

# RE:refresh!

Reference Service News from Middletown Thrall Library

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"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." Benjamin Franklin

## From the Head of Reference Mary Susan Flannery Climes

Welcome to our *sixth* issue of **RE:refresh!** This is where Middletown Thrall Library's Reference Department updates you on its ongoing efforts to empower you with the very best research tools and resources available!

Past issues of **RE:refresh!** can be downloaded from our website at [www.thrall.org/refresh](http://www.thrall.org/refresh)

## eBooks Usage & Access

Without a doubt, eBook interest has increased over the past year thanks to a variety of factors including:

- more affordable eBook readers becoming available
- improved compatibility of the OverDrive software, which is used to download and transfer certain eBooks between the library system and your computer or portable digital audio player or eReader
- heightened interest in eBooks, particularly among readers who travel frequently

The eBooks service, which has been available for some time now through our local library system (RCLS), contains books purchased by all RCLS libraries. New eBook titles are added regularly. **Please note: To see all of the books available to you** (as a member of Thrall) **you must first log into the eBooks system.**

OverDrive recently announced a new series of **accessible eBooks for visually disabled patrons.** Further details about this free service can be found in our **Reference Services** blog at [www.thrall.org/blogs](http://www.thrall.org/blogs)

We know – because *you tell us* – eBooks are definitely "not for everybody," either because they require computers or portable devices, can be too technical to set up, or that they are not altogether visually appealing (especially if you tend to read for long periods of time), or, as some of you have explained, they are not yet perfect or preferable substitutes for more traditional books in print.

We appreciate hearing from you, and we want to reassure you that we continue to work to cultivate *all* of our collections so that all members of the library can access and enjoy materials and services regardless of the format. Your interests factor directly and primarily in our decisions.

If you know of a title or an author you believe we should own, please feel free let us know about it. Please stop by or call our **Reference Department** (341-5461), or use our online form ([www.thrall.org/suggestabook](http://www.thrall.org/suggestabook)) to share suggestions. You can also **suggest books to other readers** or **browse their recommendations** through our free **RAVES!** service ([www.thrall.org/raves](http://www.thrall.org/raves)).

## Thrall Home Page Update [www.thrall.org](http://www.thrall.org)

If you visited our library home page recently, you might have noticed some book cover images along with a new page ([www.thrall.org/newtitles.html](http://www.thrall.org/newtitles.html)) featuring covers of recently published works of fiction, nonfiction, and biographies. These images, used with permission from our library system RCLS and content provider Syndetic Solutions, enable you to browse new books visually. Just click on a book to instantly search our library catalog!

## Special Coverage Center Updates [www.thrall.org/special](http://www.thrall.org/special)

Important local interests, such as **hydraulic fracturing** ("fracking"), as well as major situations around the globe (e.g. **Gulf Oil Spill, Egypt, the recent earthquake / tsunami Japan**) are all made readily accessible through Thrall's **Special Coverage Center.** Links in the Center can help you bypass the informational chaos surrounding these topics when searching online and to reach essential and official sources of news, advisories, and more.

## LightSwitch Search Tools Expanded [www.thrall.org/lightswitch](http://www.thrall.org/lightswitch)

Our educational and interactive Internet search tools, known as LightSwitch, connect you with some of the best specialized search engines available online.

The latest search topic is **Dictionaries and Thesauri.** If you would like to learn where you can find definitions or synonyms and antonyms for words, go to the link above and select **Dictionaries** as your topic.

Each LightSwitch Search Tools page includes links to specific sections of our own Web guides. Click the **Enlighten Your Search** link to explore these links and to discover more high-quality sources and services online as well as those available within your library system.

## Community Database Updated [www.thrall.org/corgs](http://www.thrall.org/corgs)

Our Reference staff members have been working these past few months to confirm and update information in our Community Organization Database. New records have been added as well. You can access this database at the link above or directly through our home page under the **Community Orgs.** link in the central list of services.

## Thrall Guides Search: *Supercharged!* [www.thrall.org/guides](http://www.thrall.org/guides)

Before, our Guides search engine "only" let you search through thousands of excellent websites annotated and contained in our Web guides. Now it searches everything – all our locally searchable databases – instantly! Now Included in the search results are:

- **All Thrall Guides** ([thrall.org/guides](http://thrall.org/guides))
- **Ready Reference Center** ([thrall.org/readyref](http://thrall.org/readyref))
- **All Thrall Blogs** ([thrall.org/blogs](http://thrall.org/blogs))
- **Special Coverage Center** ([thrall.org/special](http://thrall.org/special))
- **Current Interests Center** ([thrall.org/current](http://thrall.org/current))
- **Database Descriptions** ([thrall.org/databases](http://thrall.org/databases))
- **Local History Images** ([thrall.org/imsearch](http://thrall.org/imsearch))
- **Community Database** ([thrall.org/corgs](http://thrall.org/corgs))
- **RAVES! for Readers** ([thrall.org/raves](http://thrall.org/raves))

You can also jump right into the library catalog (title, author, subject, or keyword) at any time, or make use of the library resources sections included in most of our guides to find and request library materials.

### A New Database: *World News Digest* Select **Multicultural** at [www.thrall.org/databases](http://www.thrall.org/databases)

Available at Thrall and at home to members of our library, this database provides access to decades of U.S. and international news from the printed edition of *Facts On File World News Digest*. The WND database is updated every week and covers major social, economic, and political, events all the way back to November 1940!

### Two Thrall History Guides Updated [www.thrall.org/bhm](http://www.thrall.org/bhm) [www.thrall.org/whm](http://www.thrall.org/whm)

Two of our history information guides have been updated and expanded within the past couple of months. Our **African-American History** and **Women's History** guides contain new websites and improved access to library services (such as our history databases), reference works, and materials available within our library system.

### Ready Reference Center Updates [www.thrall.org/readyref](http://www.thrall.org/readyref)

Our Ready Reference Center continues to evolve weekly. Used by local patrons, our own staff members, as well as online researchers within and beyond our library system, this "guide of guides" offers the best of both worlds: some of the most interesting and authoritative information to be found online as well as direct access to related items in the library catalog.

Some of the newest areas and subsections are:

- **Accounting**
- **Cooking: Recipes Search Engines**
- **Cooking: Terminology**
- **Writing: Writer's Markets**

Our children's edition of this service ("**Ref Is Ready**" at [www.thrall.org/ref](http://www.thrall.org/ref)) also continues to be developed as we discover and incorporate new and useful resources.

## Philosophy & Ethics Collections

Over the past year we have expanded our philosophy and ethics (moral philosophy) collections to include many new, interesting, and informative titles. From reality to the ridiculous, our circulating philosophy collection collectively examines the great questions of life along with some of the funnier aspects of human existence. For more details, as well as a list of some recently acquired titles, please visit our **Reference Blog** ([thrall.org/blogs](http://thrall.org/blogs)).

### "Tell Me More" Language Service Select **Languages** at [www.thrall.org/databases](http://www.thrall.org/databases)

This popular language learning service, free to all Thrall members, just got easier to use and now works with all current Web browsers, Firefox included! "Tell Me More" now uses the **Adobe Flash plugin** (freely available at [adobe.com](http://adobe.com)). Languages include Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), and Japanese will be available later this year.

## Reference Collection Overview

Middletown Thrall Library's Reference collections, located mostly in front of our Reference Department, contain some of the finest and most current encyclopedias, directories, and specialized reference works ever published. Because reference items never circulate, they are always available whenever you need to consult with them.

This collection is arranged exactly as the Nonfiction section of our circulation book: according to the **Dewey Decimal system**, which divides up all of human knowledge between the numbers **000** and **999**.

We encourage you to browse our Reference collections and also to inquire at the **Reference Desk** as to what materials (reference, electronic, or circulating) might be available based on your interests or research needs.

## Collection Highlights from Reference

***Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History***  
Bonnie G. Smith, editor.  
Call number: **REF 305.4203 OXF**

This **four-volume encyclopedia** contains over 1,200 articles. Topics include biographies of notable women, histories of women's rights and movements, social issues, gender studies, and much more. If you are high school or college student doing a report on women's history or simply want to learn more about women's history, this is an excellent source to consult.

***Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present: From the Age of Segregation to the Twenty-first Century.***  
Paul Finkelman, editor.  
Call number: **REF 973.0496 ENC**

This is a truly encyclopedia set in every sense: it consists of **five volumes** and offers well over 1,000 articles covering all aspects of African American History. It also includes over 600 detailed biographies and information on key historical persons.

If you are interested in either of these Reference works, you can find them on our Reference shelves filed according to the "call numbers" specified above. A librarian can assist you in locating these and similar items.