



Ripley Public Library
Bookworm Newsletter
January 2026

Volume 15, Issue 1

Hours of Operation

Monday 10am-5pm
Tuesday 10am-7:30pm
Wednesday 10am-5pm
Thursday 10am-7:30pm
Friday 10am-5pm
Saturday 9am-2pm

Contact Information:
64 W. Main St.
Ripley, NY 14775
716-736-3913
ripleylibrary.org

Ripley Library Board:
John Hamels, Pres
Linda Probst, VP Finance
Karen Gunther, VP
Lori Fisher, Secr
Pat Washburn
Tracy Reslink
Mike Johnston

Library Director:
Molly Harvey
Asst Director:
Stephanie Feiss
Clerk: Annie Donofrio
Bookworm/About Town
Editor: Bill Near
Publisher: Robyn Albright
Media Guru: Linda Probst

Best Friends Welcome You



*May this year bring new happiness, new goals,
new achievements, and a lot of new
inspirations on your life*



Library Board Meeting, Wednesday, January 21st @ 6pm
Best Friends Fund Meeting: Saturday, January 17th @ 12:30pm

Tuesday, January 13th at 6pm

Michelle Henry will give a talk on the **Underground Railroad** and the **Anti-Slavery movement** in Chautauqua County

Michelle, who was Chautauqua County Historian for 23 years, has given numerous talks over the years about events that happened throughout the area.

During February and March Michelle will talk about “Prospect Station: A Love Triangle and a Train Wreck,” and “Annie Oakley Appeared in Chautauqua County Court.”

Michelle is currently a Research Historian for NYS Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation. She is one of only two Registered Historians in the county.

We hope you will join us for these informative topics.



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Like us on FACEBOOK
814-725-4321

New Year, new hobby—come walk & read at the library!



Great news! A treadmill is now available at the library for you! It's a perfect way to stay active while enjoying your favorite books or audiobooks from Libby. This new option allows you to stay active and engaged, making your library experience healthier and more enjoyable. Call or sign up at the library to reserve your space. Come try it out and walk your way through your favorite books!

Director's Notes by Molly Harvey



Hello all!

I hope everyone enjoyed a joyful Christmas and a fantastic start to the New Year! As we welcome 2026, our library's goals are centered around enhancing community engagement, and fostering lifelong learning. There are some exciting new things happening at the library so be sure to stop in and see what we have going on!

Be on the lookout for a survey coming soon that will help us understand what you'd like to see at the library in 2026. Your feedback is important and will help shape the future programs, services, and resources. So please take a few minutes to share your thoughts once the survey is available. We look forward to hearing from you and making the library even better for everyone!

See you at the Ripley Library friends,
Molly Harvey

A Friends Report

Events like painting classes, and the Stuffed Animal Clinic are organized by

Did you know the Best Friends Fund the BFFs.

(BFF) is the behind-the-scenes group that keeps the library functioning? The Bake sales and Soup Thursdays (and BFFs contribute funds for library maintenance this year), and Watch Party materials and equipment, as well as organ-foods are donated by individual Friends throughout the year.

year. Here is just a short list of things that happen because of the work the Friends do:

The Spring Plant Sale and the Annual Holiday Basket Raffle are held with BFF volunteers.

They are a major contributor to the Summer Reading Program. The Reptile

And, the fund-raising the BFFs do also goes to purchase library equipment

like program is funded through the BFFs, as two new computer chairs, and a fog machine as well as the money needed to buy prizes. chine for the Halloween party.

Authors are uncompensated when they come to promote their books, but wonderspeakers like the Paranormal community attention are paid through BFF fund-raising. Without the Best Friends Fund our library could not offer all these wonderful programs to keep our aged. Please think about joining this dynamic group!

From the desk of the Ripley Town Historian

By **Doc Hamels**

Once again, I am working with Dave Bower and we are compiling our third list for Ripley's Hometown Heroes Banners. We are looking for a February cutoff so please submit your paperwork right after the New Year. I am still collecting Ripley family stories of the Revolutionary War Veterans as we approach our country's 250th birthday. Please submit them either in writing to the Town Clerk's office or by email to me directly:


hamels@fairpoint.net

For those of you who might get the family genealogy bug during the cold winter months, a good place to find some interesting information is on the Find a Grave website. Often, you'll find interesting facts that someone posted there as well as parents, spouses, siblings and children. I have used this many times to locate long lost relatives for folks!



The Facebook page, **Ripley Readers Retreat**, sponsored by the Ripley Library, hosts adult readers who discuss their favorite books and encourage others to try out new titles and authors.


Pop in anytime to let us know what you've read. Though known as the Ripley Readers Retreat, it welcomes readers from all over.



VFW Post 2769
 Dave Bower, Commander
 Ripley Town Building
 14 N State Street
 Ripley, NY 14775

Meetings 4th
 Thursday
 10:30a.m.

We love our library



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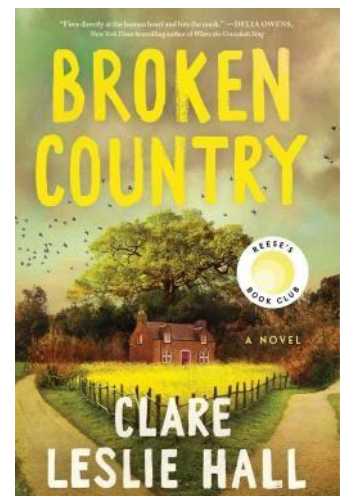
Book Club

Broken Country

By Clare Leslie Hall

Meets the 1st Monday of the month at 5:30pm

Monday, January 5th



What's new, you ask?

Why, POPCORN FRIDAYS! Come on in anytime during library hours and get some free popcorn!

While you're here, if you'd like to donate nonperishable items or personal items (like toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, etc.), you can put them on the FREE Table near the back door.

If you need something from the FREE Table, feel free to take it. No questions asked.



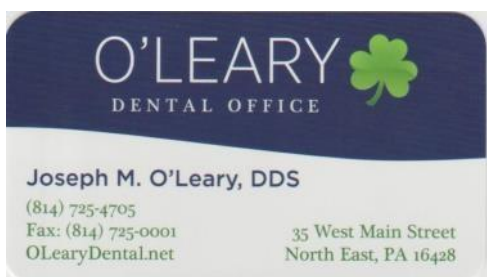
We'd like to acknowledge the following individuals and businesses for their generous donations for our Basket Raffle.

The following donation contributors were inadvertently omitted from last month's Thank You!

Main Street Pizza

Heritage Winery

Johnson Estate Winery



The story of the Hamilton Estate

The following is a multi-part series of an article written by Michael Vogel in 1998 about Ripley's Hamilton Mansion. Interest in this building has never waned in over one hundred years. The story of *The House That Bertha Built* is a fascinating trip down memory lane. Here is **Part 5—Opulence**

Built in the opulence of the pre-depression years, and reflecting a trendy 1920s fashion with things Oriental and Egyptian, the mansion's main rooms were magnificent. Centuries old silk tapestried and huge jade wall plaques lined the Great Hall, where furnishings brought from China by the couple included stands and tables of ebony, cinnabar and lacquer. There was a bronze Buddha on the mantel over a fireplace flanked by tall French doors, which could be screened by heavy mirrored panels that rose soundlessly from the floor at the touch of a button.

The adjoining Egyptian Powder Room reflected the excitement of the recent opening of Tutankhamen's tomb, in ebony sphinx-decorated furnishing set against gold tiled wall and floors. A black and gold throne-like chair covered the toilet fixture in the adjoining lavatory, where guests also would find sandalwood soap and towels with Egyptian designs.

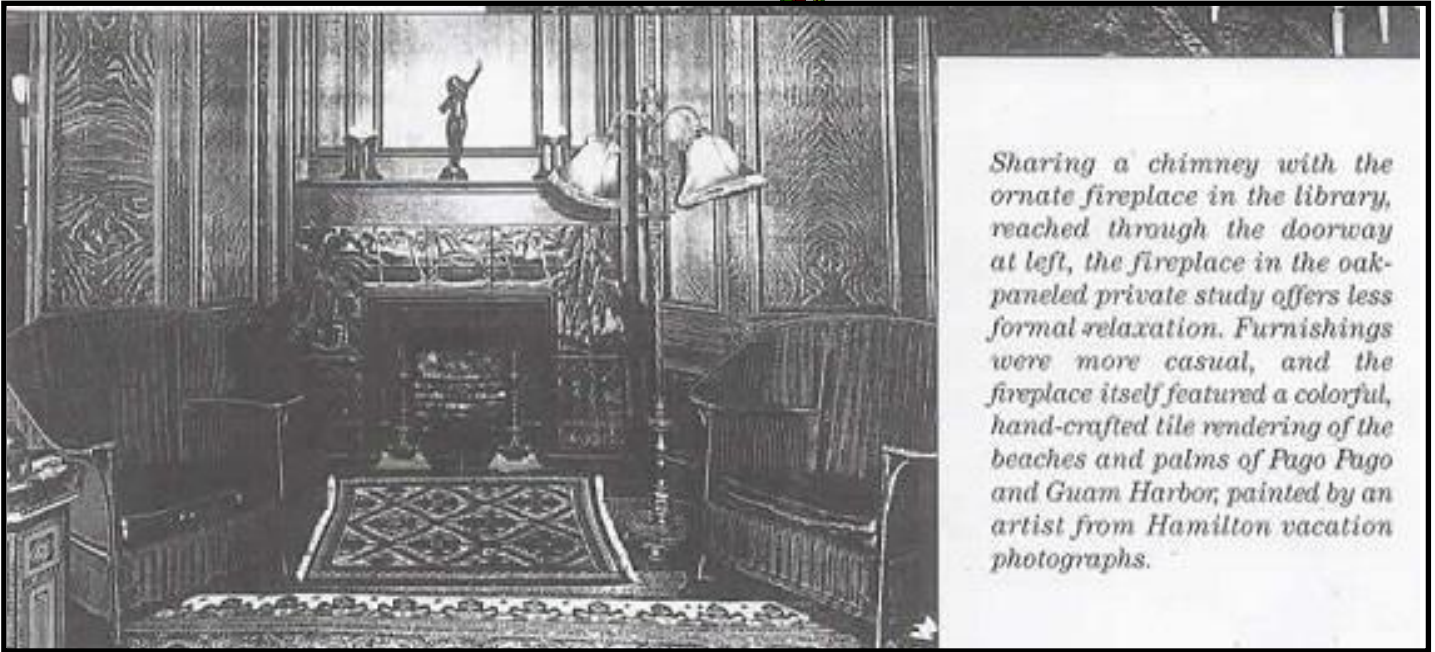


From the Library, a vista through the central core of the building offers views of the Great Hall and, beyond it, the formal Dining Room. The pocket doors leading to the hall are framed in the room's rare, matched heartwood panels of light mahogany, imported from Brazil.

Fine furnishings and carefully matched and sequenced blond mahogany paneling are hallmarks of the large library, where a Persian rug was laid over cork flooring. Many of the library bookshelves were concealed behind the paneling, with relatively few volumes on display. To the left of the fireplace in this picture, the paneling also conceals a stairway leading to the master bedroom.



Continued on page 7



Sharing a chimney with the ornate fireplace in the library, reached through the doorway at left, the fireplace in the oak-paneled private study offers less formal relaxation. Furnishings were more casual, and the fireplace itself featured a colorful, hand-crafted tile rendering of the beaches and palms of Pago Pago and Guam Harbor, painted by an artist from Hamilton vacation photographs.

Next Issue **Part 6, Sunburst, Buttermilk, and Hidden Stairway**

JANUARY 2026 NEW BOOK LIST

ADULT FICTION

Bonner/*An Unfinished Marriage*
 Donovan/*The Busy Body*
 Grisham/*The Widow*
 Hayes/*The Ex Husband*
 Huber/*A Pretty Deceit*
 Kelley/*The Nantucket Inn*
 Nantucket Neighbors
 Nantucket White Christmas
 Kelly/*The Marth's Vineyard Beach and Book Club*
 Lynch/*Pony Confidential*
 Marris/*The Good Samaritan*
 Taylor/*The View from Prince Street*
 Ware/*Zero Days*
 Wiseman/*Her Secret Amish Admirer*

NONFICTION

Chaffetz/*The Puppeteers*
 Klaes/*Hinsdale House: An American Haunting*
 Kushner/*Breaking History*
 Olsen/*Out of the Woods*
 Osborne/*Last Rites*
 Yousafzai/*Finding My Way*

LARGE PRINT

Bowen/*Tell Me, Pretty Maiden*

Fyffe/*Heart of Dreams*

Goldberg/*The Abduction of Pretty Penny*

YOUNG ADULT

Ayala/*Songs of the Lioness*
 Jackson/*Let Me Hear a Rhyme*
 Rule/*Why Would I Lie*
 Ukaza/*Flip*

JUNIOR BOOKS

Bailey/*Henry and the Something New*
 Kenyon/*Shadow Wars*
 Moore/*Beyond the Game*
 Springer/*Enola Holmes*
 Ying/*Amber Brown is NOT a Crayon*

EASY READERS

Harrison/*BIG*
 Hilderman/*Lights at Night*
 Karascoet/*Bear with Me*
 Lynn/*Valley: The Wiggle-Butt Pup*
 Weaver/*Bibi*

Brown/An Unlikely Amish Inheritance

Local History Book Review

by Michelle Henry, Research Historian

Located on Route 5

Triumph over Terror on Flight 847

By Captain John Testrake, with David J. Wimbish, 1987, published by Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan,

NJ.

Ripley native John Testrake lived through one Testrake’s wife, Patricia. This is a welcome of the most harrowing experiences that can be addition to the story, since the captives’ family imagined – a terrorist hijacking of his airplane. Testrake was a TWA pilot with 30 years of experience when his plane was over-taken by Hezbollah extremists on a flight from Greece to Rome, Italy. It was June 1985, and millions of viewers around the world watched Testrake throughout his life, some in Ripley, as Testrake talked to reporters from the plane’s cockpit with a terrorist’s gun at his head. He was nearing the age of 60 – the mandatory retirement age for pilots – when the hijacking

airplanes.

[An aside - Who today remembers that Ripley had an airport?

near Shortman Road, it was officially registered in 1933 while managed by Lamont Vance. It was still being used as an airport in 1962 when four members of the Vance family were killed in a tragic plane crash.]

Triumph of Terror also includes a chapter written from the perspective of John

This book, Testrake's first-hand account occurred. His years of flying experience, his faith, and his calm temperament helped him international figure, is written so that the reader feels his fear, anger and frustration. Sadly, terrorists, which just a young Navy diver, who was a passenger on may have saved the the plane, was beaten and killed by the hijack-lives of his crew and ers. Robert Stethem should be remembered passengers.

for his bravery and sacrifice.

Although

Testrake was born in Ripley in 1927 to Testrake lived in farming parents and graduated from Ripley Missouri as an High School in 1945. When he was 12 years adult, Ripley has old he was taken for a plane ride at Ripley air- good reason to report, and this cemented his love of flying for member him proudthe rest of his life. Testrake wrote that he ly as a native son. knew farming was not for him, and he filled his childhood bedroom with dozens of model





While in Westfield, we welcome you to stop by and visit Lake Shore Center for the Arts and experience what we have to offer in visual, digital and live performing arts, events and classes.

Phone: (716) 224-2135
49 South Portage St. (upper level)
Westfield, NY 14787
lscfta@gmail.com
<http://lakeshorecenterforthearts.com>
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Other days by request



Community Bank



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BRANCH MANAGER
NNLS ID: 1544629

P: 716.326.3145
F: 716.326.4065
shara.post@cbna.com

cbna.com

ANCESTRY.COM

Has the ancestry bug hit you? Do you know you can access Ancestry.com at Ripley Library? It's easy to get started and start tracing your roots down through the centuries.

Your research will be saved to your Ancestry.com account, but be sure to save your information on a hard drive to save your information in case.

While you're at it, we'd love if you could donate a paper copy of your familyalogy to the library. We have a special area dedicated to our local families.



**Contact information for our
representatives**

Senator Chuck Schumer

322 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone (202) 224-6542

or

130 South Elmwood Ave, #606
Buffalo, NY 14202
Phone (716) 846-4111

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

478 Russell
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone (202) 224-4451

or

Larkin At Exchange
726 Exchange St, Suite 511
Buffalo, NY 14210
Phone (716) 854-9725

**Congressman Nick
Langworthy**

422 Cannon House Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone (202) 225-3161

or

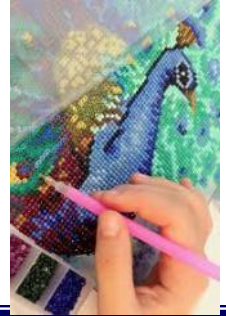
The Fenton Building
2-6 East Second Street Room
208
Jamestown, NY 14701
Phone (716) 488-8111

Sewing Group meets Thursdays at noon. Quilters and sewers of all levels are welcome.



Diamond Art meets Tuesdays at 4:30 (Dot Doers)

Trial size available for free, then purchase the kits you like.



Knight Vineyards
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Knitting & Crochet Group meets Tuesdays at noon. All levels welcome.



The Best Friends Fund is Proud to be a part of the Ripley Public Library!

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Support our Ripley community. Together we can do so much.

Ripley Community and Heritage Fund

Ripley Library is looking for Local Authors

We invite published (including selfpublished) writers to come and speak to our audience, telling us a little bit about yourself and your book. This is generally followed by a Q&A period and a book signing. Call the library and we'll set up a date. 716-736-3913

Passport to A

If you need a FREE library card, come see us and join the crowd. If you haven't renewed your card, we

Welcome to a world of adventure!



Is there an activity or class you'd like to see at our library?

Community members come here to sew, knit, play cards and meet. The library would like to offer more for our residents to do.

There are hundreds of classes online that we could present here on our large screen television.

Do the times of offered activities not fit your schedule? Let us know! We're here to enrich your lives.

Come visit the library!

Fabulous 50

We invite booklovers everywhere to join. The goal is to read 50 books in a two-year period. For every 25 books you read you will receive a prize.

To enter, register at the library or by phone or email. The list can be picked up at the library or sent to your email. Check off each box as you complete a book and write the name of the book and author. **Contact the library every month to let us know what you've achieved.**



Wanted:

Lego pieces and Lego sets

We will gladly accept any new or used Lego items to add to our collection. Please drop them off at the library.



Need an easy way to donate to the Ripley Library? Bottle and Can Collection

The Library has a collection bin in the lobby for returnable cans and bottles. Don't throw out those water bottles and pop cans! Donate them to the library.

Please be sure all bottles and cans are empty and rinsed before you place them in the bin.





PARKVIEW CAFÉ

Parkview Cafe
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<http://parkviewcafeandcatering.com>


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DIY Storytime



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Community Table

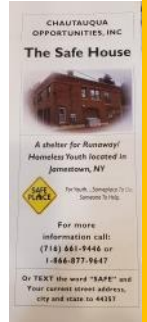
The Ripley Public Library welcomes community groups who would like to set up a table in our lobby to promote their business or group. Examples: VFW Poppy sales, Girl Scout cookie sales, as well as distribution of pamphlets or information about your group or activity. A representative for the table must be present for items to be displayed.

Reservations must be made. There is no cost, it's just our way of giving back to the community. 716-736-3913



Ripley Public Library Has Become a Safe Place Location

What is a Safe Place Location, you might ask? A Safe Place works with the Safe House out of Jamestown and is part of Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc. This is a program for runaway or homeless youth under the age of 18. If this young person needs help, all they have to do is enter the facility displaying the yellow sign that reads SAFE PLACE. They let someone in charge know they need help.





Best Friends of the Ripley Public Library

We Need Your Help!

Ripley Library's BFF group (Best Friends Fund) is looking for more members to join us to help with fundraising and program support for our library.

Dues are just \$5 per year. All we ask is that you attend monthly meetings as often as you can, and occasionally help with fundraising events. Funds raised by BFF are used for library equipment and supplies, upgrades, Summer Reading Program, etc.

There are many things to be proud of in Ripley. Our beautiful library is one of those things. Please call 716-736-3913 for more information.

Best Friends of the Ripley Public Library

Ripley Library Best Friends Fund Application

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town/ZIP: _____

Phone Number: (Home) _____ (Cell) _____

Email Address: _____

Dues are \$5 annually in January

Print this portion and return it to the library, or pick up a form at the library desk.

Ripley Public Library Mission Statement

The mission of the Ripley Public Library is to promote life-long learning for all community residents, providing unrestricted free access to all printed and recorded material from its own collection as well as that of the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System. The Library will endeavor to create a community center that

provides so much more than information for all of those who ask questions and seek answers.

Volume 15, January 2026 The Bookworm



Page 15 **BEST FRIENDS**

Best Friends Fund of Ripley Library
P. O. Box 808
Ripley, NY 14775

Phone: 716-736-3913 Fax:
716-736-3923
<https://www.ripleylibrary.org>
Email: thebookworm14775@gmail.com

<https://www.ripleylibrary.org>

Email Newsletter

We rely on email to get our newsletter out. Each month you will receive 2 emails, The Bookworm and About Town. For a monthly copy, send your email address to:

thebookworm14775@gmail.com

If you would like to opt out of our mailing, please let us know at

thebookworm14775@gmail.com

***Also available—The Bookworm and About Town on the library website**

<https://www.ripleylibrary.org>

Notes & Things

January 1st is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one!

(Brad Paisley)



Attend a Board Meeting

Ripley Public Library Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public. Check the schedule in The Bookworm for times and dates.

New Activities & Classes

Is there an activity or class you'd like to see offered at the library? Can you teach a class or give a talk about a topic? Let the library know if there is something new you'd like to add to the many programs and classes already offered. 716-736-3913

Ripley Public Library is Open for Business

Mon. Wed. Fri. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Tue. Thu. 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m.
 Sat. 9 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Ripley Public Library Board of Directors Meetings for

2026



Meetings are open to the public, in person or via Zoom, and will be held at 6p.m. Dates and times subject to change.

Jan 21	Jul 22	son or via Zoom, and	Feb 25
	Aug 26	will be held at 6p.m.	
Mar 25	Sep 30	Dates and times	Apr 22
	Oct 28	subject to change.	
May 27	Nov 25		
Jun 24	Dec 23		

Please note: all letters and/or emails to the Library and staff **MUST** be signed. Those without a signature will not be recognized. Names will be omitted, to protect privacy, if published.

January 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

				1	2	3
4	5 <i>Book Club</i>	6 <i>Knitting; Diamond Art</i>	7	8 <i>Sewing</i>	9 <i>Popcorn Friday</i>	10
11	12	13 <i>Knitting; Diamond Art; Under- ground RR speaker</i>	14	15 <i>Sewing</i>	16 <i>Popcorn Friday</i>	17 <i>BFF Meeting</i>
18	19	20 <i>Knitting; Diamond Art</i>	21 <i>Library Board Mtg</i>	22 <i>Sewing</i>	23 <i>Popcorn Friday</i>	24
25	26	27 <i>Knitting; Diamond Art</i>	28	29	30 <i>Popcorn Friday</i>	31