



The Friends of the Island Library Report

Winter 2019

Volume 2, Number 1

lbif@theoceancountylibrary.org

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Contact us:
P.O. Box 442
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lbif@theoceancountylibrary.org



Richard Morgan with members of his poetry workshop.

Thank you, Morgans

Last October, almost a decade after they first came, Richard and Pat Morgan departed our Jersey shore to take up residence in the hills of North Carolina.

When the Morgans arrived on Long Beach Island in September 2009 to enjoy retired life, they decided theirs would be active ones. Richard had been a lifelong poet, and Pat an accomplished watercolor painter.

Richard discovered that the Island Library had a writer's group led by Margaret Hawke, and he rushed to sign up. Morgan liked the idea that, with the group's regular meeting schedule, he would face a "soft deadline" of writing a poem every two weeks. When Margaret moved to a warmer climate several years ago, Morgan took over as director of the group.

"Margaret was a big force in my writing career," he acknowledged. "I've written six books of poetry in the last nine years." Prior to moving to LBI, Morgan had never even read his poetry out loud before a group and he found the experience invaluable. "I was getting honest feedback from other writers, and that's really important if you want to improve your writing."

Richard also started a poet's circle several years ago for those specializing in lyric writing. Several years ago, Pat Morgan volunteered her services to beginning artists with a "drop-in" watercolor sessions at the library. Both Pat and Richard have taken part in the annual Painted Poetry exhibition at the library each summer.

Moving is arduous, particular one of almost 700 miles. What will they do in North Carolina? "First, we'll relax," Richard said. Knowing the Morgans, we're certain the downtime will not be for long, as they blend into the cultural scene in the Asheville area. The good news is that the writing groups at the LBI Library continue.

(Editor's Note: A writer's group meets at the library on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 1 p.m. A poetry writer's group meets on the first Thursday of the month, also at 1 p.m. New participants are always welcome. Bring a sample of your work to the meeting and you'll hit the ground running.) ~

Brain Games Continue

Twenty-nineteen marks the beginning of the 14th year for Brain Games, one of the most popular offerings of the LBI Library. "We've been getting great attendance since the fall," said Judy Bouton, Quizmaster-In-Chief and former Friends President. "Most of our regulars returned, new participants came on board, and the word of mouth about Brain Games has been just terrific."

Bouton noted that the January 21 Brain Games will be intergenerational, with Southern Regional students, as well as local senior citizens participating. "This intermingling is always great fun," she said. ~



It's always a special time when Carolyn Placa, Southern Regional High School Choral Director, brings her students to the library for a holiday concert.



A Soldier's Life Saluted

"If I had known grandchildren were this much fun, I'd have had them first," the comic line goes. That came to mind after I attended a Friends of the Island Library sponsored talk given by Gina Maguire about the memoir of Nick Venturella, her grandfather.

The memoir, titled *It Was Fate: A War, a Massacre, A Romance*, tells the story of Venturella's experiences in Germany during and after World War II. The GI entrusted his granddaughter with his photos and copious letters, and, during the last two years of his life, told her his story. All this she compiled into her just-published book.

Initially rejected when he volunteered to join the U.S. army, Venturella altered his documents and signed up in 1944. Though the war in Europe would end only a month

later, Venturella would get to see first-hand the results of what would be known as the Gardelegen Massacre. That April 1945 atrocity would see the death of more than 1,000 Allied prisoners of war, who would be burned alive in a closed building by the Nazis.

The end of the war, Maguire said, was only "the start of my grandfather's story." On a blind date, Venturella met the love of his life, Herta Heitel. This romance was not without its complications, as Herta was a German national. Nick had to get approval from superior officers and okays from her church, doctors and local officials before they were able to move to Brooklyn. Their marriage lasted almost 60 years.

After Herta's death in 2006, Venturella lived with his granddaughter. When Nick died, Maguire came upon a box containing letters to and from her grandfather. She combined all this information into her book. Maguire was aided by her family and staff at the Holocaust Center at Stockton University, where Maguire is an adjunct professor. ☞

Murders Uncovered

On Monday, February 25 at 1 p.m., Rev. Frank Watson will bring the story of the Duffy's Cut project to the LBI Library. The program, sponsored by the Friends of the Island Library, will focus on the death of 57 Irish immigrants who worked on a stretch of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1832. Research and site excavation by Watson, his brother William, and other volunteers, led to the discovery of a mass grave by the railroad tracks in Malvern, Pennsylvania, and reburial of two sets of remains in Ireland.

The uncovered remains indicate that at least some of the dead were murdered, likely by a mob incited by anti-Catholic prejudice and a fear that the immigrants might be carrying cholera.

The Watson brothers recently published *Massacre at Duffy's Cut*, a history of the events of nearly two centuries ago and the efforts by the brothers and other volunteers to uncover the truth. Frank Watson spoke at the LBI library in 2016 on Carl Krepper, a Lutheran minister who spied for the Nazis in WW II. ☞

Get INVOLved!

The Friends of the Island Library are sponsoring our second Project INVOLve day. This volunteer job fair is being held on Monday, January 21, the Martin Luther King Day of Service, at 3:30 p.m. Several nonprofit groups will make short presentations about the work they do and the kinds of help they need.

To register for the event, please call (609) 494-2480 or log on to theoceancountylibrary.org. ☞

A Wholesome Look at Bread

Bread, "the staff of life," will be the subject of a talk by Rafael Morillo, a local artisan baker, at the Island Library on March 26 at 1:00 p.m. The presentation will include a discussion of gluten and celiac disease. While Morillo acknowledges that gluten-based bread should not be consumed by people who have intolerance to celiac disease, he contends that non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS), often cited as a result for avoiding eating breads, "has not been proven to exist."

Traditional baking ingredients and processes, Morillo said, "can produce wonderful breads that are good for you and minimize the presence of undesirable compounds [that may cause a problem]."



In his library presentation, Morillo will cover classifications and functionality of ingredients, baking processes, pairing to food and wine, and proper keeping and enjoyment of breads, as well as commercial yeasts vs. traditional sourdough leavening, the return of the corner bakery and other current trends.

After a long career as a university physics professor, Morillo decided to pursue his passion for neo-traditional bread-making full time and has trained in baking at the American Institute of Baking and the University of Antioquia in Medellin, Colombia.

Morillo opened the MKT bakery in Surf City in 2018. ☞

Valentine Love Songs

with Dennis Linde & Michael Corliss

Saturday, February 9, 2:00 p.m.