

Columns & Departments

- **3 Summer Camps & Schools**
- 4 Miss Cathy's Book Reviews
- 5 The Power of Love
- **6** Calendar of Events

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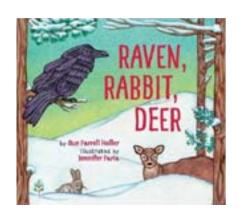








By Cathy A. Morrow



February is the month that honors love in a special way. This month I have chosen two books that demonstrate the love that surrounds us. Love that often goes unnoticed or is taken for granted.

JABBERWOCKY BOOKSHOP is OPEN! However, if there is a book you would like, you may order it from them and have it mailed directly to you.

YOU ARE LOVED A Book About Families Written by Margaret O'Hair Illustrated by Sofia Cardoso Scholastic Inc. Publisher Best for Children 4 and up

A young girl, Sofia, takes us on a journey of the creation of her special family of three brothers, two dogs, one kitten and, of course, Mom and Dad. Sofia's three brothers were born into the family. Sofia, along with some furry friends, were lovingly adopted. Sofia's parents even traveled to the Ukraine in order to get her when she was only one year old. Sofia realized that there were even more members of her family, not just aunts and uncles. Everyone in your life that loves and cares about you, friends, neighbors, teachers, All become a

special part of your life and feel like family too.

This book demonstrates all the

many different ways that we can experience love and family in our lives. Sometimes it is your biological family and other times it's a family that you create from the people in your life that care about you, even though they are not family. Sweet, colorful and detailed illustrations add to the appeal of this story.

Terry Teddy and I give this book -- --four paws up



RAVEN, RABBIT, DEER Written by Sue Farrell Holler Illustrated by Jennifer Faria Pajama Press, Publishers Best for Children 5 and up

A young grandson brings his snow boots over to his grandfather, who is sitting in his easy chair. His grandfather asks, "Want to go for a walk?" So, off they go for an adventure in the snow. They see forest animals along the way. Grandpa says the animals names as they pass by them. He says the names in English and another language. They see a rabbit and Grandpa says, "Rabbit: Waabooz." His grandson hops in the snow like a bunny. As they continue their journey, Grandpa continues to name the animals they see. They see the

different shapes the different animals make in the snow with their feet. Both grandfather and grandson completely enjoy this special time together walking in the snow.

This is a very sweet story about a shared experience between a grandfather and his grandson as they walk together through the snow covered forest.

Terry Teddy and I give this book --- four paws up



The Power of Love

By Maria Luisa Salcines



Finding the right person to love and marry is one of the greatest challenges in living. Ask any single male or female, and they will tell you how difficult it is to find that special someone.

The concept of marriage and lifelong commitment between two people is becoming a thing of the past. According to clinical psychologist Neil Warren, for every 10 marriages occurring in America today, five will end in divorce. The other five will stay married but in varying degrees of disharmony.

Only two out of three will achieve what is called true "intimacy" in the relationship. That special bond that occurs between two separate individuals, a oneness that no one can come between.

During my parents' generation, couples married because that was how two people in love could live together. Marriage was forever, and divorce was an option only in the most drastic circumstances. Today, you can get anything marriage offers quicker, cheaper, and without commitments.

We have become a generation of gratification seekers. We've misinterpreted the experts' advice about finding happiness, and we think that means doing whatever we want as long as it makes us feel good.

Sex is no longer a special experience shared by two people who love each other. Sex has become as standard on the first date as a goodnight kiss. It's all about pleasure with no strings attached.

Living with this kind of attitude has a price. Unfortunately, our children are the ones that pay the price. Children of divorced parents watch strangers come and go as their parents figure things out.

Some children grow up watching their parents argue, or worse, they live in homes filled with piercing silence. I was very young when I married my husband. I remember one of my friends said. "You're giving up the best years of your life." Forty-seven years later, I am married, and she is divorced.

I have lived all my adventures accompanied by the love of my life. And we have had so much fun. We have shown our children how you are supposed to

Making a relationship work takes a lot of giving without keeping a score as to who has given more. Marriage is all about tomorrows and waking up next to the same face, and it looking better as the years pass.

It's about possibilities and opportunities you can share when you learn to

accept each other and work together as one team. As the years go by, you begin to feel gratitude for everything you have and the person who makes you happy.

It all boils down to one thing: to succeed in marriage, you have to give a lot of love. And usually, when you do, it always comes back to you. I learned this from my parents, whose marriage served as a role model for mine.

In his book From Beginning To End, Robert Fulghum describes a wedding ceremony he attended. The minister ended the ceremony by blessing the couple's union with these words:

May the sun of many days and years shine upon you.

May the love you have for one another grow and hold you close.

May the good true light within you guide your way on together.

May your dreams come true, and when they don't, may new dreams arise.

And long, long years from now, may you look at one another and be able to say, "Because of you, I have lived the life I always wanted to live-because of you, I have become the person I longed to be."

The woman within me clearly knows that my happiness for all these years and my future dreams includes a magic that encompasses more than myself. And there's only one person who can give that to me.

This Valentine's Day, show your children how beautiful it is to have that special love in your life.

Maria Luisa Salcines is a freelance writer, author, and certified parent coach with The Academy of Parenting Education and Coaching in Redirecting Children's Behavior and Redirecting for a Cooperative Classroom. She co-authored You Can Do It, Chickadee, and You Can Do It, Tex, award-winning children's books about depression and anxiety. Follow her on Instagram @mlsalcinespoweroffamily, @youcandoitbooks, or contact her on her website FamilyLifeAndFindingHappy.com.

These books were generously provided by **Jabberwocky Bookshop**, Newburyport Jabberwockybookshop.com

Merrimack Valley Calendar of Events



February

Saturday, February 1

VALENTINE'S DAY CARD DROP-IN CRAFT SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1 1:00—4:30 PM Milhendler RoomH averhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Flyer for Valentine Card Craft

Drop-in to make Valentine's Day cards for loved ones and our community members! On Valentine's Day the library will bring cards to local nursing homes for their residents to enjoy. Can't make this date? Stop by February 4th 5-8:30. No Registration Required

STORIES WITH HAZEL MAI (SESSION 1) SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1 1:00—1:15 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Stories With Hazel Mai (Session 1) Cuddle up and read with a very special therapy dog! Choose your own books, relax with Hazel Mai, and practice your reading skills. Children must be able to read independently. We recommend arriving at the library a bit before your start time so that you can have time to choose the book(s) you will read to Hazel Mai!

Registration Required Monday, February 3

Recommended for ages 6-11.

TEEN ADVISORY BOARD (TAB) MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3 6:00—7:00 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950 The Teen Advisory Board, or TAB, is for

teens in grades 9-12 who are looking to volunteer at the library. We are currently meeting once a month. Share your insight at every meeting! We'll be discussing books, programs, and more! To join, you first need to apply by filling out

the form listed here. Have any questions? Email Kristen at Kyoung@newburyportpl.org. No Registration Required

BIG KIDS STORY TIME WITH MISS ALLISON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3 1:30—2:15 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950

Big Kids Story Time with Miss Allison Join us for books, songs, and fun for children ages 3-6. We combine music and movement with slightly longer stories to help preschoolers improve their attention span. Siblings are welcome.

We have limited space, so we require registration. Please register your entire party so we have an accurate headcount. Our goal is to provide access for as many people as possible. Please choose only one story time to attend per week.

Registration for this event opens Tuesday, January 28 at 9:00 AM.

HOMEWORK HELP MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3 4:00—6:00 PM Children's Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Homework Help

Do you need help with your homework? Math problems getting the best of you? Need help reading? Drop in to get help from one our high school student volunteers! First come, first served.

Recommended for children in grades 3-6. No Registration Required

Tuesday, February 4

COOKIES & COLORING TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 3:00—4:30 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950 Cookies & Coloring

What could be better than an afternoon of cookies & coloring? Join us to relax with coloring sheets, crayons and markers, and individually wrapped cookies. Drop in any time between 3:00 and 4:30.

Kids of all ages and abilities are welcome. Please contact the Children's Room if you have concerns about allergies, as we want to provide a safe and enjoyable program

for everyone. No Registration Required

LEGO LINK-UP

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 4:00—5:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 LEGO Link-Up

"Link-up" with other LEGO lovers and and let your creativity flow! Spend the hour creating a LEGO masterpiece! Recommended for ages 4-11. No Registration Required!

TABLETOP CLUB TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 3:30—5:00 PM Program Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950

For grades 5-12. Registration is requested but not required.

Are you a fan of... Board games? Dungeons and Dragons? Magic the Gathering? Then the Tabletop Club is for you! Once a month we set up a space for you to get your game on! Make sure to bring any gaming sup-

plies you'd like to use. Tabletop Club meets on the first Tuesday of each month (unless there is a holiday). Once you are registered for the club, you are registered for the whole series. This series goes from January through June.

HISTORY UNLOCKED: THE 7 WONDERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD (AGES 8-12) TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 6:00—7:00 PM Garden Room Nevins Library 305 Broadway, Methuen, MA, 01844

Our "Unlocked" series takes a deep dive into a variety of fascinating topics and includes fun hands-on experiences; this month we'll explore fascinating sites of the ancient world.

If your plans change after you register and you won't be able to come to the program, please have the courtesy to cancel your registration so that children on the waiting list can take your place. You can find a link to cancel your plans on your registration confirmation email, or you can call us at 978-686-4080 x26.

Wednesday, February 5

MUSIC & MOVEMENT WITH MISS ASHLEY (AGES 2-6)

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5 11:00 AM— 12:00 PM Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Li-

brary 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Music & Movement with Miss Ashley (ages 2-6)

Join Miss Ashley from Family Connections for a morning of dance, music, and fun! Be sure to bring your singing voice and dance moves!

For families with children ages 2-6, older and younger siblings welcome! Registration Required. Register through the link here. Registration will be available one week prior to the program date.

Friday, February 7

CREATION STATION FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7 11:00 AM—12:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830



Creation Station Experiment with some new types of art, materials, and styles. Wear old clothes--sometimes we get

> Recommended for ages 3-5 Registration Required

DINNER AND A MOVIE: "WICKED" SING-ALONG (ALL AGES) FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7 5:30—8:15 PM

Great Hall Nevins Library305 Broadway, Methuen, MA, 01844 Wicked

Eat your dinner at the library after hours and watch Wicked! Bring your own dinner to eat at the library. You can watch and sing along while you eat!

Please note: this movie is rated PG for some scary action, thematic material, and brief suggestive material.

If your plans change after you register and you won't be able to come to the program, please have the courtesy to cancel your registration so that people on the waiting list can take your place. You can find a link to cancel your plans on your registration confirmation email, or you can call us at 978-686-4080 x26.

Saturday, February 8

CRAFT BUFFET SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8 1:00—4:00 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950 Craft Buffet

Stop by our Activity Room, have a snack, and enjoy a variety of simple, no-mess crafts!

Drop in any time between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. This program is open to kids of all ages and abilities. No Registration Required

BOREDOM BUSTERS: SUNCATCHERS (AGES 6-9)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8 2:00—3:00 PM Garden RoomNevins Library 305 Broadway, Methuen, MA, 01844

Boredom Busters: Suncatchers (Ages 6-9) Kids can't complain about having "nothing to do" on the Saturdays when we offer this program — just sign them up to enjoy a different activity each month! In February we'll make some beautiful suncatchers. If your plans change after you register and you won't be able to come to the program

please have the courtesy to cancel your registration so that children on the waiting list can take your place. You can find a link to cancel your plans on your registration confirmation email, or you can call us at 978-686-4080 x26.

Monday, February 10

MANGA CLUB! MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10 6:30-7:30 PM Amesbury Room Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913

> Manga Club! Ages 13 - 18

Our monthly Manga Club will introduce you to some new reads, discuss manga, watch anime, draw, create. This program will change depending on the interests of the attendees. If you're an avid reader of manga or are just curious, come by! This program will be lead by Cassandra.

No registration required. For an information, contact Youth Services at ys@amesburylibrary.org or 978-388-

Free No Registration Required

Tuesday, February 11

POKEMON CLUB! TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 3:00—4:30 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950 Pokemon Club!

Do you like Pokemon? Would you like to hang out with other kids who like Pokemon? Drop in for our Pokemon Club! You can bring your cards, see what others have, or play Pokemon. No prior knowledge is necessary.

For grades K-5. Siblings are welcome. Grown-ups, please be advised: we request that attendees don't trade cards unless their adult is there to say it's okay. No Registration Required

HOW TO APPEAL TO COLLEGES FOR MORE FINANCIAL AID (VIRTUAL) TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 6:30—7:30 PM

My College Planning Team logo Now more than ever, colleges are more willing to say "yes" to appeals for more financial aid and scholarship money for both new and returning students. This workshop provides detailed guidance for families on how to appeal to colleges for more financial aid and how to improve the likelihood of a successful appeal.

Haverhill Public Library Please Register

Thursday, February 13

MIDDLE GRADE BOOK CLUB (AGES 8-12) THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13 3:30—4:30 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950 Middle Grade Book Club (Ages 8-12)

Not sure what to read next? Looking for a fun after-school activity? Check out our new Middle Grade Book Club (Ages 8-12)! Each month we'll meet to discuss a different book, play games, and eat snacks. On February 13th we'll meet to discuss "Snow & Rose" by Emily Winfield Martin. Call the library or log in to your MVLC account to request a copy of the book today! Two girls face each other, one in a red cloak and one in white.

"Snow and Rose didn't know they were in a fairy tale. People never do....

Once, they lived in a big house with spectacular gardens and an army of servants. Once, they had a father and mother who loved them more than the sun and moon. But that was before their father disappeared into the woods and their mother disappeared into sorrow.

This is the story of two sisters and the enchanted woods that have been waiting for them to break a set of terrible spells." Registration is requested (so we can plan snacks accordingly!) but drop-ins are also welcome. Caregivers are not required to stay for this program but kids should know how to get in touch with an adult should

READ TO A DOG THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13 3:30— 3:45 PM

the need arise.

Teen Loft Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913 Read to a Dog

Read to a dog to help improve reading skills and get comfortable with reading aloud with only a very cuddly dog to hear you! This program will have Gus, a certified reading dog, and his caretaker at the library in our Teen Loft! Sign up for a 15 minute slot.

This is great for reluctant readers, readers just learning, dog lovers, hesitant readers...

Please register for a time slot and arrive in advance of the time. You can bring a book or we will have some to choose from.

REGISTER: You can only register one name, but up to three children can come if you'd like For more information, contact Youth Services at ys@ amesburylibrary.org or 978-388-8148x4

TEEN GAMING CLUB (AGES 12-18) THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13 7:00— 8:00 PM

Garden Room Nevins Library305 Broadway, Methuen, MA, 01844 Teen Gaming Club (Ages 12-18) Come learn some new board and card games, or play a familiar favorite! The Nintendo Switch will

also be available to play. Different

games will be available each month for you to try out!

Please use a personal email address, not a school-issued email, when registering. Due to your school's network security settings, we are unable to contact people who use school-issued email addresses.

Friday, February 14

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

Saturday, February 15

ON SCREEN: VENOM: THE LAST DANCE SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15 2:00—4:00 PM Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 venom 3

Eddie Brock and Venom must make a devastating decision as they're pursued by a mysterious military man and alien monsters from Venom's home world. Starring Tom Hardy. Rated PG-13. No Registration Required

Wednesday, February 19

ROLE PLAYING GAME (ONE-TIME PLAY): KIDS 7 - 10 YEARS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19 10:00—11:30

Amesbury Room Amesbury Public Library149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913 Role Playing Game (One -time Play): Kids 7 - 10 years

Spend your vacation week visiting another world! This program is a self contained quest and so you can come if you've never played D&D or a roleplaying game before! For this age group, the game is a modification of Dungeons and Dragons. This is a great way to use your imagination and discover this fantastic world of roleplaying games

Pre-generated characters will be provided Kids can attend this program on their own as the story and actions are simple enough to follow!

Registration is required so we have space for everyone!

CANDY BINGO WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19 6:00-7:00 PM Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Come play bingo and win some candy! This program is for families with children and teens up to age 18.

Registration Required (please register all



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members attending)
Registration for this event opens Wednes-

day, February 5 at 8:00 AM.
COCOA, COOKIES, & CARTOONS (TEENS)
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19 3:00—4:00 PM
Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
cocoa and cookies

Enjoy some hot cocoa and cookies while we watch some cartoons! For those in grades 6-12

Drop-ins welcome but registration appreciated :)

Registration for this event opens Saturday, February 1 at 8:00 AM.

Thursday, February 20

GLOW ZONE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20 3:00—4:30 PM Program Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA Glow Zone

Nothing says fun like glow sticks! We'll turn most of the lights down in our large Program Room and crack a few hundred glow sticks for a no-mess good time. Kids can play however they like with the glow sticks, including using plastic connectors to make shapes and designs. No registration required; drop in any time between 3:00 and 4:30 p.m.

Kids of all ages and abilities are welcome, but please note that kids will be asked not to run during the program and that there will be small pieces (connectors) in the room. No Registration Required

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS (ONE-TIME PLAY): TEENS 14 - 18

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20 2:00—4:00 PM Amesbury Room Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913 Dungeons and Dragons (One-time Play): Teens 14 - 18

Spend your vacation week visiting another world! This program is a self contained quest and so you can come if you've never played D&D or a roleplaying game before or if you are a huge fan (and meet some other fans)!

Pre-generated characters will be provided. What's the story? Soirees & Shenanigans: Hello adventurer! You are cordially invited to a dinner party hosted by Archmage Boden Black. After hearing of some of your legendary feats, he decided he just had to have you for dinner.

Registration is required so we have space for everyone!

Saturday, February 22

CRAFT BUFFET

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22 1:00—4:00 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950 Craft Buffet

Stop by our Activity Room, have a snack, and enjoy a variety of simple, no-mess crafts!

Drop in any time between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. This program is open to kids of all ages and abilities.

No Registration Required

Tuesday, February 25

STEM STRUCTURES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25 3:00—4:30 PM

Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950 STEM Structures

Come play with a variety of building toys, including magnetic tiles. Kids of all ages and abilities are welcome, but please take note that some of these building toys have small pieces.

Drop in to our Activity Room any time between 3:00 and 4:30 p.m. to participate. No Registration Required

FAMILY STORYTIME: POLAR BEARS (AGES 3-8)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25 6:30—7:15 PM Garden Room Nevins Library305 Broadway, Methuen, MA, 01844

Let's celebrate National Polar Bear Day with stories and a craft about these amazing animals.

If your plans change after you register and you won't be able to come to the program, please have the courtesy to cancel your registration so that children on the waiting list can take your place. You can find a link to cancel your plans on your registration confirmation email, or you can call us at 978-686-4080 x26.

Wednesday, February 26

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT: THE WILD ROBOT WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 6:00—8:00 PM Johnson Auditorium Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Join us for a family movie!

This month we will be showing "The Wild Robot."

No Registration Required

Thursday, February 27

FROSTY CREATIONS THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27 4:00—5:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Snowflakes

Bring the magic of winter to life with a fun and creative activity: painting cement snowflakes! These sturdy, snowflakeshaped creations are perfect for kids to decorate with their imagination. Made from cement molds, the snowflakes provide a durable canvas that can be painted and personalized to suit any theme.

For ages 6-11 Registration Required Registration for this event opens Thursday, February 13 at 8:00 AM.

GAME NIGHT

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27 5:30—8:30 PM Milhendler Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830 Game Night

Join us Thursdays for a night of board games at the Haverhill Public Library!
Strategy games, abstract games, filler games, complex and non complex alike, come and try out whatever you like. Feel free to bring your own games! All experience levels are welcome.

No Registration Required

Please send any events you would like considered for the Calendar of Events to Editor@merrimackvalleyparent.com



Don't Miss Our Summer Camps & Schools Section

In the February - June Issues

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