

NEWSLETTER



Livingston Parish Library

Livingston Parish Library - Growing the tree of knowledge... one book at a time.

Louisiana Christmas Tradition

Southern Louisiana Christmas Tradition - Bonfires along the Mississippi River levee

50 miles above New Orleans along the River Road, Cajun/German descendants build about 100 huge bonfires on the Mississippi River levee. A popular, modern-day twist to the old bonfire tradition is Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer needs help lighting the dark bayou country, so they build huge bonfires atop the Mississippi River levee to help Pere Noel (or Santa Claus) find his way on Christmas Eve.

Historian Ellen Chenet Guidry wrote that it was "improbable" that early settlers lit bonfires before "Pere Noel" was well known in the area and that families originally presented gifts to children on New Year's Eve, rather than Christmas. Other theories speculate the bonfires were lit to help guide ships down the river, or to guide Catholics to midnight mass on Christmas Eve. Local bonfires were originally a neighborhood or family oriented activity.

Whatever the reason, the Christmas Eve bonfires have become a major holiday event along the river. Thousands of people from New Orleans and the surrounding countryside embrace the Pere Noel legend and gather along the levees to watch the burnings.

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Merry Christmas!

**The Library will be closed on
December 24, 25 and 31 in
observance of Christmas and
New Year holidays.**



Local Artists Featured at South Branch

The South Branch Library is featuring the work of local artists, Peggy Carbo and Melissa Leford, this winter. These artists bring a uniquely southern flair to their artwork.

Peggy Carbo

Despite Carbo's northern heritage, her work is distinctly southern. "I feel a deep connection with the south," says Carbo, "moving here was like coming home." Filled with moss-laden trees, magnolias, and wood-framed houses by the water, her work speaks to the hearts of



anyone who has ever called Louisiana home. Carbo uses traditional paints such as oil and acrylic, but a quick glance around the exhibit shows that her canvas of choice is anything but traditional. She enjoys painting on saw blades, driftwood, and anything else that presents a challenge. "There are so many different things to paint on," she says, "a different challenge every time." Adding to the unique quality of her work is her signature character, the swamp thing, a frog-like creature that appears hidden in each of her pieces.

Melissa Leford

Native to Louisiana, Leford has a strong appreciation for the outdoors. "I've been hands on my entire life," she says, "dipping my fingers in every opportunity I could." Influenced by her children, the whimsical style of Leford's carvings suggest the source of her inspiration. Upon entry into the library, one will find himself surrounded by cypress knee carvings of stately wizards, Christmas snowmen, and Santa Clauses. Her artwork ranges from simple drawings, to cute wood carved sayings, and most recently cypress knees. "So many cypress knees are being discarded because of new construction today," Leford says, "[This is] my part in saving nature."



The South Branch staff would like to extend an invitation to the public to take advantage of their library and drop by to view this beautiful exhibit by our talented local Louisiana artists.

Art Exhibits

Albany-Springfield Branch

- Gallery: Hungarian Exhibit by Alex & Royanne Kropog
- Display Cases: Hungarian Embroidery by Ruby Petho

Denham Springs-Walker Branch

- Gallery: Various local artists will display a sampling of different mediums with a "Christmas Exposé" theme.
- Display Cases: Kathy Reeves and Kitty Kuhnert, partners in photographic artistry, will collectively display in the 4 cases during December. They bill themselves as "The Kit-Kat Team" and specialize in wildlife and birds. Kitty was photographer of the year and together they travel the state bringing slices of our great state's activities to life.

Livingston Branch

- Art Show: Artwork of Bonnie Williams, Elizabeth Thompson and Mary Jane Hunt.

South Branch

- Gallery: Oil paintings by Margaret Carbo.
- Display Cases: Cypress Wood Carvings by Melissa Ledford.

Watson Branch

- Gallery: Christmas Quilting Exhibit by Members of the Watson Quilting Circle
- Display Cases: Barbie Memorabilia by the Adult Fashion Doll Collectors of Baton Rouge

Louisiana Christmas Tradition

continued:

After Thanksgiving, young people work together, contributing labor and material to create teepee-shaped structures for the bonfires. The fires are strictly controlled and permits are required. By law and tradition, the teepees should be no more than 18-feet high. By Christmas Eve, they will build about 100 teepees to set afire. Weather permitting, fire chiefs give the signal at 7 o'clock, and St. James Parish residents simultaneously set a torch to their bonfires, re-enacting a fire ritual long-performed by their early European ancestors. Bonfires still constructed in certain parts of Europe are the outgrowth of an ancient Celtic custom of building large ceremonial fires to honor the sun.

Festival of the Bonfires starts after the first week of December in Lutcher, La. Each night will be highlighted with a single bonfire lighting for visitors who can't make it to the Christmas Eve burnings.

Visitors wishing to view the bonfires on Christmas Eve should plan to drive to the towns of Lutcher, Gramercy or Paulina the afternoon of Christmas Eve.

Layne Johnson



Book Clubs

Meet New People
Make New Friends
Find New Authors
Discuss Great Books



Albany-Springfield

December 7, 10:00am Adult Book Club: *Revolutionary Road* by Richard Yates

Denham Springs—Walker

December 15, 6:30pm Eclectic Book Club: *The Last Unicorn* by Peter S. Beagle

Livingston Branch

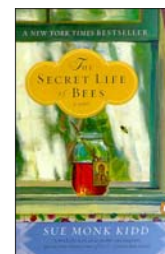
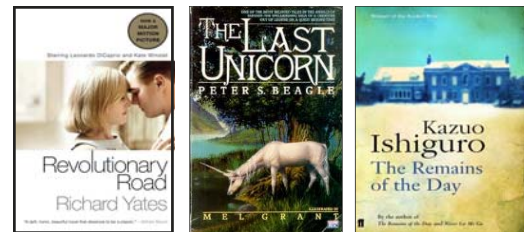
December 10, 10:30am *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro

Watson Branch

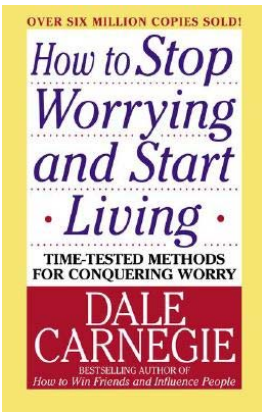
December 10, 10:00am Sunny Side Up (Inspirational): *Blue Christmas* by Mary Kay Andrews
Brown Baggers Book Club: The club will not be meeting in December. Please call the Watson branch if you need more information about this book club.

South Branch

December 17, 5:30pm South Branch Bookies: *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd



Book Review



As happy and exciting as the upcoming holidays can be, sometimes we just can't stop worrying. If you want to improve your life and enjoy a full, worry-free living, pick up this book. It will change your life! Through Dale Carnegie's bestseller, millions of people have been helped to overcome the worry habit. Dale Carnegie offers a set of practical formulas you can put to work today. The methods discussed in this book are based on many first-hand experiences of famous historical figures as well as common people. In the fast-paced world of today this invaluable knowledge will last you a lifetime! Inside this book you will discover how to:

- Eliminate fifty percent of business worries immediately
- Reduce financial worries
- Avoid fatigue -- and keep looking young
- Add one hour a day to your waking life
- Find yourself and be yourself

"How to Stop Worrying and Start Living" deals with fundamental emotions and ideas. It is fascinating to read and easy to apply. Let it change and improve you. There's no need to live with worry and anxiety that keep you from enjoying a full, active and happy life!

Teens Enjoyed Albany-Springfield Branch Program

The vampire murder mystery, *Murder at Twilight*, drew over 25 teens to the Albany-Springfield Branch Library. The teens played vampires such as Edward Cullen and Vladimir Tod from popular vampire books. From the start, the teens got into character and questioned other participants to try and find out who among them was the Global Vampire Slayer. Was it the cunning Antakia Darkmoon with her plans for world domination? Or Edward Cullen's revenge for his godfather's death? Or was it Van Helsing, since he was once a vampire slayer?

It was a tricky game, but the teens had fun. Paige Moya (aka Antakia Darkmoon) said "It was pretty cool! I hope y'all have more things like this." The prize for best costume went to Joyce Onofry for her awesome vampire-inspired outfit.



Computer Classes

Albany - Springfield Branch
No classes are scheduled for December

Denham Springs - Walker Branch
No classes are scheduled for December

Livingston Branch
No classes are scheduled for December

South Branch
Email Basics Dec. 7, 3:30pm
Word Basics Dec. 14, 4:00pm

Watson Branch
Email Basics Dec. 3, 6:00pm
Word Basics Dec. 7, 6:00pm



Leftover Safety



Especially during the holidays, many of us end up with a lot of leftovers. We know there is only a certain amount of time that they can be kept safely, but the question is – how long?

One of the links that can be found on the Library's homepage (www.mylpl.info) is StillTasty.com. To get there from our homepage look for resources link, click on useful websites, and click on health. At this website you will find that various traditional holiday foods have different shelf lives. For example, cranberry sauce should last 10 -14 days but homemade gravy may be unsafe after 2 days.

Livingston Parish Library

Wendy Bobo, Director

Giovanni Tairor, Assistant Director

Library Branches

Livingston (Main Library)

13986 Florida Blvd.
P.O. Box 397
Livingston, LA 70754
Phone: (225) 686-2436
Fax: (225) 686-3888

Hours
9:00 am-6:00 pm M, W
9:00 am-8:00 pm T, TH
9:00 am-5:00 pm F
9:00 am-3:00 pm Sat

Albany-Springfield Branch

26941 La Hwy 43
Hammond, LA 70403
P.O. Box 1256
Albany, LA 70711
Phone: (225) 567-1441
Fax: (225) 567-3768

Hours
9:00 am-6:00 pm M, W
9:00 am-8:00 pm T, TH
9:00 am-5:00 pm F
10:00 am-2:00 pm Sat

Denham Springs-Walker Branch

8101 US Hwy 190
Denham Springs, LA 70726
Phone: (225) 665-8118
Fax: (225) 791-6325

Hours
9:00 am-9:00 pm M-TH
9:00 am-5:00 pm F, Sat
2:00 pm-6:00 pm Sun

South Branch

23477 LA Hwy 444
Livingston LA 70754
Phone: (225) 698-3015
Fax: (225) 698-9979

Hours
9:00 am-6:00 pm M, W
9:00 am-8:00 pm T, TH
9:00 am-5:00 pm F
9:00 am-1:00 pm Sat

Watson Branch

36581 Outback Road
Denham Springs, LA 70706
Phone: (225) 664-3963
Fax: (225) 664-1949

Hours
9:00 am-8:00 pm M-TH
9:00 am-5:00 pm F, Sat

Holiday Recipes - Ginger Pecan Oatmeal Crisps



Ingredients

1 cup quick cooking oatmeal
3/4 cup pecan halves
1 cup whole-wheat flour
1/4 cup cornstarch
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon fine salt
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks, 6 ounces) unsalted butter, softened

3/4 cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup light brown sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 large egg

Directions

Grind the oatmeal and pecan pieces in a food processor until they resemble cornmeal--reasonably fine but with some texture. Whisk the whole wheat flour, cornstarch,

ginger, salt and baking soda together in a medium bowl. Whisk in the oat/nut mixture.

In another medium bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer until smooth and light, about 1 minute. Gradually add the granulated and light brown sugar; continue beating until evenly combined, about 3 minutes more. Add the vanilla and the egg.

Mix in the dry ingredients to make a textured dough. Line a 1 1/2-quart loaf pan or 3 mini loaf pans with plastic wrap and pack dough into the bottom half of the pan. Press to level off the dough. Lay a piece of plastic wrap on top and refrigerate until completely firm, about 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone mats.

Remove dough from the pan and unwrap. Slice dough in half lengthwise if using a large pan. Slice each log crosswise into 1/4-inch thick cookies. Place the cookies about 1-inch apart on the prepared pans. Bake until golden brown, 15 to 18 minutes. Transfer cookies to a rack to cool and crisp. Serve.

Store cookies in a tightly sealed container for up to 1 week.

Source: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/ginger-pecan-oatmeal-crisps-recipe2/>