



Cabin  
Fever

Winter Adult Reading Club  
January 3 - March 3

**Library Trivia:** ♦ Through the efforts of the Library Board and the Friends of the Library, on January 4, 1982, the Derby Public Library was accepted for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. It became the second Derby building to be given this recognition. In 1968, the Sterling Opera House had attained the listing.

## LOCAL HISTORY

Chelsie Labrecque

As some of you may already know, Derby has a rich involvement in African American history. One of the more publicized figures is Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett. He was born in Derby and in 1869 became the first African American diplomat in the history of the United States. However, there were other notable black figures from Derby during this time period- some of whom were designated as Black Governors.

Between the mid 1700's and mid 1800's, freed African-Americans in Connecticut began to form their own communities, including a political body. This led to the creation of the "Sable" or "Black" Governor position. Black Governors did not hold any real political power; their role was to serve as mediators between white and black communities. In Hartford, one of the duties of a Black Governor was to administer discipline to slaves who had disobeyed the law. Yet in other communities, the Black Governors served as a symbol of hope and freedom; "For enslaved and free communities of African descent, the elections of the governors asserted their humanity. Later, the elections of the Black Governors were to serve as vehicles to organize the abolition of slavery. Denied the official right to participate politically in the United States, African people in the Americas used the elections as a form of political revolt and self-determination\*" They would handle legal problems within the black communities and advocate for African-American rights as well. Black Governors could be free men or slaves.

It is said that no other city provided as many Black Governor's as Derby. Two of the most famous, being descendants of the Freeman family. Quash Freeman was an African native that had been captured and sold to slave traders. His final master was Agar Tomlinson of Derby. In 1784 Connecticut passed a bill that began the gradual emancipation of slaves in the state. In 1800, Tomlinson emancipated Quash and gifted him 30 acres of land, a small dwelling, a barn, a cow, and a yoke of oxen. This was when Quash took the last name of Freeman. In 1810 he became the first Black Governor elected in Derby and served for five years.

Later, his son Roswell Freeman became a Black Governor as well. Born in 1804, Roswell was elected in 1830 and served for seven years. He was married to Nancy Freeman. They remained in Quash's household, located deep in the woods of Derby Neck (now part of Osborndale Park). Roswell died October 6, 1877 and was buried at Bare Plains Cemetery in Ansonia. Nancy remained a widow until her own death in 1895. In 2012, archeology students from Central Connecticut State University excavated the site where the Freeman home had once stood.

Other notable Black Governor's from Derby include Gov. Tobias and his son, Eben Tobias. Tobias was a slave owned by Captain John Wooster, a tavern owner in Oxford. Tobias married another one of Wooster's slaves, Rachel Hull in 1776. Through his service during the American Revolution he was able to gain his freedom.

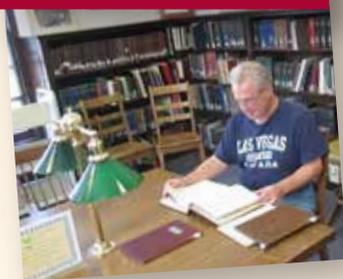
In 1815, Tobias was elected Derby's Black Governor, maintaining the position between Quash and Roswell's elections.

In 1805, Rachel Hull gave birth to Eben Tobias. When he married his wife, Susan Bassett, he took on her surname. Eben Tobias Bassett was the father of Ebenezer Bassett. He served his term as Black Governor from 1840-1845 and was the last Black Governor in Derby. His family resided on farmland on Great Hill along the banks of the Housatonic River, belonging to Dr. Martin Bull Bassett of Derby.

More information about this fascinating piece of Derby history is available in our Local History collection.

\*Information taken from *African American Connecticut Explored* by Katherine Harris, Stacey Close, and Frank Mitchell, Wesleyan University Press

Take some time to explore Derby's fascinating and notable history this winter.



# DERBY Public Library

## From the Desk of the Director:

Cathy Williams

*Write it in your heart that every day is the best day of the year.*

--- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Happy 2017! I hope the new year brings everyone new hopes, new experiences, new joys, and new beautiful memories. One of our Library friends recently shared something very interesting with me that you might like to add to your "resolution" list this year. According to a health guide printed in the December issue of *Better Homes and Garden Magazine*, reading 3.5 hours a week will help you live longer. So when you think about it, joining the **Derby Public Library's Winter Reading Club** will help guide you to a longer life! *Cabin Fever* runs from January 3 through March 3. Participants, ages 18 and over, read books of their choice, share them with other club members, win weekly prizes, and celebrate with a closing Spring Party. This is a fun and healthy way to beat the winter blues!

While you have always been able to print from our Library computers, our mobile device users have not had this option available to them. That will change this winter. You will now be able to print from your laptop, tablet, or phone while visiting the Library. But that's not all. The next time your home printer malfunctions or you run out of ink, you can send your documents remotely to our Library printer. Simply click on Mobile Printing link on our website, follow the prompts, and pick up your printouts at the Library!

We have recently upgraded our Local History collection management software. It is now easier to search for photos, objects and archives in our collection by using *PastPerfect 5.0*. A designated computer in the Local History Room is available for all interested in learning about Derby's rich history. A staff member would be happy to get you started.

Your generous book donations have greatly contributed to the success of our semi-annual book sales over the years, and we deeply thank you. Because our upcoming construction projects will be impacting our already limited storage space, however, we will not be accepting any new donations this year. We will also be suspending our book sales for the year. Again, thank you for your past support and continued cooperation.

Don't let the cold weather keep you in this winter. The Library has a full schedule of events to keep you busy. **Steve Reilly**, local author, will visit to discuss his new book *The Lord of the Infield Flies* and **Paul Colburn** returns to discuss *Bobcats: Connecticut's Secretive Cat*. **The Silver Sluggers** will hold two **Hot Stove Sessions** to help get them through the off season. Two popular favorites, Rich DiCarlo's **Water Color Class** and Stacey Ference's **Cooking Demonstration** are scheduled. For everyone who hasn't been lucky enough to get tickets to Broadway's *Hamilton*, you can get a taste of it from **Stephen Spignesi's 499 Facts About Hip-Hop Hamilton and the Rest of America's Founding Fathers** on February 13. Check the inside calendar for the for these and all of our ongoing programs. We are always looking for new program ideas so let us know if you have any requests or ideas!

In closing, I unfortunately have some sad news to share with you. Long time Library Board member Lillian Comboni passed away in November. Lillian helped guide the Library through many transitions over the years, including advocating for our beautiful building's listing on the National Register for Historic Places and helping to oversee our building renovation/expansion project in 2000. Her steadfast dedication to these and other efforts, along with her quick wit will be greatly missed.

*"A life that touches others goes on forever."* --- Author Unknown.

Lillian Comboni







## Message from Miss Sue

Sue Sherman

It is hard to believe we will be celebrating our 6th **Take Your Child to the Library Day** on Saturday, February 4. For anyone who is unfamiliar with this now nationwide day of recognizing libraries, it began as a collaborative effort by Children's Librarians in Connecticut to encourage families to stop by and discover all the resources and opportunities their local library offers. Think of it as a sampling of what today's libraries are all about. Families are welcome to join in several activities throughout the day including a painting class presented by the **Giggling Pig Art Studio**, **Lego Time** and a drop-in **Crafty Kids** program. Therapy dog **Payson** and her owner Janet will also be in the Children's Room to welcome visitors, so stop by to say hello. Children ages 5-11 may register to read a book to Payson and learn more about our ongoing therapy dog program throughout the year. She just loves to meet new friends and shake paws!



How your child can learn to read before school — and other read-aloud miracles.

**MEM FOX**  
ILLUSTRATED BY JOAN GREENBERG

Children's author Mem Fox has written in her book *Reading Magic* that "experts in learning and child development have discovered that if children know eight nursery rhymes by heart by the time they are four years old, they're usually among the best readers by the time they're eight." It is statements like this that support the relevance of books in a young child's world. It can encompass reading aloud, giving a board book to a toddler to "read" on their own or attending a story time to further stimulate their interest in books. Our winter session of weekly **StoryTimes** begins on January 11 and runs through March 16. If you are a parent or caregiver of a young child, consider attending a class and notice how quickly they begin to respond and participate each week with favorite rhymes, finger plays and songs. Our story times include **Mommy and Me** which is a lap sit program geared for infants birth to 12 months old along with a caregiver. It introduces our youngest patron to books, rhymes and songs taking place on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 AM. Toddlers age 13-24 months along with a caregiver are welcome to join us for **Wonderful Ones** to learn, play and grow through an interactive class that fosters developmental and social skills through stories, songs, rhymes, musical instruments and more meeting on Wednesdays at 10:30 AM. **Time for Twos** is offered on Thursdays at 10:00 AM for children 25-36 months old and their caregiver with an opportunity to listen to stories, sing songs, participate in early literacy activities and create a simple craft.

We are very excited to be hosting **It's Potty Time** on Tuesdays, February 21 and 28. This two part program is geared for parents, caregivers and early childhood educators focusing on how to implement the often daunting routine of potty training. In collaboration with TEAM, Inc.'s Family Resource Center, we welcome Elaine Langsam who will facilitate this informational and interactive workshop bringing an element of fun into accomplishing this step in a toddler's life. There is no fee to attend, but registration will be required. We look forward to offering other parenting programs throughout the upcoming year.

Just a reminder . . . we will continue our weekly after school **Crafty Kids** on Wednesdays and **Family Place – 1,2,3...Grow With Me** begins a new session on January 23. Registration is ongoing for the **1,000 Books Before Kindergarten** initiative. Stop by the Children's Room for further information on this wonderful literacy resource and check out our bulletin board of young reading stars who are currently participating in the program.



## Staff Picks

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|-------------------|--|
| Cathy Williams    | <i>The Sleeping Beauty Killer</i> by Mary Higgins Clark                      |
| Sue Sherman       | <i>The Missing Mitten Mystery</i> by Steven Kellogg (Children)               |
| Kathy Wilson      | <i>Looking for Me</i> by Beth Hoffman  |
| Ann Mirisola      | <i>Two by Two</i> by Nicholas Sparks   |
| Mary Householder  | <i>The Wrong Side of Goodbye</i> by Michael Connelly                         |
| Lorraine Piazza   | <i>Behind Closed Doors</i> by B.A. Paris                                     |
| Gabriella Novak   | <i>It's Snowing! It's Snowing! Winter Poems</i> by Jack Prelutsky (Children) |
| Tony Delos        | <i>Jackaby</i> by William Ritter (Young Adult)                               |
| Brian Karkut      | <i>The Secret Life of Figgy Mustardo</i> by Marsha Wilson Chall (Children)   |
| Marc Weissman     | <i>Can I Wear My Nose Ring to the Interview?</i> by Ellen Gordon Reeves      |
| Andrew Bisaccia   | <i>My New American Life</i> by Francine Prose                                |
| Chelsie Labrecque | <i>The Wicked Boy</i> by Kate Summerscale                                    |



## TEEN ZONE

Tony DeLos

Greetings **Teen Zone** fans and **Happy New Year!** One of the encouraging things about putting those wonderful end-of-year holidays behind us is the opportunity the month of January provides for revitalizing our day-to-day experiences. Many seize the time to rededicate commitments to self-improvement, often turning to fresh experiences as a means to new-found fulfillment. And if you're the type that has a knack for "reading between the lines", chances are you're anticipating an announcement of some new young adult initiative that'll put you on-track to accomplish all those objectives. Well, you'd be 100 percent correct!

The **Teen Zone** is excited and proud to announce the auspicious inauguration of our latest, and perhaps greatest, YA program - **Teens Teach Tech!** What we envision is a gathering of the great young minds that our technology-soaked culture is wittingly producing – a time to share your knowledge and talents. Let's face it, how often have you heard that in order to figure out some new-fangled thing these days just ask a teenager? And from whom do they learn so many of those up-to-the-minute, cutting edge processes and device operations? From other teens, of course! It's our formulation of a "teen-led" forum where the exchange of technical aptitude happens with various new tools and gadgets. **Teens Teach Tech** will happen monthly, starting 6:00 PM Tuesday, January 24, with a follow-up gathering the same time, Tuesday February 14.

Our **YA Wednesdays** program continues to be a **Teen Zone** marvel. We've actually been visited by friends that have moved out of town but make special plans to join us and not miss out on the fun and friendships that have developed! Be part of the camaraderie at 6:00 PM each week. Also, don't forget our **Teen Chess Club's** coach, Mr. Julio Maldonado, is available on a "will call" basis. Just phone us to confirm that you're interested - we'll coordinate Monday, 6:30 PM reservations. That'll do it for this edition. See you 'round the Zone!



Looking for something to do?  
Visit the **Teen Zone**.

Take advantage of our **Charging Station** – one of the many services the Library offers to help you with your technology needs.



## TECH CORNER

Marc Weissman

*"I resolve to be more technologically savvy!"*

With the new year upon us, this is traditionally a time when resolutions are made. So to help you accomplish any technology goals you might have for 2017, here are a few reminders about the Derby Public Library:

**Charging Station** – For your convenience, a charging station is located in the adult computer area on the Main Level for those who wish to recharge their mobile devices. The station accommodates Android, Apple, Micro-USB and many other common connection types to help you power up quickly.

**Flash Drives / Earbuds** – If you need them in a pinch, the Library continues to offer flash drives and earbuds for purchase. Please check with our circulation desk regarding cost and availability.

**Parent-Specific Computers** – We understand and sympathize the need for parents to multi-task when bringing their child to our Library. To facilitate this, two dedicated adult computers are located in our Children's Room so parents can check their email or get work done while their child is enjoying the fruits of our junior offerings.

**Free Wi-Fi** – The Library continues to provide free Wi-Fi for our patrons. One of our helpful staff members at the circulation desk can provide you with the secured password, so you'll be good to go.

**Scanners** – For those patrons who wish to create electronic versions (PDFs, JPGs, etc.) of their documents and photos, the Library is equipped with a total of 3 scanners – 2 in the adult computer area on the Main Level, and one in the Children's Room on the Lower Level. If you require any assistance with scanning, a Library staff member will be happy to help you.

**Tech Time Classes** – As we've done for many years, the Library continues to offer a pair of technology-related classes each month. Held the 3rd Wednesday and 3rd Thursday of every month, the topics are customized to the needs of the attendees and can range from effective Google searching to using your mobile devices to improving your Microsoft Word/Excel skills to creating and efficiently using your email account. All skill levels are welcome and no registration is required.

**Downloadables** – Between *Overdrive* and *Hoopla*, Derby Public Library card holders can use these web-based methods to temporarily download all sorts of electronic media, including movies, TV shows, audio books, e-books, music, and comic books, right to your mobile devices.

**Online Databases** – You can access a multitude of online databases right at your fingertips, such as, *JobNow* (employment), *Mango* (languages), *lynda.com* (instructional videos), *researchIT CT* (state-wide library search), and many more on all Library computers. Derby Public Library card holders can also access them remotely.

**Facebook** – If you haven't already done so, be sure to "like" our Facebook page to keep yourself current on the latest Library programs, *Tumbuck Tuesday* photos, and more.

**New Service – Mobile Printing! Happy New Year!**