

Where does the WOPL lead you?

LIBRARY MATTERS

BY ISABEL CASTRO

This year, the nation will celebrate the libraries they know and love from April 8 to 14. And Americans love their libraries! Wayne A. Wiegand, the author of "Part of Our Lives: A People's History of the American Public Library," calls libraries "much loved community incubators of personal happiness and informal self-education."

Originally, the National Book Committee, formed in 1954, sought to encourage people to read more. Research in the mid-1950s showed that Americans were buying fewer books and more radios, TVs and musical instruments. These days it's probably electronics and not guitars, although ukuleles seem to be making a comeback. The American Library Association has sponsored National Library Week, celebrated each year during the second week in April, since 1959. The theme for 2018 is "Libraries Lead" and ALA is asking people, "Where did the library lead you?"

Books, the original focus of Library Week, have been known to spur people into action and innovation. As a Detroit teenager in the 1860s, Thomas Edison, a guy

many West Orange residents have heard about, decided to read every book in the public library for scientific information. Wilbur and Orville Wright read a book about birds at the Dayton Public Library that one of their biographers claims, "rekindled their interest in flight." Books, both paper and electronic, are still a large part of what libraries do, but libraries can offer so much more.

At the library, you will find classes on computer programs, learning a new language, teaching others a new language, becoming an American citizen and even how to crochet. Our computers are used to access the internet and social media, and for job hunting, news gathering and staying close to family and friends. Entertaining or educational programs at the library expose users to art, music and helpful information. It can be a place to meet and talk with another human being or just spend some quiet time alone.

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It's even possible to use the library without having to come through the doors. Start at our webpage to browse the catalog and request a book. Or just call and we'll do it for you. Home delivery can be set up for patrons who find it difficult to visit the library.

Under the "Digital Resources" tab you can find links to ebooks and magazines

using Cloud Library and Zinio. All of our databases, found under the "Research" tab, are accessible from anywhere and at any time. Find the answers to your questions about history, local businesses or find the phone number of an old college pal and a new recipe for Brussels sprouts. The list of available databases is long, but here are the categories in alphabetical order: book reviews, business, career and job development, current events, education & testing, environment, general research, health and wellness, homework, history, law, library science, literature, newspapers and magazines, science, world culture and geography and world languages. And yes, Rosetta Stone is free with a library card!

There's something for everyone in the community at the West Orange Public Library. The question is, where will the library lead you?

Isabel Castro is the adult services, outreach and programming, and bilingual librarian at West Orange Public Library.

The frantic scramble before the long wait

As an 18-year-old senior in high school, I'm naturally waiting to hear back from colleges. Applying to colleges is one of the most stressful and drawn-out processes a teenager can go through — puberty is also up there — but there's no avoiding it.

First, you have the choices of early deci-

PAUSE & REFLECT

BY JOSH BAKER

sion, early action or just regular decision. Early decision plans are binding — a student who is accepted as an ED applicant

must attend the college. Early action plans are non-binding — students receive an early response to their application but do not have to commit to the college until the regular reply date of May 1.

On top of that, there's also the numbers side of things and all the required forms. There's a fee of \$75 to \$100 just to apply; the Common App, not accepted by all schools, has six sections; the required 600-word essay; the multiple mini-essays every school requires; the letters of recommendation from teachers and employers; the financial aid forms; the 20-page application for West Orange High School scholarships; and the SATs taken at least twice, possibly with tutoring in between. There is this laundry list of stressors, all while keeping your junior year grades up and getting your driver's license. Oh, and don't forget to send those SAT scores to all the schools you applied to — at \$12 per school. Tired yet? Well, we're just getting started.

Now onto the waiting. The point where you actually receive your answer is the most tedious part, because of how much they continue to drag it out. First, you open the email after waiting months and months for a response. Then, they tell you in the email ... that your answer is waiting for you on their website, which the schools like to call their "portal." But first, you have to enter your username and password for that website. And then, you have to click on a button that has your actual answer! Now, picture all of this happening with your entire family anxiously crowded around you and your laptop, waiting impatiently.

On top of that, colleges don't always give you a confirmation. Sometimes they just

send you more useless information before their answer, but the most annoying part is when they want to defer you. A few weeks ago, I got an email from Northeastern University, which was the last college to which I had applied early action, but not yet received a response. I got really excited, but it was just them telling me I had been deferred to the regular decision deadline. However, they spent the first three to five paragraphs explaining that they didn't have a final answer yet. So I had to wait even longer!

A deferral from a college admissions office happens only if you apply early decision or early action. It means that a college didn't admit you in the early round but will reevaluate your application during the regular admissions period. I eventually got accepted, but the monthlong extension was no fun. Plus, a few days ago, Lehigh University gave me the ever-elusive option of being waitlisted. Being waitlisted is unlike being deferred; the college has finished reviewing your file and made a decision to put you on a waiting list for admission. Being on a waitlist typically means that you are placed into a "holding pattern" of sorts. The admissions committee may or may not admit students from the waitlist.

Applying to college is a rite of passage. It certainly toughens you up and teaches you about time management, disappointment and perseverance. I hope finding a wife is easier!

Josh Baker is a senior at West Orange High School and staff member of The Pioneer, the school's newspaper.



Photo Courtesy of Joseph Fagan

PRESERVING HISTORY — Township historian Joseph Fagan, right, donates a German army WWI regimental history book to Jonathan Casey, director of archives at the National World War I Museum and Edward Jones Research Center in Kansas City, Mo. The book was published in 1920 in Stuttgart, Germany, and came to West Orange in the 1930s with Joseph Sprossler. Before his daughter, Eleanor Sprossler, died in 2016, she asked Fagan to find a good home for the 96-year-old book. It will now be part of a library dedicated to World War I research.