

A Glance @ Guernsey

From the Director’s Desk: Bridging the digital divide by Sarah Wiggins

Part of the library’s mission and responsibility in the community is to provide high interest materials meeting their current recreational, educational and vocational needs utilizing available current technology as well as supporting life-long learning experiences.

Within this mission, lies the Library’s role to introduce available and emerging technologies to the community. Probably the best known example of this is free computer use and internet access that all public libraries offer to its community. As a result of economic conditions, many members of communities do not have the means to acquire the latest technologies. This introduction of the latest technologies to those who could not otherwise experience them helps all socioeconomic levels of a community to maintain and/or gain needed skills to be a literate and participating citizen.

Providing such services through the library is referred to as “bridging the digital divide”. Currently, many new technologies are on the market. Examples are smart phones, tablet pc’s, iPods, and e-readers. This list does not include social networking applications being used by millions.

One may ask, is Guernsey Library keeping pace with technological changes in the greater society? Thus far the library has added one e-reader, the Kindle, several play-a-ways, the Download Zone which provides e-books and audio books, and three different databases. Further the library actively uses Face Book to keep our community abreast of activities at the library; and Twitter to announce planned programs.

Are we doing enough to bridge the digital divide in Chenango County?

Library Hours

Monday	9:00 am–8:30 pm
Tuesday	9:00 am–8:30 pm
Wednesday	9:00 am–8:30 pm
Thursday	9:00 am–8:30 pm
Friday	9:00 am–6:00 pm
Saturday	9:00 am–4:00 pm
Sunday	1:00 pm–4:00 pm

Closings:

Sun.	Dec 25	Christmas Day
Mon.	Dec 26	Day after Christmas
Sun.	Jan 1, 2012	New Year’s
Mon.	Jan 2	New Year’s
Mon.	Jan 16	MLK Jr. Day
Mon.	Feb 20	President’s Day

Local History: A Historical Event: Twenty-Mule Borax Team Comes to Norwich, N.Y.

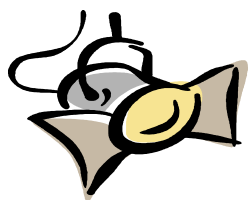
Our city of Norwich has rich history if one will take time to dig. The old local newspapers often tell of unusual events that took place in Norwich and some are quite interesting and even educational such as the visit of the Twenty-Mule Borax Team that arrived on Wednesday, October 8, 1919.

The Pacific Coast Borax Company was known for its enterprise and originality when it came to advertising and they had decided to recreate the 20-Mule team, two wagons and a water wagon

which would then tour the country and distribute samples of Borax products. Borax is a mineral and the crystals were named “cotton ball” and to be sure one had borax they needed to pour alcohol and sulfuric acid over the crystals and set it on fire. If the flame burned green, it was borax. Borax was found in the ancient lake beds that covered Death Valley and William T. Coleman purchased from Aaron Winters a claim in Death Valley for \$20,000. Being a business man, Mr. Coleman opened the Harmony Borax Works in 1882.

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Staff Spotlight by Sarah Wiggins: Grant Horton, Library Page

Grant Horton is one of the newest library pages at Guernsey Memorial Library. He has been here for approximately four months. Grant was born in Colorado but has been in this area since first grade. Currently, Grant is still in high school and looks forward to graduating in 2013 at which time he hopes to attend Hartwick College. He is considering music as a possible major. He stated, "I like music but I think it is not a practical thing in life. I will cross that bridge when I come to it."

Grant says he likes working at the library because it is fun, his co-workers are nice and he works on something different everyday.

When he is away from the library, Grant engages in many hobbies. They include swimming, musicals, marching band and playing the viola. Oh, and he really enjoys dancing.

Other activities includes reading. His favorite author is Laurie Hallse Anderson and his favorite book is *Twisted*. He likes this book because it is intriguing to his age group without being dull. He stated, "every sentence has a meaning, a point." he first read this title for his censorship project. He also feels that the book has a modern setting and modern problems and he likes reading books he can relate to.

Grant has two brothers and one step sister.

Reviews by Sue Morehead: *A Turn In the Road* by Debbie Macomber

Number of Pages: 333 pages

Publication Date: 2011

Plot Summary:

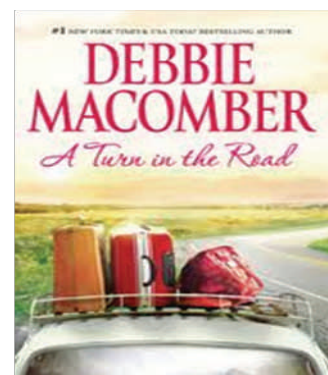
Bethanne Hamlin, her daughter Annie, and her former mother-in-law Ruth are driving to Florida for Ruth's fiftieth high school reunion. Ruth is making the trip, hoping to see her lost love Royce. Bethanne has to make a decision about whether to get back together with her ex-husband Grant. Annie, who has just broken up with her boyfriend, wants to show him that she can get along just fine without him in her life. While on the road they meet a man named Max, who may just turn out to be a new love for Bethanne. It becomes the trip of a lifetime for all three women.

Subject headings:

Romance; Contemporary Fiction

Appeal/Special Features:

This book is classic Debbie Macomber romance. It has a lighthearted and entertaining story line and good character development. It is also a "clean read" for those who do not care for some of the more "descriptive" contemporary romance novels.



Children's Corner: Winter Story time Session Begins January 3rd



Young children and their families are invited to join us for the winter story time session that begins January 3rd and runs through March 9th. Each week children will explore a different theme through stories, interactive songs, rhymes, felt board activities, crafts, and games. Story times are designed to engage young children in the love of reading and books through a highly interactive story time designed for their age group. Preschoolers and their families will meet for story time on Tuesdays from 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. There will be a special story time for babies and toddlers on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10:30 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.

No registration is required and you do not need to attend all the sessions in order to participate. Themes are as follows:

Themes are as follows:

Jan. 3 & Jan. 6	It's Mitten Weather
Jan. 10 & Jan. 13	Snuggle Up!
Jan. 17 & Jan. 20	Cookie Counting
Jan. 24 & Jan. 27	Get Well Soon!
Jan. 31 & Feb. 3 (Exercise)	Let's Work It Out
Feb. 7 & Feb. 10	Let's Play Pretend
Feb. 14 & Feb. 17	Hugs and Kisses
Feb. 21 & Feb. 24 Bears, Penguins)	The Arctic Circle (Polar
Feb. 28 & March 2 March 6 & March 9	Cleaning Up Animal Sillies

Local History: A Historical Event: Twenty-Mule Borax Team Comes to Norwich, N.Y.

The workforce for mining the borax was comprised mostly of Chinese laborers. They were paid only \$1.50 a day to scrape the cotton ball ore from these ancient lake beds. This was hard, dirty, hot work and the heat was usually the hardest of the conditions to deal with. Transporting the minded borax was no easy feat. To get to the nearest railroad points these mule teams had to travel 165 miles and through some of the most rugged and desolate areas. On the Death Valley trail there were no human settlements or lodging and a good 60 mile stretch had no water for man or beast. Temperatures could soar during summer from 136 degrees to 150 degrees so it was vital that they haul along a tank wagon that would carry 1200 gallons of water.

These 20 Mule Teams could usually cover only 18 miles a day so they had to be well

provisioned to make it through the desert. A round trip would take 20 days.

The description of the borax wagons is quite impressive. These wagons were built in Mojave and were the largest and strongest of wagons. To give you an idea of their size, the front wheels were 5 feet high and the rear wheels were 7 feet high. Each wheel had a tire of steel 8 inches wide and 1 inch-thick. The wagon beds were 16 feet long, 4 feet wide and 6 feet deep; weighing 8000 pounds. Each wagon could hold 25 tons and if you add on the water wagon, (not including hay, grain and other provisions), these great mule teams would pull 60,000 pounds! The mules used were selected for their intelligence and were trained to answer to their names.

The driver or "skinner" rode the "nigh-wheel" (left hand) mule and gave the mules commands by shouting orders, calling the mules by name, and by means of a long "jerk" line. This "jerk" line ran through rings on the harness of the nigh animals up to the leaders and was approximately 120 feet long. If the "skinner" wanted the team to turn left he would give a steady pull on the line and to turn right he would give the line a jerk. Hence the name "jerk" line.

The "skinner" who drove the 20 Mule Borax Team into Norwich was Bill Parkinson and he was known as "Borax Bill". He was one of the best drivers and had done tours through 21 states in three years.

Local History: Twenty-Mule Borax Team Comes to Norwich, N.Y.

Others that were with the visiting mule train were, "Tarrantula Pete", who gave the lectures. The driver's assistant, who was called a "swamper", had numerous duties to perform. Some of those duties were walking along the mules when going up grades, operating the brake on the rear wagon on down grades. When in camp, he would assist in unhooking, un-harnessing, and feeding the mules.

He then would attend to the gathering fuel for fire, cooked the meals and washed the dishes.

This grand mule team drove into Norwich at noon on Wednesday, October 8, 1919 and stopped in front of H. D. Gregory's grocery store at 58 North Broad Street. "Borax Bill" was to demonstrate

turning the mule team and "Tarrantula Pete" gave the lectures on Borax and handed out samples to those in the crowd. The two wagons were filled with 20,000 samples along with the water wagon, for a total of 20 tons to be pulled by the mule team; a good 40,000 pounds less than if they hauled mined borax. Even with a lighter load the mule team was still only able to travel 15 - 20 miles a day.

The following day they were to head out to Cortland and would arrive there on Friday. From there they would go to Rochester and then to Buffalo. From Buffalo the team was to be shipped south for the winter.

The Otis A. Thompson Local History Room has on display a model of the 20 Mule Borax Team, courtesy of Gail Merian.

We also have a slightly older Borax box along with articles that appeared in The Norwich Sun advertising the Mule team and their visit to Norwich.

In the same display case on the top shelf we have artifacts from the J. M. Lucas Liquor Store. The jug was donated by a grandson, Leslie Lucas, and a glass bottle, recently donated by Richard Fahey.

For those coming in to look at the display cases no registration will be required. If however, you decide to look around at books or want to do research, signing in and a photo I.D. are mandatory requirements.

Come in and enjoy some unusual history!



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A special Thank You to the contributors to this issue

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