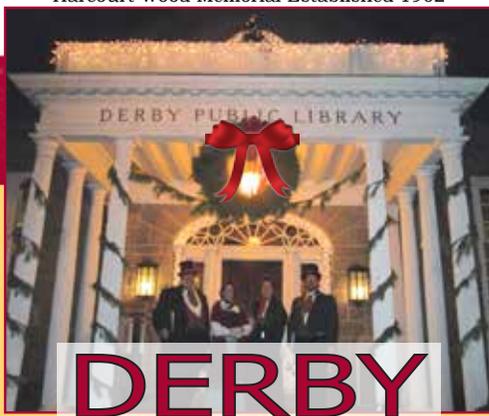




**HOURS:**  
MON.-WED. 9 AM-8 PM  
THURS. 9 AM-6 PM  
FRI. 9 AM-5 PM  
SAT. 9 AM-2 PM



# DERBY Public Library



## Annual Holiday Open House

CT Yuletide Carolers  
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

**Library Trivia:** ♦ The Library's first Annual Holiday Open House was held on December 16, 2003. Then Mayor, Marc Garofalo led everyone in an afternoon sing-along.



## LOCAL HISTORY

Chelsie Labrecque

The first Jewish congregation was not established in Connecticut until 1843, due to laws prohibiting organized Jewish worship. However, there were obviously families living throughout the state since 1659. In Derby, the first known Jew was Mordecai Marks. He came to the Valley in 1726, having been born in London in 1706. After converting to the Christian faith he married and opened up a successful hardware shop. Samuel Brush, the original owner of the shop that eventually became Howard & Barber, had been Jewish as well.

As such it is no surprise that a thriving Jewish population was dated as far back as 1718 within Derby. However, due to a larger number of Jews living in the cities, the first synagogue in the Valley was not completed until 1893. The Congregation B'nai Israel was established by Jews from Ansonia, Derby, Shelton, and Seymour and was built in Ansonia. During this time period, however, it was difficult for Jews from Derby to walk to Ansonia for daily services.

This led to Derby and Shelton Jews working together to establish their own synagogue, away from the rising conflicts between Orthodox and Conservative Jews in Ansonia. In 1905 the Congregation of the Sons of Israel was established. It was erected on Anson Street, although construction did not finish until 1918. Its first Rabbi, Solomon Sigel, remained with the congregation until its destruction on December 21, 1930, when the Congregation of the Sons of Israel was completely destroyed in a fire. A children's Hanukkah program had been going on that evening when the power went out. After failing to return power to the building the show was cancelled. Within half an hour of the congregation leaving, the building was set ablaze due to faulty wiring. Along with the building, most of the items - including the Torah - had been destroyed as well. Thankfully, the Sons of Israel maintained a separate religious school until 1953 and managed to remain a separate congregation until 1959.

After the Flood of '55, a meeting was held between representatives of various congregations within Ansonia, Shelton, and Derby in order to form a merger. They established the United Jewish Building Fund of the Associated Towns and began raising money to construct a building that would eventually house two synagogues, the Jewish Community Center, and its Board of Education in one place. This building would become the Beth Israel Synagogue Center. It was located at 294 Elizabeth Street in Derby and construction was begun in 1958.

Over time, however, as the population grew older, many Jewish residents moved to other areas, such as New Haven and Orange. This was due to several reasons. For one, during the 60's and 70's the job market in the Valley fell and the quality of education fell also. In response, many families moved to larger cities. Those who remained struggled to keep family businesses open. As a result, synagogue membership declined until finally the Beth Israel Synagogue Center merged with the Congregation Or Shalom in Orange in the early 1990s. The Beth Israel Synagogue Center had been the last synagogue in the Lower Naugatuck Valley. The building it previously occupied is now the New Life Community Church.

## From the Desk of the Director:

Cathy Williams

*Christmas is doing a little something extra for someone.*

-- Charles M. Schulz



My process for writing this column has remained largely the same for the past 14 years. I keep notes of news and updates of things as they happen. As the newsletter deadline approaches, I put these together, along with special events, and share them with you. For this column, however, the words were not coming quite as easy. Then I found the very first column I wrote when I officially became Director of the Derby Public Library.

*From November, 2003: While I am not new to the Library, some adult patrons may not be familiar with me. I began my career at the Derby Public Library 16 years ago. I started part time at the adult circulation desk, moved to Assistant Director, and for the past 14 years have had the privilege of being the Children's Librarian, a position I thoroughly enjoyed. Since last December, I also took on the role of Acting Director. On August 1, I was officially appointed Library Director. Having been born here and keeping strong family ties, the city of Derby has always felt like home to me. These feelings have only grown throughout my years at the Library and I look forward to many more.*

Now, those many more years later, it is with many emotions that I write I will be retiring at the end of this year. While I look forward to spending more time with my family and especially look forward to my new role as "Grandma," it is not easy to walk away from the place and the people that have been such a big part of your life for over 30 years. I have not only seen the Library as an institution grow and develop, but I have been honored to watch two and three-year-olds grow and develop and continue to come back and visit, some with children of their own.

The Derby Public Library is truly a unique place, a place where I have shared stories, smiles, hugs, laughter and unfortunately some tears, with many of you who have become more friends and family than patrons. I hope to see you at the Library before the end of year and then I hope our paths will continue cross.

But enough of that . . . here is much more news to share with you!

Several months ago I told you that the Derby Public Library was one of the first 15 libraries in the state to receive a grant from the State Library Board for a high-speed fiber optic connection to the Connecticut Education Network (CEN). Well, good things come to those who wait - the work has been completed! Between this new connection and some new equipment, internet users should now be seeing a faster connection. Once again, many thanks to Maria Bernier, at the State Library for her endless patience and guidance during this process!

Many thanks go out to John Rak and his family for their donation in memory of their Aunt Sofia Switala. Their continued support will once again enable the Library to purchase additional titles for our popular Polish collection.

Welcome to Christine Boulay, our new Library Assistant/Local History Coordinator. Christine's past work experience at the Derby Historical Society and her enthusiasm for local history were a perfect fit for the position. Christine will be happy to assist you with all your local history and genealogy inquiries.

I am so happy to invite everyone to the Derby Public Library's **14th Annual Holiday Open House**. This year's festivities will once again feature music throughout the day. Marc Weissman will be on keyboard in the afternoon, and the Connecticut Yuletide Carolers will lead us in a sing-along in the evening. And as always, there will be cookies, punch and raffles. Hope to see you there!

Happy Holiday to all!

*How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.*

- From the movie Annie



"Tis the Season!

Join us for some good old-fashioned Holiday cheer!





## Message from Miss Sue

Sue Sherman

As we approach what is often perceived as the most hectic and busiest time of the year for families, wouldn't it be great to take a "time out" and be able to put some fun into the mix? We welcome families to visit the Children's Room for some great upcoming programs!

Two author visits are planned featuring **Rich DiCarlo** and his recently published picture book *There's No Such Things as Monsters*, which he also illustrated, on Saturday, November 4 and **Tarra Andrews** will share her picture book *No Peanuts for Santa* on Saturday, December 2. If you are a family coping with food allergies, you are sure to enjoy Ms. Andrews' holiday story about Santa and his reindeer and their allergies. Books will be available for purchase/signing the day of their respective event. Light refreshments will also be served.

**TumbleTrain Gymnastics** returns with classes for toddlers and preschoolers on November 13 and December 4. Kids can burn off some of that extra energy during these classes which introduce them to the use of age appropriate gymnastics equipment, including balance beam, bars, floor mats and more. If you're looking for a more calming activity for your young child, stop by for **Yoga-Wees** when you and your child can both participate in a fun introduction to yoga on Wednesday, December 13. Weekly **Story Times** and **Family Place -1,2,3...Grow with Me** also continue in November and December.

Our after school programs include Thanksgiving and Christmas themed **Crafty Kids** the second Tuesday of each month,

along with our **S.T.E.A.M.** program on the third Thursday every month. Don't forget our **DIY Station** which is always packed with activities such as a scavenger hunt, word puzzles, guessing jars and more! The best part is you can complete them at your own pace whenever you stop by the Children's Room. See if you can find the Thanksgiving turkey (paper cutout of course) and Santa's elf hiding in a different location in the Children's Room.

During the holiday school break we have scheduled a **Reindeer Story/Craft Time** on December 27 and a drop-in **Craft Time** on December 28.

Just a reminder . . . there is no fee to attend story times or other children's activities and residents from communities outside of Derby are always welcome to join us.

It's hard to believe the start of a new year is right around the corner meaning our **winter story time session** is fast approaching. We begin registration on December 11 with classes starting the week of January 8. **Happy Holidays!**

## TEEN ZONE

Tony DeLos

Greetings *Teen Zone* fans! I'm utterly astounded by the sheer speed with which the seasons seem to be flying by! It feels as if the school year is still in its early stages and already the preparations for holiday festivities are making their way to the top of our collective to-do lists. But one thing that provides a measure of comfort is that we're all in this together and can look to each other for support (after all we are talking about happy holidays!) especially when gathering at the Library for a break from all the holiday hub-bub.

Our **YA Wednesdays** continue to provide teens with a weekly 6:00 PM break from their studies as they refresh themselves with some friendly diversion and recreation. And just to ensure that our offerings remain enticing, we're adding the Sony PlayStation 4 game system to the *Teen Zone* repertoire! Although, I must say that we're seeing some pretty spirited UNO play these past few sessions. Then, our **Build a Better World Teen Maker Space** is also seeing a "growth spurt" with the addition of virtual reality goggles, several new 3D doodle pens, and a button making machine! Bring in some favorite print pictures or graphics and create your own personalized statements to wear, or perhaps even give as gifts! **Teen Makers** get together on the last Thursday of each month at 3:00 PM.

Of course, what would holidays 'round the *Zone* be without some celebratory event to capitalize on the merriment permeating the air at DPL? So in keeping with our tradition of getting your break from school off to a good start, teens are invited to a holiday celebration of: **Movie-Pizza-BakerSpace!** Movie and Pizza need no explanation, and the **BakerSpace** component is your creative outlet for decorating some delicious bakery items to be enjoyed either during the movie or taken home and shared afterwards. This triple-play of fun will happen December 19, starting 5:30 PM.

Finally, as we close out the year 2017, DPL will also be closing a chapter of its storied history as we bid congratulations and farewell to our retiring Director, Mrs. Cathy Williams! With 30+ years of dedicated service to all DPL patrons, I can personally attest to her enthusiasm for *Teen Zone* fans and visitors and I would especially highlight her contributions to the development of exciting programs for our young adult patrons! Miss Cathy will be missed, so be sure to express well-wishes and hopes for her making an occasional pop-in to see what's *hap'nin'* 'round the *Zone!* **Happy Holidays to all!**

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**Author visit** – Join us for a special holiday author visit with Tarra Andrews reading *No Peanuts for Santa* on December 2.



## Holiday Staff Picks

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Cathy Williams   | <i>The Polar Express</i> by Chris Van Allsburg                          |
| Sue Sherman      | <i>And Then Comes Christmas</i> by Tom Brenner (Children's Room)        |
| Kathy Wilson     | <i>Winter Storms</i> by Elin Hilderbrand                                |
| Ann Mirisola     | <i>Christmas Blessing</i> by Melody Carlson                             |
| Mary Householder | <i>Twelve Dogs of Christmas</i> by David Rosenfelt                      |
| Lorraine Piazza  | <i>Just a Little Christmas</i> by Janet Dailey                          |
| Gabriella Novak  | <i>Santa Claus</i> by Rod Green (Children's Room)                       |
| Tony Delos       | <i>Santa is for Real</i> by Charles Edward Hall (Young Adult)           |
| Brian Karkut     | <i>The Christmas Puppy</i> by Roberta Grobel Intrater (Children's Room) |
| Marc Weissman    | <i>Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade</i> by Matt Harnick                   |

## TECH CORNER

Marc Weissman

### Smartphones or Tablets or Laptops: Oh my!

Nowadays there are so many mobile device options to choose from, it can often be confusing which one(s) to purchase. As you might guess, a lot depends on your specific needs, your budget and your level of experience. And as you might also guess, there are advantages and disadvantages to each choice.

Starting with the smallest devices, smartphones can be seen virtually everywhere, so to speak. One immediate plus is they combine traditional phone use with internet capability and access to downloadable apps for all sorts of . . . well . . . applications. Tablets and laptops, meanwhile, typically do not offer phone capability, although free video chat software like FaceTime, Facebook Messenger and Skype make this somewhat of a moot point. The compact, lightweight portability of smartphones is also a benefit. Even as screen sizes for them grow, most can still readily fit into your pocket or purse whereas tablets and laptops often cannot. And if you're into gaming, higher-end smartphones offer all sorts of high-resolution video traditionally only available on game-specific devices. As far as downsides go, reading e-books on your smartphone, while possible, can be challenging given the relatively small screen size. And while programs like Microsoft Word or Excel can be accessed, extensive use of them may be cumbersome when working with large files. Not to mention, in general, the internal and external storage capacities of smartphones are very limited when compared to laptops, although the introduction of external terabyte memory cards has closed that gap considerably.

Moving on to tablets, while they tend to be bigger than the typical smartphone, portability is still an advantage when compared to laptops (except perhaps versus Apple's MacBook Air.) But like smartphones, tablets can offer access to the internet and downloadable apps. The added advantage of tablets are their touchscreen keyboards are much larger than the typical smartphone's and thus are easier to use without relying so much on AutoCorrect. However, that same touchscreen keyboard can be perceived as a disadvantage for those users who are more comfortable using a hard keyboard. As well, tablets can be easier to use in tight spaces like in a taxi cab or on a plane since there is no need flip them open. Battery life also tends to be longer for tablets versus laptops, but this can be very brand specific both for the battery itself as well as for the mobile device. Tablets traditionally have not been conducive for gaming however, but with technology constantly evolving, this may no longer be an issue.

Regarding laptops, right off the bat they offer both wired and wireless capability which can be very convenient in areas of weak wireless signals. While smartphones can use data to access the internet in the absence of wireless, there are often overage charges when doing so, as opposed to none when using a laptop with a wired, ethernet cable. And as was alluded to earlier, when using full-fledged programs like Word or Excel, laptops can offer an ideal combination of screen size, memory and the presence of a hard keyboard. The reality is, laptops are the closest portable device to the office-based desktop when it comes to versatility, yet unlike desktops, they are portable for doing off-site presentations or when telecommuting. On the other hand, cost and weight are probably the biggest concerns when purchasing a laptop versus the other mobile options.

Like most decisions when it comes to technology, choosing the right mobile device requires a careful balance between experience, cost and intended use. The choice is yours!



Have you checked out our Graphic Novel collection lately?