am committed to working with my fellow board members, the library director, staff, Friends of the Library, and patrons to ensure not only that the William Jeanes Memorial Library remains relevant in the digital age, but also that it affirms its central role in the life of this community. As a gathering place for neighbors of all ages, as a safe afterschool haven for children, as a space for civic dialogue and lifelong learning, the library is uniquely positioned to be the Whitemarsh town square. I view technology as a key learning tool, though it never will replace the value of connections between human beings, especially in teaching literacy to young learners.

I welcome your ideas and suggestions. Just drop me a line at szove.jeanes@gmail.com.

To see photographs of the renovation, visit Jeanes' [Flickr page](#).

The William Jeanes Memorial Library has been temporarily located at 2391 Harts Lane, Lafayette Hill. From Feb. 6 through March 5, the library will be closed so that it can return to its permanent home at 4051 Joshua Road, Lafayette Hill. Please continue to visit the website at www.jeaneslibrary.org for online services and for important updates. The library also can be reached at 610-828-0441.

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