

## Ford to retire

After 35 years at the helm of Ritter Public Library, Director Janet Ford has announced her retirement. She plans to conclude her time at Ritter by the end of December.

"I hope I've helped the community by providing the books and materials and information they need, and also a building they can be proud of," Ford said.

"I've been privileged to be part of three addition-renovation projects during my years," she said, "and I've enjoyed working with numerous trustees and staff to help the library grow."

Ford, who was born and raised in Vermilion, began her career at the public library in Clyde, Ohio, after earning her master's of library science from the University of Indiana.

She served as the children's librarian in Clyde and also as director there for more than two years, before coming to Vermilion as director in 1981.

Ritter's board of trustees have begun the process of searching for a new director and intend to have one in place by the end of the year.

In addition, trustees are looking for a new member for the board to fill a term that begins in 2016. Trustees serve as volunteers without compensation. They meet every second Tuesday at 7 p.m. Applications are available now at [www.ritterpubliclibrary.org](http://www.ritterpubliclibrary.org) and at the customer service desk.



Bethany Porter, Elizabeth Donaldson and Ashley Meece in front of the S.S. Niagara.

## NEW GENERATIONS WILL LEARN TO LOVE READING

New generations of little ones will learn to love reading at Ritter Public Library. The children's department at Ritter has new leadership and new staff to better serve families in Vermilion.

Elizabeth Donaldson took over as head of youth services in April. Bethany Porter joined the team as a youth services associate last fall and Ashley Meece started in May. Their first project – the summer reading program – was a big success, with nearly 600 people participating.

Donaldson began her career in the children's department at Westlake Porter Public Library. She earned her master's of library and information science from Kent State University in 2010 and worked at Hudson Library before coming to Ritter.

"I have two big passions in my work," Donaldson says. "The first is stewardship of the materials we offer our patrons. My goal for the children's and teen collections is to make them comprehensive, relevant and up to date for today's readers."

"My other passion is early literacy. I would like to see Ritter become a center for childhood

learning in our community."

Donaldson has expanded storytimes at Ritter to make them more convenient for families. And she has started a new early-reading program called "A Thousand Books Before Kindergarten". (*Find out more about the program inside this newsletter.*)

Donaldson and her staff have also put together a new section in the children's department for "tweens", ages 9 to 13, and they have updated the early learning room with new activities.

Porter and Meece will both plan and lead storytimes, programs for kids and teens, and help develop the collection. Porter has a bachelor's degree from the University of Mount Union and is currently working on her master's of library and information science. She has previously worked at the Mount Union library and also the Stark County District Library.

Meece earned her bachelor's degree from Miami University, where she worked in the science library. She also worked at the Clermont County Public Library and she too is working on her master's in library and information science.



Three generations enjoy the early learning room! Michelle Ostrander holds Luke and Nancy Ostrander holds Mary Clare.

## New programs & classes for the fall

Our calendar for fall is full! Go to [www.ritterpubliclibrary.org](http://www.ritterpubliclibrary.org) to see what we've got planned.

Relieve stress with free Tai Chi classes. The whole family will giggle and get goofy at our fun dance parties. Try the newest book club, which is for adults who like to read titles written for young adults.

Or sign up for one of the hands-on, basic computer classes. Don't see a time that suits your schedule? Call 440-967-3798 to book a one-on-one appointment.

## 1000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN

### Raising little ones to learn to love reading!

When children love to read, they're more successful at school. Get the little ones in your life ready to read with Ritter's new "Thousand Books Before Kindergarten" program.

"When families read with their children, they pass on a love of books that will stay with kids their whole lives," says Elizabeth Donaldson, the new head of youth services at Ritter. The American Academy of Pediatrics says reading to babies and toddlers stimulates early brain development and helps build key language, literacy and social skills.

Donaldson has launched the new program to help parents, grandparents and other caregivers get started on the goal of reading 1,000 books with their children before they begin kindergarten.

"It's never too early to start," she says. Even newborns are part of the program, but families can begin at any time. The concept is simple and the rewards are priceless.

Read a book to your baby or toddler. Keep it fun and hold him or her if you're able. If your child learns early to associate reading with pleasure, she is more likely to enjoy reading on her own when she is older. Yes, you can repeat books and yes, you can read to more than one child at a time.

How long will it take? If you read just one book a night, and you skip a few nights, you will have read about 350 books in a year. That's 700 books in two years and 1,050 books in three years. As most children start kindergarten at around 5 years old, you have more time than you think!

Get started by picking up a reading log at the children's desk and dive into your first 100 books. Enjoy all 10 reading logs and you'll reach the goal - helping your children develop the skills they'll need to become good readers on their own!

## New card just for kids, plus a club for new readers too!

Ritter is working with Vermilion schools to make sure every child has access to a library card. Schools are sending home applications this fall for a new "3 For Me" kids card.

With a parent or guardian's approval, kids can get the colorful card at school and use it when their class visits Ritter - or anytime they are at the library. The card allows them to check out three children's books, with no late fees.

"We're strengthening our ties with the schools and classroom teachers so that every student knows about their public library," said Janet Ford, director.

And now there's a "New Readers" club at Ritter too. Children can join



the club by stopping by the children's desk. Just read a book of your choice to become a member! You'll receive a bookmark and certificate and your name will be added to a special display celebrating Ritter's newest readers!

# CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

This year, a new strategic plan is guiding Ritter's progress. It calls for helping Vermilion celebrate its unique qualities, connecting with the community, making library services accessible to everyone and developing staff talents.

Trustees and staff worked to draw up specific action steps to accomplish these goals, each with its own timeline for tracking progress. The plan is designed to take the library through the end of 2016.

Some steps for making library services more available include removing and relaxing obstacles to service, expanding outreach programs and developing a speakers bureau to advertise services.

Ritter will help preserve and highlight the stories of Vermilion with a new, local storytelling program, in partnership with the Vermilion Area Archival Society. This summer, staff, trustees and Friends of Ritter greeted the public and passed out coupons for free books at the farmers market in Victory Park. Staff and Friends also gave away children's books during a town-wide Third Thursday event.

To improve their skills with technology, staff members are taking part in special training sessions. They're also attending programs focused on providing improved customer service. Youth services associates and other staff traveled this summer to attend workshops sponsored by the Ohio Library Council and the Northeast Ohio Regional Library System.

"By emphasizing access to technology, staff training and community outreach, the library has become a valuable resource that many in the community now depend on," said Tim Costello, trustee.



*Marilyn Brill, Diana Puls and Dan Dropko.*



## Recycle at Ritter

Don't throw away your old cell phones or ink cartridges. Drop them off at Ritter and recycle them. Friends of Ritter earn money for every item they recycle - good for Ritter and good for the environment!

Friends are currently collecting cell phones and laser ink cartridges. At this time, they are not taking desktop computers or laptops.

Look for the collection box near the south entrance. It's located in the Commons by the Friends' ongoing book-sale shelves. The book sale, another fundraiser for Friends, is open during regular library hours. Find bestsellers, paperbacks, children's books and videos.

## Friends support plan for future

Friends of Ritter have set aside \$5,000 to support the library's new strategic plan. "We're dedicated to promoting use and enjoyment of the library," said Karylle Wetzler, Friends president, "so of course we want to be part of this plan for the future."

The money is to be used over the two-year life of the plan to pay for things like materials, programs and technology that will support the plans' goals.

In addition to this money, every year Friends use proceeds from their fundraising efforts to provide supplemental funding to every department in the library. The annual book sale is one of the Friends' largest fundraisers. It has been chaired for the past several years by Pam Reese. The Chocolate Festival is another large, annual fundraiser. It has been chaired most recently by Lois Arnold.



## ENDOWMENT GIFTS

- *In memory of Jack Armstrong*
- from Judy Williams
- from David & Roberta Berns
- A matching gift from the Nordson Corp.
- *In honor of Janet Ford* from Phyllis DeMark
- *In memory of Arthur Schmitz* from Ben & Joann Gleason
- from Rita Blanford
- from Judy Williams
- from Ruth Maurer

## HOW TO DONATE

Memorialize a loved one or honor a friend with a donation to the Ritter Public Library Endowment Fund. The fund is dedicated to providing for the library's future needs, stability and growth. Donations to the endowment fund are permanently recognized at [www.ritterpubliclibrary.org/endowment](http://www.ritterpubliclibrary.org/endowment)

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# Partnering with the community to tell the stories of Vermilion

People who live in Vermilion value the town's unique charm and history, according to a survey conducted by Ritter last year. The library is helping celebrate Vermilion by telling its stories at programs throughout this fall, in partnership with Friends of Ritter and the Vermilion Area Archival Society.

Local author R.C. Durkee will talk about her book "Rum Run" on Monday, Oct. 12 at 7 p.m. It's the story of boot-legging on Lake Erie during Prohibition. Refreshments will be served.

Vermilion native Daniel Smith brings his inspirational story to the library Tuesday, Oct. 27 at 7 p.m. Athlete, coach, photographer

and writer, Smith was instrumental in helping establish Vermilion's annual triathlon.

During the mid-1800s, Vermilion enjoyed its golden age of shipbuilding. Many of the captains of the large lake schooners that were built here chose to live in Vermilion off season and dozens of their homes still stand. Hear the interesting story Monday, Nov. 9 at 7 p.m.

Photographer Scott Dommin, whose popular pictures capture the beauty of Vermilion, will show his work at the library Nov. 5-25. He will talk about his work, and the basics of digital photography, Thursday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m.

Call 440-967-3798 for all the details.

For more up-to-date news & events  
visit us online at [www.ritterpubliclibrary.org](http://www.ritterpubliclibrary.org)

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## HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

**Veterans Day**, Weds, Nov. 11

**Thanksgiving**, Thurs, Nov. 26  
*closing at 5:30 pm* Weds, Nov. 25

**Christmas Closings**: Thurs, Dec. 24; Fri, Dec. 25; Sat, Dec. 26

*open Sunday, Dec. 27 from 1 - 5 pm*

**New Year Closings**: Thurs, Dec. 31; Fri, Jan. 1; Sat, Jan. 2

*open Sunday, Jan. 3 from 1 - 5 pm*

## HOURS

**Mon - Thur** 9:30 am - 8:30 pm

**Fri, Sat** 9:30 am - 5:30 pm

**Sunday** 1 - 5 pm

