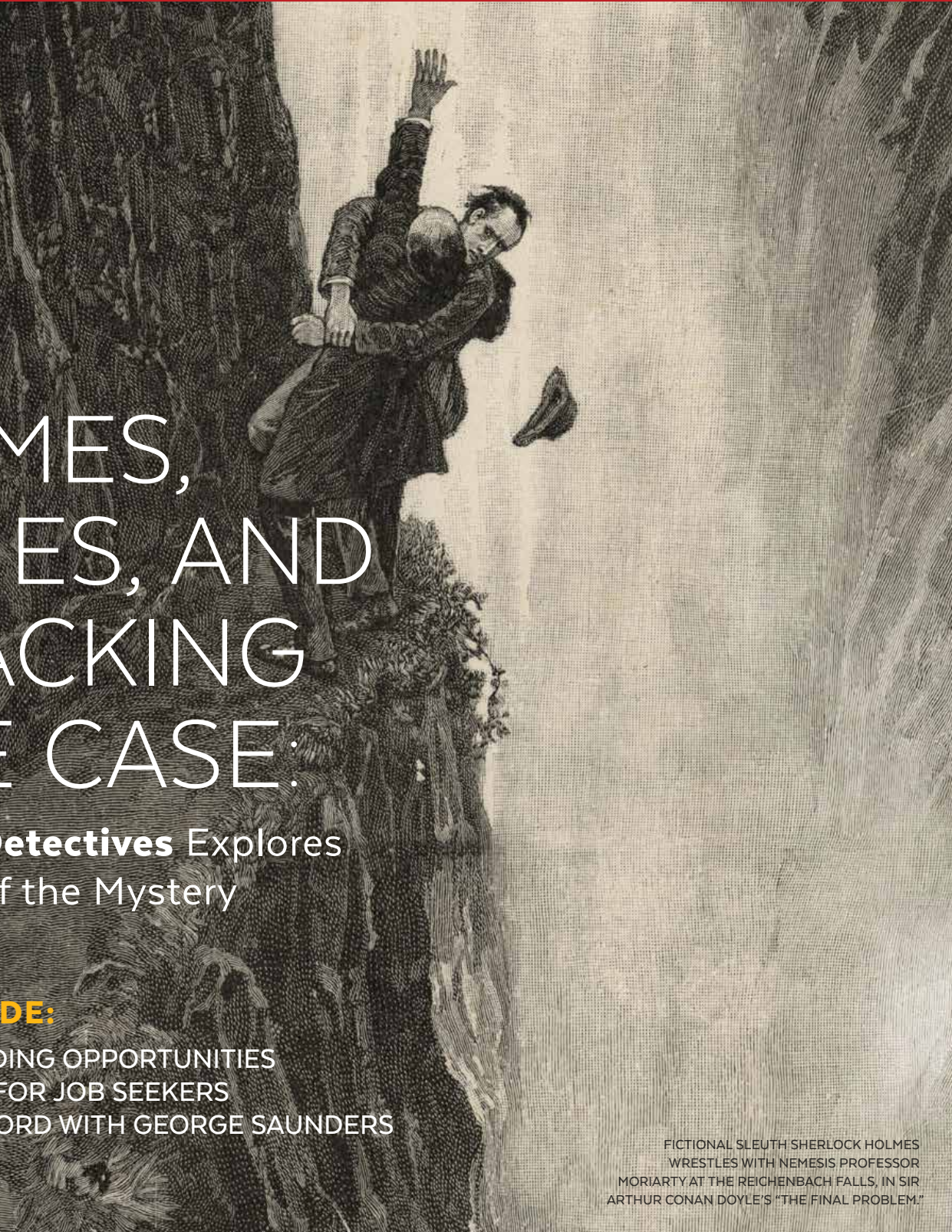


VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 2

SPRING 2017

OFF *the* SHELF

A MAGAZINE FROM THE FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA



CRIMES, CLUES, AND CRACKING THE CASE:

We the Detectives Explores
the Art of the Mystery

ALSO INSIDE:

UNIQUE LENDING OPPORTUNITIES
RESOURCES FOR JOB SEEKERS
THE FINAL WORD WITH GEORGE SAUNDERS

FICTIONAL SLEUTH SHERLOCK HOLMES
WRESTLES WITH NEMESIS PROFESSOR
MORIARTY AT THE REICHENBACH FALLS, IN SIR
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S "THE FINAL PROBLEM."

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Dr. Willie Parker

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Misty Copeland

Ballerina Body: Dancing and Eating Your Way to a Lighter, Stronger, and More Graceful You

APR 25 · 7:30 PM

TICKET REQUIRED

David Grann

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI

APR 26 · 7:00 PM

TICKET REQUIRED

Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant

Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy

VENUE: IRVINE AUDITORIUM, 3401 SPRUCE ST.

APR 27 · 7:30 PM

TICKET REQUIRED

David Callahan

The Givers: Wealth, Power, and Philanthropy in a New Gilded Age

MAY 2 · 7:30 PM

TICKET REQUIRED

Richard Ford

Between Them: Remembering My Parents

MAY 4 · 7:30 PM

TICKET REQUIRED

Gabourey Sidibe

This Is Just My Face: Try Not to Stare

MAY 9 · 7:30 PM

FREE

Jo Nesbø

The Thirst: A Harry Hole Novel

MAY 18 · 7:30 PM

FREE

Dennis Lehane

Since We Fell

OFF *the* SHELF

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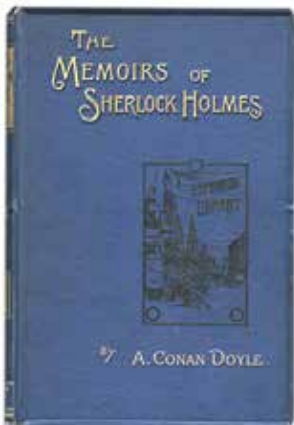
OFF THE SHELF

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Off the Shelf is published twice annually for supporters of the Free Library of Philadelphia and showcases the Library's educational, economic, and cultural contributions to the region.

ON THE COVER AND BELOW:

THE MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 1894, IS A COLLECTION OF 11 "ADVENTURES" OF THE GREAT DETECTIVE. THE COLLECTION CONCLUDED WITH "THE FINAL PROBLEM," IN WHICH HOLMES SEEMINGLY FALLS TO HIS DEATH.



FROM THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Spring 2017 issue of *Off the Shelf*! We're excited to highlight for you some of our most fresh and exciting initiatives here at the Free Library of Philadelphia.

We've been especially hard at work preparing for the launch of **We the Detectives**, two simultaneous exhibitions and a series of live performances. Here you'll read about how our teams in the Rare Book Department and the Rosenbach are mounting exhibitions exploring the history of the true crime and detective genres, strengthening the bonds between our collections, and fostering a cohesive customer experience. As part of **We the Detectives**, we're partnering for the first time with New Paradise Laboratories, an innovative theater company that will bring an immersive theatrical experience to the Parkway Central Library, exposing our customers to the theatrical arts like never before.

In these pages you will also read about our expanded view of our role as a lending library. Of course we'll always be here to lend you a classic novel or the hottest DVD, but today, customers can also take home everything from ukuleles to neckties from the Free Library's collections!

You'll also learn about the new ways in which we're expanding our career services throughout our 54-location system, ensuring that all Philadelphians have the skills and resources they need to find a new job or a better one. And as ever, we're bringing you a fabulous author interview in *The Final Word*, featuring George Saunders.

There's always something unique and unexpected waiting for you at the Free Library, whether you meet us in one of our neighborhood locations, online at freelibrary.org, or out in the community where we're making an impact every day. Be sure to visit us this spring!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Siobhan A. Reardon'.

Siobhan A. Reardon
PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR



PHOTO BY JON ROEMER

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news AND NOTES

KARA CHICKSON VERGHESE, MELINDA PREVITERA, JOE PREVITERA, AND SUBHASH VERGHESE



PARKWAY CENTRAL LIBRARY'S GRAND LOBBY



MARK AND TOBEY DICHTER



JIM AND SIOBHAN REARDON WITH GREG REDDEN



MIRIAM AND ARTHUR SPECTOR



NYASIA MCGILL WITH AUCTIONEER STEVE KATZ



SHARON LESHNER, CHRIS LOWEN, AND GABI WINICK

More than the usual suspects turned out for a madcap evening of mystery, mayhem, and merriment at **Whodunnit? A Gumshoe Gala**, all in support of the beloved Free Library of Philadelphia.

WE EXTEND HEARTFELT THANKS

to the William B. Dietrich Foundation, which, under the guidance of Board of Trustees member John Soroko, generously donated \$1 million for the renovation of the Grand Staircase in the Parkway Central Library, as part of the *Building Inspiration: 21st Century Libraries Initiative*.

AROUND THE SYSTEM

- 1 Former *One Book, One Philadelphia* featured authors (from left) Christina Baker Kline, Lorene Cary, James McBride, Carlos Eire, and Steve Lopez discussed their methods of creating memorable characters and narratives, as part of the 2017 *One Book, One Philadelphia* Kickoff event.
- 2 Congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis visited Cecil B. Moore Library with Mayor Jim Kenney to speak with area students about civic engagement.



- 3 During the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, volunteers and young readers helped to build bookcases to place in Read by 4th-sponsored book nooks, mini-libraries located in small businesses like nail salons, laundromats, and barbershops with furniture provided by IKEA and reading materials donated by Scholastic.
- 4 Third-grade students prepared ingredients to make quick-pickled vegetables as part of the Culinary Literacy Center's Nourishing Literacy program.

CUSTOMER CORNER BARRY DAVIS



Barry Davis grew up in West Philadelphia near Blanche A. Nixon/Cobbs Creek Library. In his elementary and middle school years, he retreated to the library every day after school to hide away and read. Barry doesn't remember ever checking out a book. Instead, he would take one—most likely a mystery, like *Nancy Drew* or *Encyclopedia Brown*—from the shelf, read it, return it, and continue where he left off the next day.

"I'd sit there and read to the point where I'd lose track of time," he said. His mom or brother would retrieve him when it was time for dinner.

As he grew up, Barry held on to his love for reading and also developed a passion for writing. He stood out in his engineering program at the University of Pennsylvania for enrolling in many language arts classes, but he ultimately pushed aside his literary interests to focus on his career in telecommunications. However, he returned to writing fiction with a more serious intent at age 40, and that pursuit quickly turned into his priority.

"My work in telecommunications became just a job. It was no longer a career," he said. "My love of writing really became the central professional focus of my life."

Barry's writing focuses on issues of race, violence, and history. He aims to produce work like that of crime writer Walter Mosley, whose stories are plot-driven but not without a message. Barry has now self-published eight novels and three short-story collections on Amazon, where his readers submit rave reviews.

It was Amazon that recently brought him back to Cobbs Creek Library after not having visited in decades. The company planned to profile Barry in a video and wanted to shoot the footage in a place of significance to him, one that would highlight his background as a writer. For Barry, the library was an easy choice.

"Cobbs Creek Library ignited in me a love of books and reading. It really aided my parents in terms of drawing out in me a desire to get an education," he explained. "I wouldn't be a writer if it wasn't for Cobbs Creek."

HIDDEN GEMS

“The Murders in the Rue Morgue”

Move over, London.

England’s capital city may count Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot among its resident gumshoes, but only Philadelphia can be called the true birthplace of the modern detective tale.

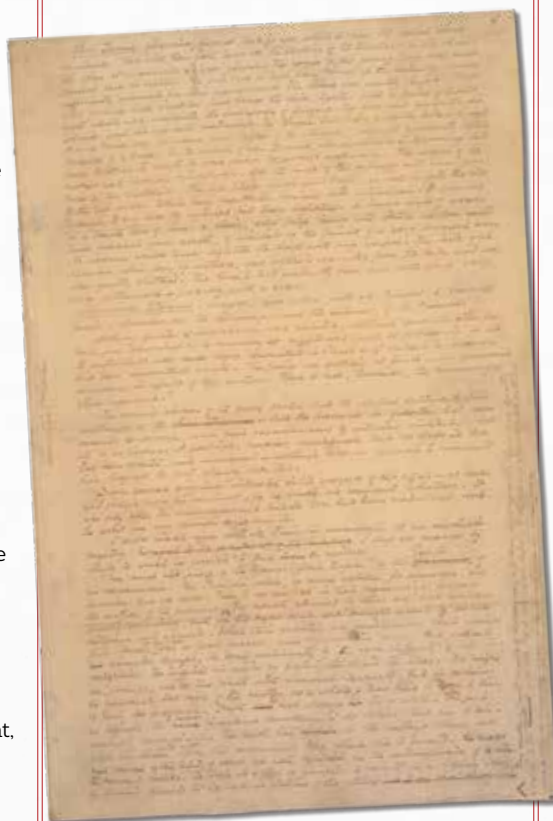
Long recognized as the first detective story of its kind, Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” was written when the author lived in Philadelphia and was first published in the city’s *Graham’s Magazine* in 1841. This story follows detective C. Auguste Dupin as he picks his way through a puzzling double-homicide in Paris. And though the tale may come to an improbable conclusion—which we will leave readers to discover on their own—it set the stage for a generation of mystery writers to run with and perfect the construct.

Today, Poe’s handwritten manuscript for this caper lives in the Parkway Central Library’s Rare Book Department, and pages of “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” will be on display in both that department and the Rosenbach as part of the Library’s **We the Detectives** initiative (see page 8). The manuscript and story also provide the backbone for *GUMSHOE*, the theatrical component of **We the Detectives**, produced by New Paradise Laboratories.

Curator Karin Suni points to now-common tropes found in the story to highlight its impact on the creation of the detective genre: the brilliant amateur detective, the first-person narration, and Dupin’s use of deductive reasoning to reach his conclusion.

HIDDEN GEM

#42



EDGAR ALLAN POE, AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT SIGNED OF “THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE.” PHILADELPHIA, 1841. COURTESY OF THE COLONEL RICHARD GIMBEL COLLECTION OF EDGAR ALLAN POE MATERIALS, RARE BOOK DEPARTMENT.

THE PAGES OF THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF EDGAR ALLAN POE’S “THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE” SHOW EVIDENCE OF HAVING SURVIVED THREE FIRES, AND OTHER TRAVAILS, BEFORE BEING RESCUED FROM A TRASH BIN.

One stark difference between “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” and more current tales?

“Poe wasn’t playing fair,” says Suni, stating that readers could not have guessed the unlikely outcome on their own, something today’s bookworms demand.

Perhaps just as intriguing as the history of the story is the provenance of the manuscript itself.

The rare gem was first retrieved from a trash bin at the printer’s office in Philadelphia, only to be tossed and rescued again during the new owner’s move. It miraculously survived two fires in that owner’s office before avoiding major smoke damage from a neighbor’s subsequent, though unrelated, fire. Several years later, the manuscript once more found its way into a trash bin, rescued at last by a neighbor whose keen eyes spotted it.

“This manuscript is so fascinating for so many reasons. Beyond the fact that it’s a Poe manuscript and a complete Poe manuscript actually used for publication, [there] is the object itself and the evidence of what it survived,” says Suni, noting that one can still observe slight smoke and water stains on the pages. “I just think there’s a bit of magic in it!”

VISITORS CAN VIEW PAGES FROM “THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE” MANUSCRIPT IN THE RARE BOOK DEPARTMENT’S BECOMING THE DETECTIVE: THE MAKING OF A GENRE AND THE ROSENBACH’S CLEVER CRIMINALS AND DARING DETECTIVES, BOTH OF WHICH ARE PART OF THE **WE THE DETECTIVES** INITIATIVE. TO LEARN MORE, VISIT FREELIBRARY.ORG/DETECTIVES.

FOCUS ON

UNIQUE LENDING

LIBRARY ASSISTANT OMELIO ALEXANDER DISPLAYS JUST SOME OF THE TIES AVAILABLE FOR CHECKOUT FROM PASCHALVILLE LIBRARY.



A BAKER BROWSES THROUGH DOZENS OF CAKE PANS TO PLAN CONFECTIONARY CREATIONS OF HER WILDEST IMAGINATION. MEANWHILE, A MAN CHOOSES THE PERFECT TIE FROM MORE THAN 60 TO WEAR TO HIS GRADUATION. ELSEWHERE, A MUSICIAN SLATED TO PLAY A WEDDING GIG PICKS OUT AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR FROM A BATCH OF 25 OTHER INSTRUMENTS.

ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT SEEM LIKE THESE PEOPLE ARE IN A DEPARTMENT STORE, THEY'RE ACTUALLY AT THE FREE LIBRARY!

It's well-known that a Free Library card comes with access to books, DVDs, and audiobooks—but cardholders can also check out neckties from Paschalville Library's Tiebrary, cake pans from McPherson Square Library, and musical instruments from the Musical Instrument Collection at Parkway Central Library! These items can be borrowed over a lending period of three weeks, just like any other material.

"At the Free Library, our core belief is access," says Perry Genovesi of the Music Department. "We have this place where you don't have to have money to be able to use a resource or learn something."

These collections certainly attract interest from people who might not be able to afford the items otherwise, as well as from those who want to try something new without an investment—and, most importantly, with related guidance and resources at their fingertips. Checking out a football-shaped baking pan or a banjo is definitely a novelty, but these items do not exist as one-offs. Instead, they are natural extensions of the resources and services the Free Library already offers. Bakers can borrow cookbooks with their cake pans. Musicians—from beginners learning the basics to the experienced who want to expand their skills—may haul an armload of sheet music home with a mandolin or ukulele. And when a job seeker looks at a tie, he won't simply be sent on his way:

"It's more than just 'here's a tie,'" says Niema Nelson, Digital Resource Specialist. "We're dedicated to helping job seekers succeed."

The Tiebrary is an integrated part of Paschalville's Job Readiness Center, where customers can learn how to write a résumé, fill out a job application, prepare for an interview, or apply for a green card.

As all three of these unique collections grow in selection and in capacity, librarians are planning programs around the collections and in conjunction with other departments. Nelson has already facilitated demonstrations on how to tie neckties, and Genovesi envisions a Musical Instrument Collection collaboration with the Culinary Literacy Center, combining food and sounds from world cultures. In the meantime, other borrowing ideas are brewing—like bird-watching binoculars and blood-pressure cuffs. Stay tuned!



MUSIC DEPARTMENT LIBRARIAN PERRY GENOVESI STANDS BEFORE A DISPLAY OF STRING INSTRUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR CHECKOUT.

CRIMES, CLUES, AND CRACKING THE CASE:

We the Detectives Explores
the Art of the Mystery

THE SCENE: A grand country manor, winter. An unexpected blizzard bears down on the small gathering of well-heeled acquaintances shuttered inside. The butler is found dead in his quarters. Everyone seems to have an alibi ... and also a reason to have committed the crime.

OR, PERHAPS: A grisly apartment block on the wrong side of the tracks. A bruised body is found slumped in the stairwell. An accident? Or something more sinister? Nobody is talking, but everybody seems to know something.

THE HISTORY OF MYSTERY:

A BY-NO-
MEANS-
EXHAUSTIVE
TIMELINE

1841

Widely considered to be the first story of its kind, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" is published in Philadelphia. *Read more about the unique history of the manuscript on page 6, and come check it out in person as part of **We the Detectives!***

1887

Sherlock Holmes makes his debut in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "A Study in Scarlet," ushering in an era of mysteries.

1920

Dame Agatha Christie publishes *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, her first of more than 80 cozy mysteries that follow the exploits of Belgian sleuth Hercule Poirot and crime-solving spinster Jane Marple, among others.

1920

Pulp magazine *Black Mask* launches in the United States, catapulting the careers of hardboiled mystery writers Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, and Erle Stanley Gardner.

WE THE DETECTIVES

Mysteries have captured the minds of millions of readers since 1841, when Edgar Allan Poe published “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” which featured C. Auguste Dupin, the world’s first modern fictional detective. Whether it’s the thrill of the puzzle, the intrigue of the setting, or the ever-brilliant sleuth spearheading the search, we all seem to love a good whodunnit and the chance to crack the case ourselves.

This spring and summer, the Free Library of Philadelphia is offering visitors the ultimate chance to explore the mystery genre and crack a whole new type of case through **We the Detectives**, a unique, multifaceted, and immersive intellectual and creative experience, made possible by a generous grant from the William Penn Foundation.

Combining art and mystery to explore the art of the mystery, **We the Detectives** features two concurrent exhibitions, hosted at the Parkway Central Library and the Rosenbach, that examine the growth of the genre—including the original manuscript of Poe’s trailblazing story (see page 6)—plus a revolutionary theatrical and mobile performance presented by New Paradise Laboratories.

“The Free Library is a place that encourages new and innovative ways of thinking,” says Ingrid Heim, **We the Detectives** Project Manager. “These aren’t your typical rare book exhibitions or your typical theater performances. We hope that **We the Detectives** will inspire our audiences by having them experience something not usually encountered at the library.”

THIS BROADSIDE, RECOUNTING NEW YORK CRIMES OF 1847, WOULD HAVE BEEN PRINTED CHEAPLY AND DISTRIBUTED BY STREET HAWKERS. THE CRIMINALS DEPICTED HERE INCLUDE BURGLARS, CON MEN, PICKPOCKETS, AND MURDERERS.

Carrier’s address of the National Police Gazette, January 1, 1848. New York, 1848. Rosenbach, AN 848n.

THE MYSTERY OF DROOD WAS DEEPEENED WHEN DICKENS DIED HALFWAY THROUGH ITS WRITING, LEAVING UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS. FRUSTRATED READERS HUNTED FOR THEIR OWN CLUES, SCOURING EVERY DETAIL FOR HINTS OF THE INTENDED OUTCOME.

Charles Dickens (1812–1870), *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1870. Rosenbach, EL3 .D548m 870.



CLEVER CRIMINALS & DARING DETECTIVES

At the Rosenbach, *Clever Criminals and Daring Detectives* traces the cat-and-mouse game that criminals and detectives have played in history and literature from the 1600s to the 1900s.

From Poe to Dickens to Doyle, many authors were fascinated by real-life detectives and modeled their heroes on historical figures. Visitors can explore these connections between fact and fiction as they examine an original Sherlock Holmes manuscript, letters from Ellery Queen, and the earliest account of an American multiple murder. They can even try their hand at solving a mystery.

1927

Young readers get in on the game with the start of the popular series *The Hardy Boys*, created by Edward Stratemeyer and published under the pseudonym Franklin W. Dixon. Nancy Drew—also a creation of Stratemeyer—solves her first case in 1930.

1929

Ellery Queen—the pen name of cousins and co-writers Manfred B. Lee and Frederic Dannay—publish *The Roman Hat Mystery* and go on to write more than 30 books over the next four decades.

1935

London publisher Allen Lane begins publishing paperback books called “Penguins.” Mystery novels skyrocket in popularity due to this new affordable and accessible format.

1939

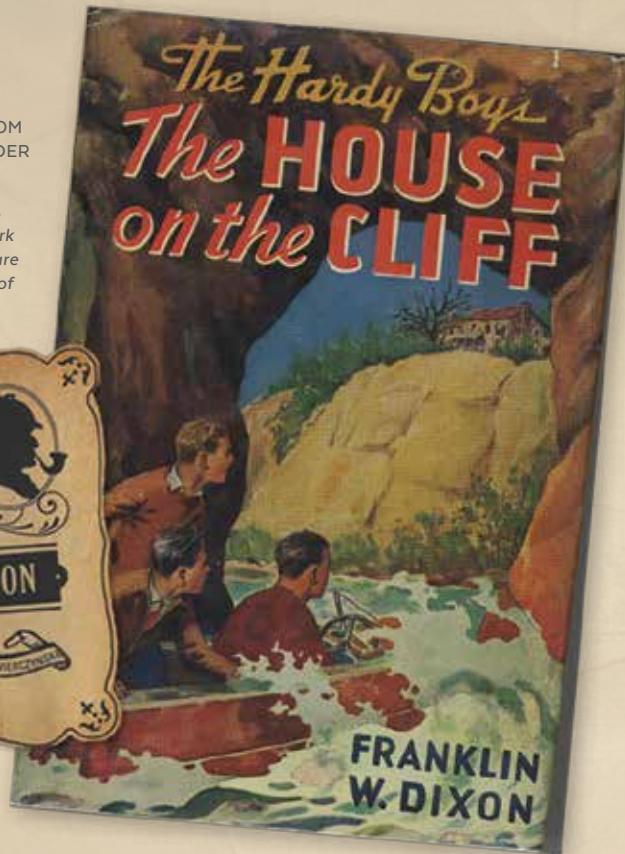
Across the pond in New York City, Simon & Schuster starts the paperback “Pocket Books” line.

1949

It was Professor Plum in the conservatory with the knife! The board game *Clue* launches, inspiring kitchen-table sleuths worldwide.

BELOW IS A PORTION OF THE COVER OF AN INTERACTIVE BOOK IN WHICH DR. WATSON PROVIDES CLUES FROM HIS PRISON CELL SO THE READER CAN CLEAR HIS NAME.

Duane Swierczynski, *The Crimes of Dr. Watson*. Philadelphia: Quirk Books, 2007. Courtesy of the Rare Book Department, Free Library of Philadelphia



TO THE LEFT IS A 1945 EDITION OF THE SECOND TITLE IN THE HARDY BOYS SERIES, FEATURING COVER ART BY A. O. SCOTT. THE FIRST EDITION WAS PUBLISHED IN 1927.

Franklin W. Dixon, *The House on the Cliff*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1945. Courtesy of the Children's Literature Research Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia

"Detective stories are so much a part of popular culture that I thought it would be a nice way to expand the kinds of materials we show—by including more items from the Theatre Collection, the Children's Literature Research Collection, and even the Fiction Resource Collection—and also to partner with the Rosenbach to present the big picture of our culture's fascination with crime and detectives," says Karin Suni, librarian and curator of the Free Library's Theatre Collection.

"It takes a bit of sleuthing when you create an exhibition from a wide variety of collections. You have to really search around and then also evaluate the materials you find to see

if they fit, much like seeing if a particular clue is relevant or is just a red herring. And sometimes you find items that open up whole new avenues to talk about the subject in ways you hadn't necessarily thought of, just like a detective chases down a new lead."

Many people who come to the Free Library or the Rosenbach reasonably expect to encounter exhibitions of literary material. But a key element of mystery is the unexpected, like an important clue coming from an unlikely source or a twist in a case that makes the sleuth—and the reader—re-examine everything she or he thought to be true.

BECOMING THE DETECTIVE THE MAKING OF A GENRE

Becoming the Detective: The Making of a Genre, on display in the Rare Book Department's William B. Dietrich Gallery at the Parkway Central Library, examines how mysteries came to capture the imaginations of generations of readers.

The exhibition goes beyond the page, exploring detective stories in stage productions, radio broadcasts, film, television, and even board games like *Clue*. Visitors can look at Poe's manuscript, movie posters of Sherlock Holmes, first editions of *The Hardy Boys*, and more. Both exhibitions are on view April 8 through September 1, 2017.

1952

"Bond, James Bond." The notorious spy introduces himself to the world in Ian Fleming's *Casino Royale*.

1957

Perry Mason first appears on television, perhaps the most enduring of the detectives who make the leap from page to screen throughout this post-war decade.

1962

P. D. James debuts investigator and poet Adam Dalgliesh of New Scotland Yard in *Cover Her Face*.

1963

MI-6 spy David John Moore Cornwell (you may know him as John le Carré) publishes *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*. After its success, le Carré chills out and retires from espionage to write full time.

1969

Zoinks! *Scooby-Doo* debuts, striking fear into the hearts of ramshackle amusement-park-owners-dressed-as-ghosts everywhere.

GUMSHOE

A NEW PARADISE LABORATORIES PRODUCTION



EXPERIENCE GUMSHOE OUTSIDE LIVE PERFORMANCE TIMES USING YOUR MOBILE PHONE.

Got 45–60 minutes? Start in Parkway Central Library's Grand Lobby with your mobile phone and text the keyword **FULLSHOE** to the number 215-GUMTHAT (215-486-8428). Follow the secret prompts.

Got 20–30 minutes? Start in Parkway Central Library's Grand Lobby with your mobile phone and text the keyword **SHORTSHOE** to the number 215-GUMTHAT (215-486-8428). Follow the secret prompts.

Data and messaging rates may apply.

Faithful to this convention of the genre, in an unprecedented collaboration between the Free Library and New Paradise Laboratories, the Parkway Central Library will also transform into an immersive theatrical space through *GUMSHOE*, a performance investigating the never-ending struggle between fact and fiction.

A twist on the notions of what a performance can be and what a library can do, *GUMSHOE* carries participants into an expedition through the underbelly of the building, blending half-truths and bald-faced lies to get to the bottom of a crime (that may not, in fact, be a crime).

"We couldn't concoct a more interesting setting for an immersive audience experience," says Whit MacLaughlin, Artistic Director of New Paradise Laboratories. "The building is the central character. Think of the library as a vault that contains much of what marks human efforts to remain human. It's a receptacle for our dreams, accomplishments, curiosities, difficulties, and memories. It's a container filled with surprises, both hidden from view and standing in plain sight."

GUMSHOE audiences will be led throughout Parkway Central by a series of clues provided by guides who may be acting a little ... peculiar. Performances will run from April 8 through May 7, 2017. And for those who can't make it to a live performance, you can text a special number from your mobile phone to receive a series of messages and calls that will entice you through the labyrinth—a true 21st-century spin on this 19th-century genre.

Like Holmes and Watson, sleuths work best when they work together to solve mysteries. And the unexpected pairings often prove to be the most fruitful. "New Paradise Laboratories and the Free Library

of Philadelphia enhance each other's capabilities by encouraging each organization's willingness to adapt," says MacLaughlin. "It's an unusual venture for both organizations that allows each to flex its muscles in new and invigorating ways. [New Paradise's] outside-the-box sensibility has meshed well with the traditions that propel the mission of the Free Library: curiosity, intellect, and civic-mindedness."

Free Library President and Director Siobhan A. Reardon concurs:

"We the Detectives is a phenomenal example of what can be achieved through innovation and collaboration. The Free Library and the Rosenbach preserve thousands of rare, historic items. At the same time, we serve as vibrant community hubs where ideas can blossom into action. In collaboration with New Paradise Laboratories, we're bringing our rare items to life through art and inviting the whole community to enjoy the immersive and brain-bending results. We are incredibly grateful to the William Penn Foundation for its support of this groundbreaking endeavor."

For full details about *We the Detectives*, including *GUMSHOE* performance listings, visit freelibrary.org/detectives.

1970s

Columbo, *The Rockford Files*, *Kojak*, *Charlie's Angels*, *The Mod Squad* ... need we say more? Also, James Patterson publishes his first of 147 (so far!) novels.

1980s

On the page, Kinsey Millhone, Sue Grafton's famous private investigator, starts working her way through the alphabet with *A is for Alibi*. She's still cracking on to this day, having made it to X in 2015. Onscreen, we meet Jessica Fletcher, a contemporary Miss Marple from Maine, in *Murder, She Wrote*.

1990s

Dun dunnn ... *Law & Order* premieres, kicking off two-and-a-half decades of spinoffs and cementing itself as a permanent TV fixture. Walter Mosley publishes the first of his famed Easy Rawlins mysteries, *Devil in a Blue Dress*.

2000s

Published posthumously, Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* becomes an international bestseller. Veronica Mars, a high school student and private investigator, inspires a new generation of plucky, clever young women.

2010s

Carrying the "hit-mysteries-with-girl-in-the-title" torch, Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* becomes an international bestseller despite (because of?) its two very unlikable main characters. Benedict Cumberbatch breathes new life into Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's beloved detective in the BBC hit *Sherlock*.

from the **NEIGHBORHOODS**

••• BY JENNIFER DONSKY


FIND YOUR FIRST JOB, NEW JOB, OR NEXT JOB AT THE FREE LIBRARY!

There must be some people who enjoy searching for a new job or career, but for many, the pursuit is filled with stressful uncertainty. Now imagine that you need to find a job and also don't have a computer or internet access. Perhaps you haven't sought new work in a while and don't know where employers advertise positions now that the classifieds in newspapers have become so thin. Or maybe you have a gap in your work history and don't know how to explain it on a résumé.

All of these scenarios are very familiar to Brandon Waddington, Free Library Digital Resource Specialist (DRS). Brandon runs the Laptop Lab at Nicetown Library and assists about a dozen job seekers each and every day. Launched in June 2016, the Lab features five laptops that allow users to connect to the Library's many electronic resources, including Winway Résumé, which Brandon finds extremely useful when working with library customers.

Winway Résumé allows users to choose templates of both résumés and cover letters from within given professions and then customize them.

He estimates that nearly three-quarters of his clients lack a current résumé or email address—both of which are imperative to a successful job search—and spends a large



A BROAD ARRAY OF
JOB WORKSHOPS
AND SEMINARS HELP
PHILADELPHIANS
GAIN VALUABLE
JOB-SEARCH AND
CAREER SKILLS.



portion of his time helping people create the documents they need. Another Laptop Lab can be found alternately at Bustleton and Torresdale libraries in Northeast Philadelphia.

Based in a different part of Philadelphia but meeting similar needs is DRS Niema Nelson of Paschalville Library. This community in the southwest part of the city is plagued by a chronically high unemployment rate and, concurrently, a lack of services. These were two of the factors that led to the collaboration of the Job Readiness Labs at Paschalville Library and nearby Southwest Community Development Corporation (CDC). Under an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant, staff at the two facilities have been working closely to plan services and programming in a shared model that has been adopted by 10 additional local organizations. At the heart of the common agenda is enhancing services for job seekers.

The Free Library is delighted to offer these specialized job-seeking services. Our “regular” staff helps create outstanding outcomes, too. When Doris Pico visited the Tacony Library and Arts Building for the first time in October, she was still residing in Miami, Florida. In town to see her cousin, she wanted to brush up on computer skills, with the hope of changing occupations after decades in the workforce. Not only did Ms. Pico get to practice computing at the library, but she also met kind and accommodating staff who guided her in a job search. Lo and behold, a job offer at Shop Rite arrived, followed by a management position at Auto Zone. Now a resident of Philadelphia and hard at work, Ms. Pico credits her recent successes to the library and the helpful staff at Tacony.

Whether job seekers are looking for their first, new, or next job, the Free Library is here to provide guidance and resources to help build careers.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: NIEMA NELSON

PASCHALVILLE LIBRARY
DIGITAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST

How did you get started working for the Free Library?

I had been a volunteer for my neighborhood library in Colorado Springs on and off throughout middle school and high school. When I moved to Philadelphia, I originally applied for a clerk position with the City. Once I was on the clerk list, I was called for an interview for a part-time library assistant position at Parkway Central, and I jumped at the chance to work for the Free Library.

What do you enjoy most about your current role as Digital Resource Specialist at Paschalville Library?

I most enjoy the freedom to implement my ideas and seeing the impact on people’s lives daily. Often, people come in who are long-term unemployed and very discouraged. I see them find confidence in a new skill they learned or an interview they aced because of a few hours at the library.

How do the Job Readiness Labs (at Paschalville Library and Southwest CDC) positively impact customers?

The Job Readiness Labs bring an access point for many customers to services that will help them find employment and conquer some common obstacles in their way. We are a friendly face that can assist them in finding jobs and learning new skills, refer them to resources in the community they were unaware of, and provide a bit of encouragement. It can make all the difference.

If you could have lunch with any author living or dead, who would it be and why?

That’s a tough one for me. I would have to choose Leslie Esdaile Banks, also known as L. A. Banks. I absolutely love studying mythology and theology, and she incorporated so much in her paranormal/fantasy series. I would love to hear about her research, inspiration, and travels. She passed less than a year after I started working for the Free Library, and I hoped to meet her (Leslie was a Philadelphian and board member) and let her know how much she inspired me as a writer and a person.

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THE FINAL WORD

WITH GEORGE SAUNDERS

TO LISTEN TO FREE, DOWNLOADABLE PODCASTS FEATURING GEORGE SAUNDERS, VISIT [FREELIBRARY.ORG/AUTHOREVENTS](https://freelibrary.org/authorevents).

George Saunders, a MacArthur Genius and one of *TIME* magazine's 100 most influential people, is the author of several collections of short stories, including the *New York Times* notable books *Pastoralia* and *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline*, Story Prize finalist *In Persuasion Nation*, and National Book Award finalist *Tenth of December*. Known for his surreal, darkly funny fiction, Saunders tells "just the kinds of stories we need to get us through these times," according to novelist Thomas Pynchon. Saunders's latest work—and his first novel—is *Lincoln in the Bardo*, a tale of the 16th president's son's death and his bizarre purgatorial afterlife. The writer Zadie Smith calls it "a masterpiece."

OTS WHAT ROLE HAVE LIBRARIES PLAYED IN YOUR LIFE? WHAT ROLE DO YOU THINK THEY PLAY IN OUR 21ST-CENTURY WORLD?

GS This may sound a little dramatic but my writing trajectory changed forever in the Chicago Public Library. I was trying to figure out what contemporary fiction was all about and at that time a library was the one place you could find literary journals. In one of these (*Antaeus*) I found "Hot Ice" by Stuart Dybek and that was it for me—I knew contemporary fiction could be a vital, moral force in the world. And that's what libraries will always do: be a place where the world's great knowledge is physically stored, and where serendipity is possible.

OTS LINCOLN IN THE BARDO IS YOUR FIRST NOVEL. WHAT COMPELLED YOU TO WRITE A NOVEL AT THIS POINT IN YOUR SUCCESSFUL CAREER? HOW DID THE PROCESS OF WRITING IT COMPARE TO WRITING SHORT STORIES, NOVELLAS, OR NARRATIVE NONFICTION?

GS It was really just this particular material, which turned out (it came to feel) required that form. I honestly had pretty much given up on writing a novel, was perfectly content with that ... and then this material arrived. Or, I should say, it became undeniably urgent, after hanging around in my head for about 20 years. As far as the process, it wasn't really all that different—like a car mechanic suddenly starting to work on an airplane engine. Wait, I guess that is pretty different But in this case, the approach really was very similar and had to do with doing lots of revising. The one nice thing was, I had really strong opinions about the book—could tell if a new bit was working or not.

OTS LINCOLN IN THE BARDO IS, AT ITS CORE, A GHOST STORY. HAVE YOU HAD ANY ENCOUNTERS WITH GHOSTS? IF NOT, WHICH LITERARY OR HISTORICAL GHOSTS WOULD YOU BE KEEN TO INTERACT WITH AND WHY?

GS I've had one, but I think I'll keep that to myself. I wouldn't mind meeting Gogol's ghost, so I could ask for some writing tips. Well, Gogol's ghost and the ghost of a Russian translator.

OTS YOUR PROSE IS CHARACTERIZED BY COLLOQUIAL PHRASES, HUMOR, AND ABSURDISM—EVEN WHEN THE TONE IS GENERALLY MELANCHOLY. WHAT DRAWS YOU TO THIS LANGUAGE?

GS Flannery O'Connor said something like, "A man can choose what he writes but he can't choose what he makes live." I think that's why I gravitate to that kind of language—I feel I can get some heat going with it. That's how writing works, I think: First we do what we can make live, and then we find philosophical or thematic rationales afterward. It doesn't mean these aren't valid—it just means they aren't causative. That's been my experience anyway.

OTS TO YOU, THE FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA IS ALSO THE FREE LIBRARY OF ____ . WHY?

GS It is also the Free Library of Providing Such Means Necessary to Expand the Souls of Those Who Enter Therein. Why? Because all (well, much) of human knowledge is in there, organized and tended by loving hosts. The only limits are the curiosity and energy of the seeker.

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is the shortest way home.”**

—JAMES JOYCE, *ULYSSES*

Bloomsday 2017

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Join us on beautiful Delancey Place for the Rosenbach’s annual Bloomsday celebration, a day-long reading of an unforgettable book that has been called everything from masterfully moving to hilariously obscene. Let professional readers transport you to Dublin in 1904, and follow Leopold Bloom on his journey the longest way round. This event is free and includes admission to the Rosenbach, where James Joyce’s *Ulysses* manuscript will be on view.

