

yourguide

Spring 2011



Do-it-yourself Takes on New Meaning

The do-it-yourself trend usually refers to home improvements, but a byproduct of the recession has been an increase in the number of people taking on tasks that, in the past, they may have contracted

out. Now people are changing their own engine oil, learning new computer skills on their own, and putting together their own weddings. Whatever you choose to tackle, the Library is your first and best resource for free information to help you succeed at your next project. This issue of *Your Guide* includes several do-it-yourself resources offered through the Library. Don't see your project listed here? Just ask one of our staff; they can help you find almost anything you may need. Good luck on your next undertaking!

Learn-it-yourself Online

Harness the power of the Internet to learn something new. Your computer can help you do more than send e-mails, create documents, or shop online! It is a gateway to a number of reputable websites that can help you get educated on a wide range of topics.

For example

The problem: You need to change the formatting of your résumé in Microsoft Word. **Solution:** Lynda.com

The problem: You want to Skype with your children/grandchildren but you need to set up a webcam. **Solution:** Mahalo.com

The problem: You need to protect your computer from spam, spyware, and viruses. **Solution:** HP.com/go/learningcenter (even if you don't own an HP machine).

How do you uncover these hidden treasures of the Internet? With a simple Google search. In the Google search box type, "how to..." You will be rewarded with hundreds of sites—even college level courses—that can teach you almost anything, FOR FREE!

Some of the advantages to learning online:

- Always available
- Learn at your own pace
- Choose the format for your learning style (videos, step-by-step printable guides, tutorials, online courses)
- Infinite number of topics
- Practical information
- Free

For more online learning resources check out the Library's **Training Materials** page (www.mpppl.org/research/training_materials) and the *Learn to Use Your Computer: Free Online Courses* presentation.

Sites to check out



Short how-to videos, as well as full length video courses on a multitude of topics, including how to install a hard drive, how to use your Kindle™, and how to start a container garden. *Hint: go to HomeDepot®'s YouTube channel.* (www.youtube.com)



Step by step guides and videos, which will show you how to create folders on your iPad, create ring tones for your iPhone, and even how to increase the download speed on your PC. (www.ehow.com)



lynda.com

Full video courses to help you learn to use Microsoft and other software applications. Lynda.com offers free tutorials or you can pay for a subscription to learn even more. (www.lynda.com)



GCF

LearnFree.org

Self-paced classes that will teach you to use your computer or one of the Microsoft applications like Word or Excel. You can also test yourself on your new skill with the quizzes at the end of each lesson. (www.gcflearnfree.org)



KHANACADEMY

Over 1800 instructional videos and exercises on college level math, science, and humanities topics. (www.khanacademy.org)



Education-Portal.com

Free online courses from major universities, including MIT, University of Notre Dame, and Carnegie Mellon. (education-portal.com)



Here Comes the Bride!

If there's a walk down the aisle in your future, the Library has resources to help you plan a unique event—and maybe even save a few dollars for the honeymoon! From the invitation to the send-off toast, the Library is full of ideas and projects for your special day.

Design your own "Save the Date" cards, invitations, placecards, and party favors with ideas from *Wedding Papercrafts* (745.5941 WED), *Wedding Favors & Decorations* (745.5941 PAF), and *Wedding Invitations...A Bride's Guide to Simple Calligraphy* (745.61 MAT).

If you're the crafty type, you'll enjoy *The DIY Bride: 40 Fun Projects for Your Ultimate One-of-a-Kind Wedding* (745.926 COC), *Wedding Crafts* (745.5941 RIS), and *The DIY Bride Crafty Countdown* (745.5941 COC.) Take a look at the Hobbies and Crafts Reference Center (search "wedding crafts") on the **Research & Reference** page (www.mpppl.org/research) for even more ideas and patterns.

On a tight budget? Check out *Crafty Ideas for the Bride on a Budget* (745.5941 CRA), *Pretty Weddings for Practically Pennies* (745.5941 RIS), and *The Green Bride Guide: How to Create an Earth-friendly Wedding on Any Budget* (395.22 HAR.)

Worried about making (or receiving) a wedding toast? You might want to give your best man a copy of *Wedding Toasts Made Easy* (808.51 HAI) or *Perfect Wedding Speeches and Toasts* (808.51 DAV), and you can check that worry off your list.

Wedding flowers, cakes, and photography are covered, too. You can even get in shape for the happy day with *The Wedding Workout* (DVD 613.7108 WOM) and make your first dance one they'll never forget! (*Dancing Together: A 90-minute Guide to a Beautiful Wedding Dance*/DVD 793.33 DAN.)

This is just a sampling of the many resources the Library has available to help make your wedding a one-of-a-kind event.

SPECIAL PULL-OUT SECTION
Save for Future Reference

Playing Your Way to Literacy

“I’m making a picnic.”

“Your waffle is ready.”

These might not be the words you expect to hear at a library, but they are part of our new Youth dramatic play area designed to promote pre-literacy skills.

Children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. Play is their “work” and the way in which they make sense of their environment. Noted child development expert Jean Piaget believed that “make-believe” play allowed children to move from concrete activities to symbolic ones, where language and the written word can begin to substitute for the activity itself. This developmental stage is an essential precursor to literacy. Playing also allows children to practice making choices, enhances their creative abilities, and helps them understand their world. Our new dramatic play area encourages self-directed play, where children interact independently with their environment and make their own learning goals.

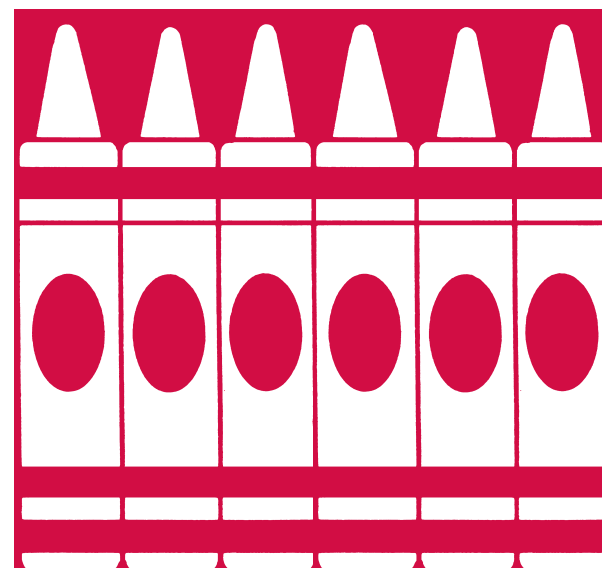
Modeled on the home environment, our dramatic play area currently includes a kitchen, and plans are underway to add a storybook house made from discarded library books. It is designed to be a learning center where children can experience and practice the six pre-literacy skills—print motivation, print awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary, narrative skills, and phonological awareness. Every two months a new theme will be introduced to



the early-literacy station to spark interest and activity. Colorful, well-illustrated, theme-related books will promote print motivation. Easy-to-follow recipes will support narrative skills. Labeled props will foster print awareness and teach new vocabulary words. A simple rhyming game will help develop phonological awareness. Finally, identifying the beginning letter of food items will teach letter knowledge. Positive encounters with reading through play will help children understand the value of the written word. For example, a child could “scribble” a shopping list or sound out the word for “microwave.” A child is more likely to remember how to read the word “soup” if he first sees this word while having fun pretending to make soup in a play kitchen.

The theme-related activities are designed to promote parent-child interaction—such as helping one’s child find a food that begins with the letter “A”—and support parents as they gently teach their children the six pre-literacy skills in a fun environment. The simplicity of the activities will provide a launching pad for parents to continue the literacy experience at home in the child’s own play center. The flexibility of the dramatic play area will allow Youth staff to introduce new activities to keep the area fresh and the children engaged.

So, if your child is bored with the toys at home or if you feel yourself craving a plastic waffle, just head over to Youth Services and let the playtime fun begin.



The Six Pre-literacy Skills

Print motivation is associating fun with the printed word, inspiring an interest in, and the enjoyment of, books and reading.

Letter knowledge is learning that letters are different from each other, that they come in capital and lower case versions, and that letters relate to different sounds.

Print awareness is noticing print and recognizing that print has meaning. It includes knowing how to hold a book, turn the pages, and learning that books are full of words.

Narrative skill is the ability to describe objects, talk about events, and tell stories.

Phonological awareness is learning that words are made of sounds—hearing and playing with the beginning sounds in words, the smaller sounds within words, and syllables.

Vocabulary is knowing the names of things, concepts, feelings, and ideas.

Learn to speak
another language,
now!

Apprenez à parler
une autre langue,
maintenant!

Expand Your World

¡Aprende a hablar
otro idioma, ahora!

Ucz się języków
obcych już dziś!

There are a lot of reasons to learn a language. Perhaps you learned a language in school and want to brush up your skills. If you’re traveling, you might want to make a good impression or simply survive. Knowing a second language could be helpful for your job. If you live in one of the Chicago area’s many diverse communities, a second language may give you the opportunity to be neighborly. Just as there are many reasons to learn another language, there are also many routes to take. You can enroll in a class, turn to books and CDs, or invest in computer software. Whatever path you choose, learning a language takes effort and practice.

But it doesn’t have to be an unpleasant chore. In fact, Mango Languages makes it fun. Mango is an exclusive online language learning program that you can gain access to through our **Research & Reference** page (www.mpppl.org/research). Mango teaches conversational skills using real-life situations and native speakers. You’ll learn helpful phrases,

including greetings, expressions of gratitude, and directions. Along the way, you’ll get cultural tips to help prevent those awkward social faux pas. Did you know that it is not proper to bow in the Chinese culture?

Mango Languages teaches by using onscreen prompts with audio instructions in English and whichever of the approximately 60 languages you are studying. Conversations are broken down into segments so that you understand what you are saying. If you have a microphone, you can record yourself to hear how well you’ve mimicked the native speaker. With three different course levels, you can choose your level of proficiency—from

enough comprehension to find the bathroom to feeling fluent enough to engage in an extended conversation.

Mango is free to anyone using a computer inside the Library and can be easily accessed from home using your MPPL card. If you, or someone you know, wants to learn English as a second language or improve his/her skills, Mango has ESL courses for native speakers of Spanish, Polish, Korean, and a dozen others.

Have an iPhone?

This summer Mango will release an app so you can “Mango anywhere!”



Cultural Tidbit

In Mandarin there is only one word meaning “he,” “she,” and “it.” Everything is simply “ta.” The Mango narrator notes, “We are all equal,” which not only reflects the recent history of communism in China but also gives insight into Chinese philosophy.

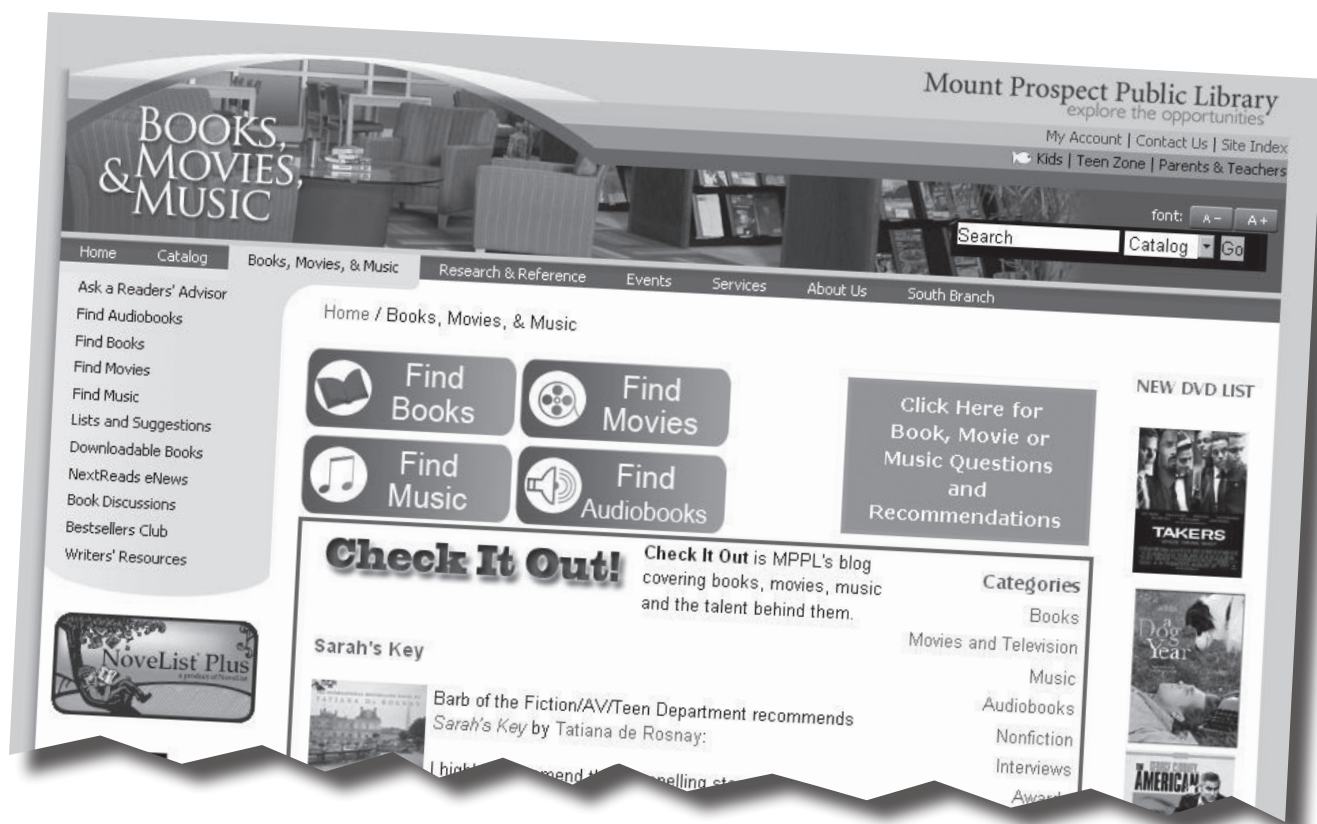
What Do I Read Next?

Once upon a time we could open our newspapers to find a weekly section devoted just to books. Important books, funny books, comfortable books, and challenging books. Books to make us think, books to make us cry, books to transport us, and books to take on vacation. Professional reviewers would highlight what was new and what was worth our time. Sadly, those days have faded. As newspapers have been forced to cut pages, writers, and features, the thoughtful *Books* section is only a fond memory for most publications. Where is a willing reader to turn?

The good news is that the outlook is brighter than it may seem. Many newspapers and magazines still feature reviews, though the content may be primarily online and the selection not as diverse. If you prefer that authoritative feel of newsprint in your hands, you can find descriptions of a variety of titles in the latest *BookPage*, a review publication made available free to you through the generosity of the Friends of the Library. Stop by the Fiction/AV/Teen Desk for your copy.

If online searching is more your style, there is no shortage of blogs and amateur reviews on the Internet. Sometimes, though, you are hungry for a suggestion that carries a little more weight. Click into the **Books, Movies, & Music** page of our website (www.mppl.org/books) to find staff picks and featured titles. The **Find Books** page offers links to awards sites, genre lists, and review publications. Choose **Lists and Suggestions** to explore an ever-expanding collection of read-alikes and intriguing topics.

One of the most comprehensive book suggestion resources is right at your fingertips. NoveList Plus enables you to take the elements you enjoyed about



one book and generate a list of others that share those characteristics. Simply click on the icon from the **Books, Movies, & Music** page or select NoveList Plus from our list of web resources by title. The home page will greet you with covers of the most popular books of the moment—the ones that likely have long hold lists—and suggest similar books to keep you company while you wait. You can also search for a type of book and then narrow your choices by topic, tone, or pace. Details include author information, reviews, series lists, and other extras. Explore on your own, or stop by the Library to ask us how to make the most of this addicting tool.

If you'd rather have those recommendations come to you, sign up for one or more of NextReads' eNews. NextReads is an electronic newsletter that offers suggestions for 25 different categories including

Armchair Travel, Audiobooks, Thrillers, Christian Fiction, and Memoirs. Have the week's bestseller lists delivered to your e-mail, and click directly to the Library's catalog to check availability or place a hold. Newsletters also feature themed topics to help you discover those older gems you may have missed. "Scandalous Romances," "Business Histories," and "Cozy Comfort Foods" are examples of lists that just might lead you to the perfect book you didn't know you wanted.

Don't forget that your friendly Library staff specializes in connecting you with great books. Stop by the Fiction/AV/Teen Desk to tell us what you like, and we will be happy to make a few suggestions. Whether you want more of something you already enjoy or a chance to try something completely different, we'd love to talk with you. Happy reading!

My Discoveries

Have you always wanted to be a book or movie critic and write reviews to share with others? Do you mean to keep track of the books you've read—or the books you want to read—but can never find that list? Maybe you'd like a different way to search for materials that meet your interests.

Look no further than the **My Discoveries** feature on the Library's catalog.

Go to the Library's home page (www.mppl.org) and click on **Catalog**. On the far right of the gray bar is the **My Discoveries** feature. When you click in, you'll be asked to register and create a username. This is not your Library card number, but a name of your own choosing. This name will show publicly when you write a review, so be as creative or as anonymous as you like. Who knows—you might even get a following! You will also create a password. Once your account is created, you're set. As you search the catalog, you can do any of the following:

Lists

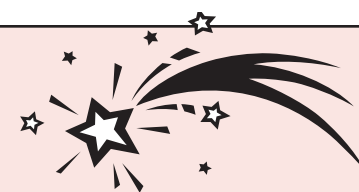
When you find an item you want to add to your list, click on the "save or tag" link. In the dropdown box, you can create a "new list" and give it any name you like. Once you've created a list, it will be available in the dropdown box or you can create multiple lists. This is ideal for wish lists or reading lists. By default, you are the only one who can see your lists. It's also possible to make lists public so everybody can see them if you want to share them. You'll never have to look for those lists again!



Ratings/Reviews

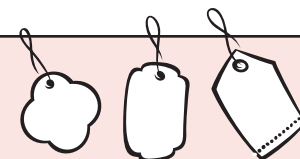
Share your inner critic! After finding an item that you want to rate/review, click on the "save or tag" link. You'll see five stars, ranging from terrible at 1 (I hate it) to excellent at 5 (I love it.) Fill in the stars (by clicking) and give it your rating.

From there, you can write a review if you like. Click on the "Write a Review" link and a box will appear for you to give your own take on the item.



Tags

Tags are given to materials as a way to describe the contents. Tags make finding material easier. For example, if a book has a tag "New Orleans" because it is set in New Orleans, clicking on the phrase will bring up other books with that same tag. Using unique tags can also help in locating material you're specifically interested in, like books in a series or movies your kids like. To add a tag, click on the "save or tag" link and add your tags.



Need a Car? Got a Car?

Here are some Library resources to help

Purchasing or leasing an automobile can be a challenging experience, fraught with anxiety and doubt mixed with anticipation. There are many resources available through the Library that can help make the car-buying experience easier. Once you own a car, you'll want to keep it in tip-top shape—we also offer resources to help you maintain it.

Choosing a Car

Your first task in the buying process is to narrow down your choices. A great place to start is *Consumer Reports*. The April issue of each year is totally devoted to cars and full of useful information, including top picks. Current models are reviewed and used models are evaluated for reliability. The monthly issues of *Consumer Reports* carry more in-depth articles on selected models as well as reviews of automobile parts and features, such as tires and batteries. Issues from the last 5 years are available to be checked out. Second copies of the current-year issues are kept at the Reference Desk for use while in the Library.

For another perspective that focuses more on a car's driving experience, try *Automobile Magazine*, located in our Consumer Reference area. The auto enthusiast interested in new fuel technologies as well as interior and body designs will enjoy *Auto Restorer*, *AutoWeek*, *Car and Driver*, and *Motor Trend*.

Buying a Car

Once you've identified the make and model you're interested in and are ready to purchase, you'll want to know how much you should expect to pay and where you should buy your car. When it comes to price, turn to *The Original New Car Cost Guide*, which provides comprehensive pricing (dealer invoice and MSRP) on over 250 models. This publication, located

in our Consumer Reference area, is updated every two months. For used cars and other vehicles, we have the *NADA (National Automobile Dealers Association) Official Used Car Guide* available online and in print, ask about it at the Reference Desk.

Two general websites are especially helpful to car buyers. The Kelley Blue Book online (www.kbb.com) helps to locate new car pricing and features, dealers' inventory, calculate financing rates, and monthly payments. Use the Perfect Car Finder® to narrow the make/model by your desired price range, MPG, manufacturer, and other criteria. Edmunds.com is a recommended free site used to compare new and used car deals, evaluate incentives and rebates, and read reviews and road test results.

Chicago's Consumer Checkbook, available on our website from within the Library, provides car buying strategies, consumer reviews of local dealerships, advice for negotiating car prices, leases and warranties, insurance premiums, and repair/body shops. There are checklists to chart a dealer-to-dealer comparison on markups and options. This source also allows you to check your resale or trade-in value and check for advice and sample prices for tires.

Maintaining Your Car

Did you know we have a wide selection of *Chilton's* and *Haynes* automotive service manuals that can be checked out? These manuals cover general



maintenance, fuel system, engine overhaul, engine or chassis electrical, and suspension and steering. Diagrams and an index for troubleshooting and diagnostic procedures are added benefits.

There are additional books in our collection that are guides to general car care. Many identify typical car troubles, suggest how to handle road emergencies, and explain what's under the hood, even if you're not of a mechanic's mindset. From our **Research & Reference** page (www.mppl.org/research), you can log on to Auto Repair Reference Center, which provides a great deal of vehicle information to the car owner who wants to repair a car or who just wants to understand how the car works. Vehicle information includes repair procedures, service bulletins and recalls, and wiring diagrams. In addition there is an audio/video guide to a car's anatomy, general car and repair tips, and a troubleshooting guide.

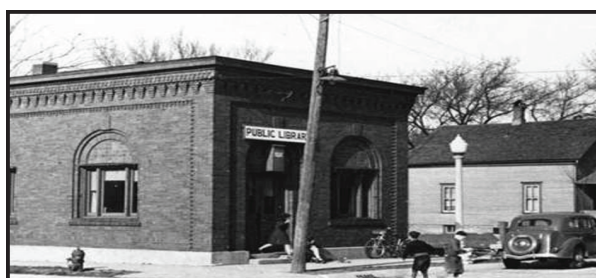
Buying and maintaining an automobile is a major responsibility. The Library's resources can give you the information to make this experience less stressful and empower you as an informed consumer.

Local History Collection

Here are a few questions for you. (*Answers are at the end of the article. No peeking!*)

- 1) Who first officially settled Mount Prospect?
- 2) How many times has downtown undergone "redevelopment?"
- 3) How many local newspapers have covered Mount Prospect?

Did you know the answers? If not, or if you have other questions about Mount Prospect's history and that of surrounding communities, check out the Harold Weary Genealogy and Local History Room on the second floor of the Library. Here you will find books, microfilmed newspapers, old telephone directories, and a variety of printed items in the



local history file. Behind the Reference Desk, we have local school yearbooks with pictures of stars before they were famous (American Idol Lee DeWyze, *Glee* writer Ian Brennan, and Academy Award®-winner Marlee Matlin.) Each item holds a piece to the history of Mount Prospect. The books are easily accessible on the shelves. If you are interested in viewing some of the other types of material, please check with a reference librarian. Come and learn more about the story of Mount Prospect.

Answers: 1) Ezra Eggleston 2) At least four and counting 3) Seven

Keep the kids busy

Check out the toy collection at the Library—great for when relatives, neighbors, or grandchildren visit! We have puzzles, games, puppets, and toys for every age. There are also themed activity bags that contain toys and books for preschoolers on a popular topic, such as shapes, transportation, and dinosaurs. Just pick up a bag and have fun! (*Limit of 4 toys per family.*)

