



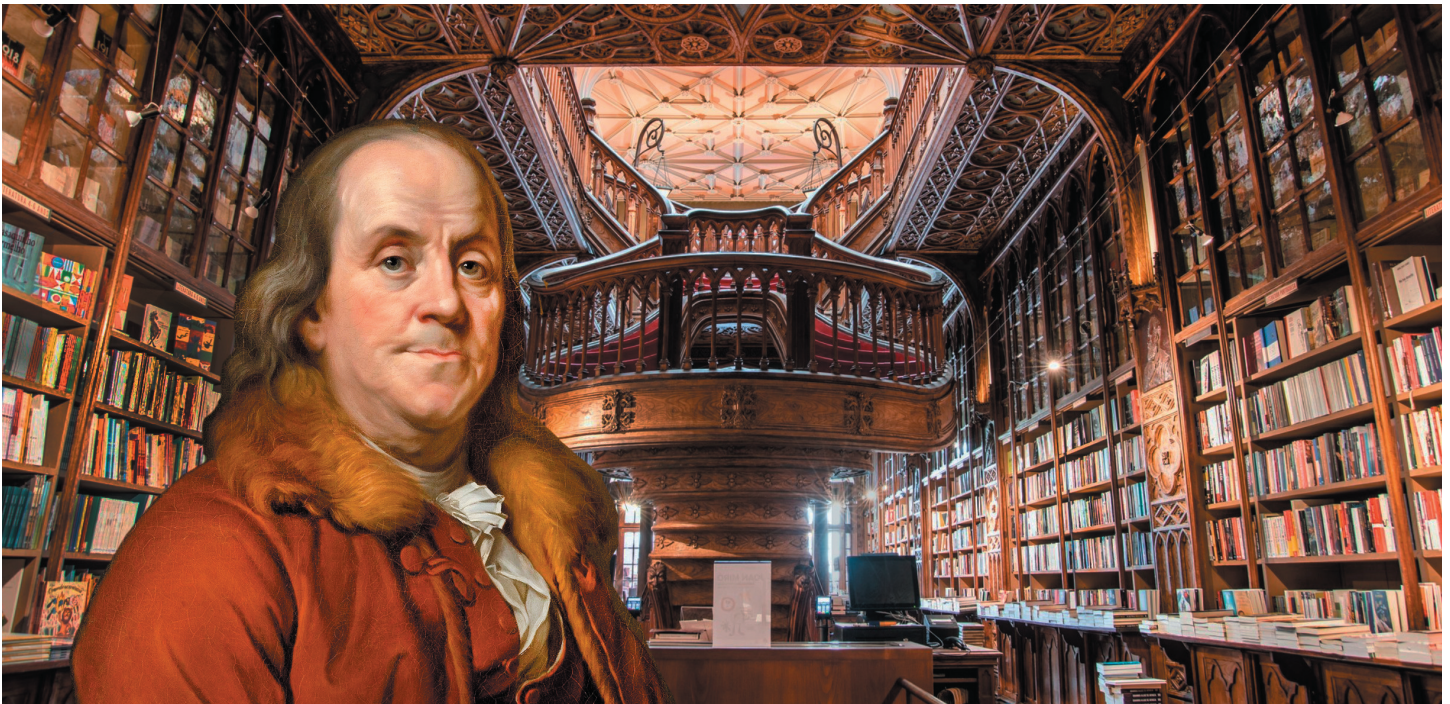
Book Lovers Dispatch

No. 9

www.bookloversdispatch.com

Fall 2025

America's First Library



By J.R. Bale, *Book Lovers Dispatch*

When we think of libraries, we tend to think of public institutions providing books and other services in our local communities. However, that is not how libraries began. Libraries were private possessions of the wealthy. Given the low literacy rates of the time, this makes sense.

Books were valuable possessions accessible only to the most educated and privileged.

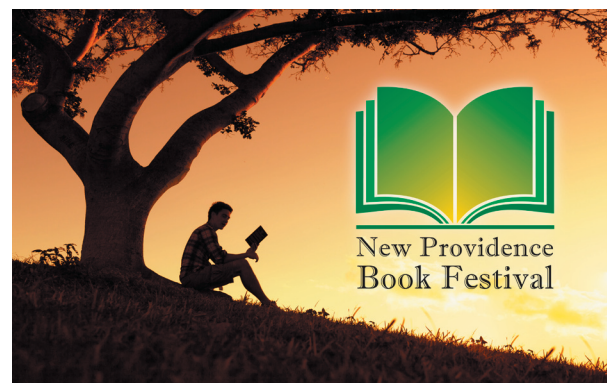
How did libraries evolve into the public institutions we know and love today? It happened in stages.

Like many things, we must give credit to Benjamin Franklin. As a professional printer, Franklin had a vested

(Continued on Page 2)

New Providence Book Festival

On **Saturday, September 20, 2025**, 9 AM to 3 PM, the Salt Box Museum will host the New Providence Book Festival on its grounds at 1250 Springfield Avenue, New Providence, NJ. Over 15 New Jersey authors, across various genres, will be on hand to discuss and sign their books. All are invited to attend this cultural event. A raffle will be held and refreshments will be available. The Salt Box Museum will be open to all visitors free of charge. The rain date is September 27th. Learn more at www.newprovidencebookfestival.com.



To subscribe to ***Book Lovers Dispatch***, go to www.bookloversdispatch.com

The Magic of Reading

Think about the construction of a simple book. It is a wood pulp product, processed into thin layers with black-inked squiggles on the surfaces. Yet, through these squiggles, we can decipher the thoughts of someone who may be on the other side of the planet, or who lived hundreds of years ago. We may even discover they have similar thoughts to our own.

The author conveys situations, concepts and emotions silently. It is a form of telepathy. As authors cast these spells, we the readers absorb and interpret these magical runes allowing them to touch our souls. Our greatest literary conjurers include names like Dickens, Austen, Orwell, Tolstoy, Cervantes and others. More recent authors work arduously to be added to such a list. Please encourage and support all of today's literary conjurers. They have magic to perform and souls to touch.

America's First Library (Continued from Page 1)

interest in the printed word. He also had a keen interest in self-education, for which books are vital. In 1727, Franklin established the Philadelphia-based discussion group known as the Junto, which fostered intellectual dialogue. While Franklin enjoyed the Junto's spirited discussion and debates, he became convinced that the group needed an authoritative library to referee basic facts.

During that era, purchasing books in Pennsylvania and other colonies was prohibitively expensive. Those who sought books usually had to acquire them in New York or Boston. To mitigate this cost, Franklin had an idea. In 1731, he established a library with a subscription fee, the Library Company of Philadelphia. Members were allowed to buy shares at a relatively low cost. These shares became hereditary, allowing this "intellectual wealth" to be passed down from generation to generation.

As the Library Company evolved, it began allowing non-shareholders to borrow books for a small fee and collateral. Franklin was particularly proud that tradespeople and farmers took advantage of this particular innovation. Years later, Franklin expressed his belief that this increased education contributed to the establishment of democracy.

From the Revolutionary War until 1800, the Library Company served as a precursor to the Library of Congress. This library model quickly inspired others. By 1800, there were dozens of lending libraries throughout the country.

The establishment of free, tax-supported public libraries wouldn't take hold until the mid-1800s, long after Franklin's death. However, these libraries would have been unlikely without Benjamin Franklin's groundbreaking work.

Visit the Salt Box Museum



1350 Springfield Avenue, New Providence, NJ

www.NewProvidenceHistorical.com 908-665-1034

The *Book Lovers Dispatch* is now accepting advertising as a way to support its mission of talking about all things bookish. Our advertising rates:

Half page	\$50	Quarter page	\$25
Third Page	\$35	One-eighth page	\$15

To support our mission and arrange an ad, please go to www.BookLoversDispatch.com/contact.

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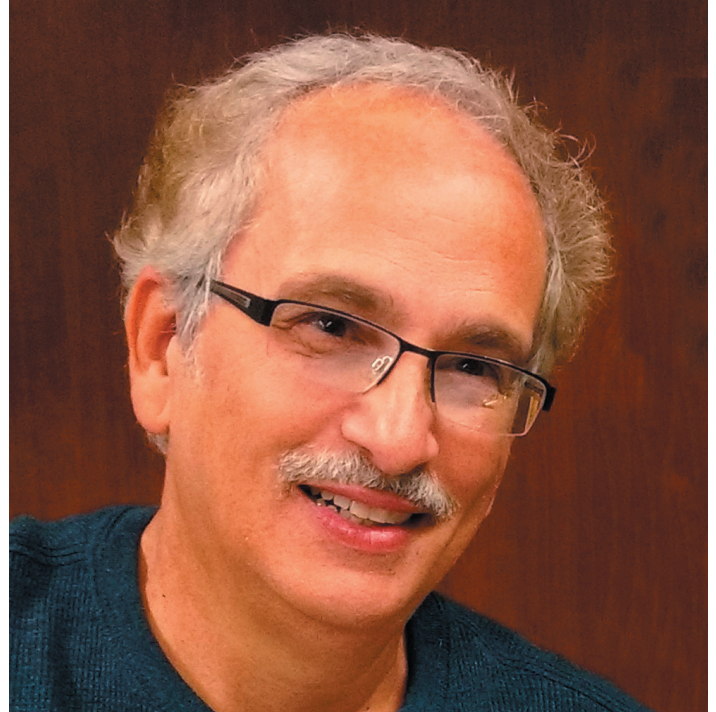
To Author Falco, Baseball Is Not Just a Game

By Elissa Matthews, *Book Lovers Dispatch*

For author Steve Falco, baseball isn't just a game—it's the backdrop for a lifetime of storytelling. Originally from Roselle and now living in Fanwood, Falco grew up playing ball in the backyard with his brother. "Write about what you know," he says, and for him, that means bats, gloves, and the smell of fresh-cut grass.

Falco's critically acclaimed book, *Mickey Mantle's Last Home Run*, is a coming-of-age story about two boys: friends and teammates on their JV baseball team in 1968. Like many young people growing up in America in the late sixties, they have heroes. For TJ, who is white, it is Mickey Mantle, the aging star of the New York Yankees. For Jonathan, who is black, it is Martin Luther King Jr., the leader of the civil rights movement. Unfortunately, 1968 was a bad year for heroes and America. Together, these boys learn what true courage is. Falco was surprised to discover the enduring passion that Mickey Mantle inspires, even among teenagers today. Look for it wherever you buy your books!

Falco's first book, *Grandpa Gordy's Greatest World Series Games*, is an intriguing, often hilarious,



Steven Falco

compendium of world series knowledge, events, and anecdotes. (Look for it now that World Series Season is coming up soon!) His upcoming book, *Coach Pepperoni and the Battle of the Boroughs*, now in draft form, is a tale of Little League for readers 9–11. The pitch? A retired coach returns to lead the Rosedale Little League with eccentric methods—will it be enough to win? Read it and find out. The book is slated for 2026.

For Falco, writing about baseball isn't just about the sport—it's about capturing the camaraderie, quirks, and triumphs that make the game timeless. "The fun part is the first draft—just pouring it all out. Then comes the skill, structure, and the inevitable reorganization." Not to mention the detailed research: these days a blend of old-school interviewing, research on microfiche, and fact checking on the internet.

His path to writing began early, guided by strong grammar school teachers and a standout high school instructor. In college, a good professor encouraged his voice, and Falco immersed himself in newsletters and the campus newspaper, covering both sports and fiction. "Fiction is easier—you don't have to prove anything."

Let's hear it for fun and games—Play Ball!



The New Providence Book Festival Returns!



Over 16 Authors Personally Signing Their Books!



New Providence
Book Festival

at 1350 Springfield Avenue, New Providence, NJ 07974.

Over 16 authors will be signing their books, across various genres, including J.R. Bale, D.M. Barr, Michelle Cameron, Michael Stephen Daigle, Ted Delgrosso, Susen Edwards, Sarajane Giere, Elle Hartford, Kim Harwanko, Rebecca Holden, Tom Kranz, Elissa Matthews, Michael Penncavice, Sue Steinhart, Jean Taylor and Danielle Willmott.

The event will include author talks, panels, a raffle and refreshments. A new featured event is the “Spoken

Book Lovers Dispatch is very pleased to be a sponsor of the **New Providence Book Festival**, to be held on **Saturday, September 20, 2025, 9 am - 3 pm.**

The festival will be on the grounds of the Salt Box Museum, located

Word Open Mic” event.

Hosting the festival is the New Providence Historical Society’s Salt Box Museum, which was originally an 18th century farmhouse. Free tours of the museum and its collection will be available during the festival.

To learn more about this event, just go to www.NewProvidenceBookFestival.com.



Merchandise to support the festival can be purchased at NewProvidenceBookFestival.com.

Upcoming Book Events in 2025/2026

September 6, 2025
Saturday, 9 am - 5 pm

Authors Grove at Belvidere Heritage Day
Garret Wall Park
Belvidere, NJ 07823



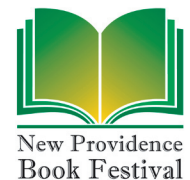
September 13, 2025
Saturday, Noon - 8:30 pm

Flemington Scary Story Fest
Act 2 Books
2 Central Avenue
Flemington, NJ 08822

**SCARY STORY
FEST!**

September 20, 2025
Saturday, 9 am - 3 pm

New Providence Book Festival
Grounds of the Salt Box Museum
1350 Springfield Avenue
New Providence, NJ 07974
www.NewProvidenceBookFestival.com



September 27, 2025
Saturday, 11am - 4 pm

Passaic County Book Festival
Weasel Brook Park
Clifton, NJ



October 4, 2025
Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm

Collingswood Book Festival
Haddon Avenue
Collingswood, NJ 08108
www.CollingswoodBookFestival.com



October 10 & 11, 2025
Friday & Saturday

Morristown Book Festival
Morristown, NJ
www.morristownbooks.org



October 13-19, 2025
Monday - Saturday

Easton Book Festival
Easton, PA
www.eastonbookfestival.com



March 14, 2026
Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm

Books in Bloom
Randolph Community Center
30 Calais Road
Randolph, NJ 07869

Additional events are listed at www.bookloversdispatch/book-events

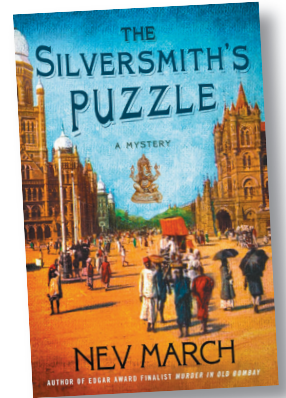
Recent Book Releases

The Silversmith's Puzzle

By Nev March

In 1894 colonial India, Lady Diana's family has lost their fortune in a global financial slump. Worse, her brother Adi is accused of murder. Desperate to save him, Captain Jim and Lady Diana rush back to Bombay. However, the traditional Parsi community finds Jim and Diana's marriage taboo and shuns them.

The dying words of Adi's business partner, a silversmith, are perplexing. As Captain Jim peels back the curtains on this man's life, he finds a trail of unpaid bills, broken promises, lies and secrets. Why was the silversmith so frantic for gold, and where is it? What awful truth does it represent?



Murder at the Chestnut Wig

By Amy M. Reade

July 1852. As the Fugitive Slave Act tightens its grip on the young nation, whispers of abolitionist activity ripple through Cape May. Widow Jeannine Holt is the owner of The Chestnut Wig, a decadent gambling salon in town. She presents a graceful façade, but beneath the charm, Jeannine hides her role as station master in the Underground Railroad.

When a man is stabbed to death at The Chestnut Wig, chaos erupts. A racially motivated arrest occurs within hours. When the sheriff refuses to investigate other suspects, Jeannine must take matters into her own hands to unmask the person's identity before the condemned man hangs. But the real killer is watching. Will her next gamble be her last?

Learn more at www.amymreade.com.



www.BookLoversDispatch.com



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