

## Take a chance, explore the possibilities

A few years ago I caught a sweet movie on television called "Last Holiday." Queen Latifah plays the lead, Georgia Byrd, a clerk in a department store in New Orleans. She is a passionate woman, loves her food, sings in the church choir, follows the rules and takes direction from her toxic boss. She has a crush on a co-worker and through an interesting chain of events she ends up getting diagnosed with a brain injury with less than a month to live. It's the kind of movie that catches my heart every time I see it and I've watched it several times.

Georgia keeps a journal with notes, recipes, photos, dreams and assorted motivational articles. She calls the journal, "Possibilities." I often think of Georgia's journal when I work with clients to help them achieve their organizing and decluttering goals. I love hearing about what their possi-

### ORGANIZED & CLUTTER FREE

BY EILEEN BERGMAN

bilities are and putting a plan in place to help them turn their possibilities into their reality.

So what are your "possibilities?" Are you dreaming about making your current home more habitable and safe for you to age in place? Are you hoping to begin entertaining your bridge group in your living room again? Do you want to clear the extra bedrooms so that your friends and relatives can have a sleepover? Are you hoping to move south to a warmer climate but can't get out because of your clutter? Do you dream of entertaining for an upcoming holiday? These "possibilities" can become your reality.

There are some special lines from the

movie, for example: "I've been waiting my whole life to do something like this." Sound familiar? What about: "Fate changed everything." Or, my personal favorite: "Next time we will laugh more, we'll love more, we just won't be so afraid."

What's my point? What does a movie from 2006 have to do with organizing and decluttering in 2017? Lessons learned are ageless and, as I learned from Georgia's journey, there is always hope and the opportunity for growth and change. She sees beauty in everything where others just take it for granted. If you watch the movie, you will completely understand my reference to "Don't that ceiling ever just make you wanna cry?" I knew exactly how Georgia felt at that moment!

We all have our doubts, our setbacks and challenges in life. It's how we deal with

them that makes us unique. Georgia took her diagnosis as an opportunity to squeeze a lifetime of pleasure into a four-week period. Yes, I know it's just a movie but this one really touches my heart. In spite of all the negative in her life, she takes a bold step to move forward and enjoy herself, and in doing so she opens up her world of "possibilities." And you can too!

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## Curiosity keeps us informed and libraries running

Libraries fill many roles for many people. They are centers of culture, community, skill building and, at their core always, learning.

Curiosity inspires us to continue learning throughout our lives. Curiosity generally begins as a desire to understand a particular — perhaps at the time mysterious — topic, such as how birds fly, what makes a computer work or what causes a volcano to erupt. Curiosity begins early in life when children begin to question the world around them and continues through adulthood, sometimes even leading us toward our focus for college theses. However, a college education is far from the only goal of fostering curiosity: it is imperative for understanding the world in which we live

### LIBRARY MATTERS

BY KRISTEN JULIA ANDERSON

and for making informed decisions.

Throughout our lives there is always one place that is there to help us follow our curiosity toward learning and enlightenment. As children we rely on our parents to take us there and as adults we are able to visit as we please. It's a place where books about endless topics are free for exploring, where internet is free and accessible, and where knowledgeable people are there to help us on our search. It's a place that as a society we have always valued as a means toward knowledge and lifelong learning. This place I speak of is of course the library.

As we progress as a people, access to information will become increasingly important. The need and ability to question and understand the world and all it has to offer will never diminish. One might argue that we can use our home computers or phones to search but we have to remember that not everyone has internet access in their homes. Further, it's not always self-evident how to find the information we seek or how to know if it's reliable. There is also something deeply motivational about being surrounded by wall-to-wall books when it comes to research — whether for the sake of personal interest or scholastic pursuit. Libraries are institutions of learning that are accessible to all who walk through their doors and that right is some-

thing central to humanity.

As we approach the summer months and schools close until the fall, the library is a place where children can continue their education and explore their curiosities. Even beyond school, libraries are always there for us throughout our lives and are varied curiosities. While it's probably true that many of us may have used libraries more during our school year, libraries are always there to support us with our informational needs. To begin, all you have to do is walk through the doors.

**Kristen Julia Anderson is the teen librarian at the West Orange Public Library.**

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Disappointed mayors

To the Editor:

The Mayors Council on Rahway River Watershed Flood Control expressed disappointment that President Donald Trump's first budget did not contain the engineering and pre-construction funding required for the Rahway River Flood Mitigation plan. Now the president's proposed federal budget goes to the U.S. Congress for consideration.

The president's budget proposal cut the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers construction appropriations for the next fiscal year by almost 40 percent. The Mayors Council has requested the region's elected federal officials to fight to get the funding into the federal budget for the fiscal year that starts in October 2017. Mayors also expressed appreciation to Sen. Cory Booker, Sen. Robert Menendez, U.S. Rep. Leonard Lance and U.S. Rep. Donald Payne Jr. for their advocacy of getting the Water Resources Development Act authorization that the Rahway River flood mitigation project is a federal priority.

"Over \$100 million of damages were faced by residents along the Rahway River

during Irene," Cranford Mayor Thomas Hannen said. "The mayors have kept their eye on the ball to ensure progress and we appreciate our federal and state representatives who have been behind us all the way."

The next step in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers process is approval of the Chief's Report. The federal WRDA requires the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to expedite the process and, as soon as the Chief's Report is approved, engineering and pre-construction work can get started. Funding is required to get to this step.

The Mayors Council is urging citizens in the affected communities to remind federal officials of the circumstances that flooding brings and that a regional consensus was reached after a thorough evaluation of 10 alternatives.

Alternative 4a was selected as having the strongest cost-benefit ratio and includes modification to the Orange Reservoir, adding two 36-inch outfall pipes permitting the reservoir to be drained two days before a major storm to reduce significantly the water elevation downstream during the major storm event. There will be

downstream channel improvements through Cranford with 1.5-miles of channel deepening, with most of the channel work done in the river not on land. Also there is expected to be lifting or acquisition of numerous properties in the city of Rahway.

As part of its outreach effort, the Mayors Council plans to visit and brief the successful gubernatorial candidates to request their support; establishing citizen avenues to register their support and a "tweet the president" effort to remind the White House of the critical infrastructure plan which includes protection of the the integrity of the Orange Reservoir dam.

The Mayors Council includes 2017 mayors of the affected communities: Maplewood Mayor Victor DeLuca, Cranford Mayor Thomas Hannen, Union Mayor Suzette Cavada, Rahway Mayor Sam Steinman, Kenilworth Mayor Anthony DeLuca, Springfield Mayor Diane Stampoulos and Millburn Mayor Cheryl Burstein.

Dan Aschenbach  
Former Cranford mayor  
Mayors Council Rahway River  
Watershed Flood Control

### Policy on letters, columns

The West Orange Chronicle welcomes submissions from its readers. Letters to the editor or opinion pieces on any subject will be considered for publication on the opinion pages. Responses to response letters will not be printed. The West Orange Chronicle reserves the right to edit all submissions for length, content and style. Writers must include their name, address and daytime telephone number for verification. Letters must not be longer than 250 words. Longer pieces must be arranged in advance with the editor.

The West Orange Chronicle accepts letters to the editor and guest columns via email. The address is wochronicle@thelocalsource.com. All letters and guest columns must be received by 5 p.m. Friday to be considered for publication in the Thursday edition of the West Orange Chronicle. Letters received must be on topics of interest, preferably in response to content that appeared in the newspaper.

Writers are asked not to include lengthy lists of people and organizations they wish to thank.