



**GLVWG
Offline
Monthly
voice of
the
Greater
Lehigh
Valley
Writers
Group
founded
1993**

WHO'S WHO FOR 2008

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(cont)

JUNE 28, 2008

**Come meet
Rita Guthrie
PR FOR WRITERS**

After earning a degree in studio art and taking some graduate classes in logistics management and systems analysis and design, Rita Guthrie made her mark in one of the toughest markets anywhere: the United States Army. She was a civilian employee at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, in CECOM, the Communications and Electronics Materials Readiness Command. But it was in the 1990s as a board member of a nonprofit group that Rita discovered she was "a natural at public relations, good at getting free press and coming up with PR concepts and 'stunts'—and I don't mean scaling the outside of a skyscraper!" Her cohorts on the board nicknamed her the "idea lady" and began referring her for PR work.

After several years of offering pro bono services, Rita finally hung her shingle early in 2005 as *Rita Guthrie, Public Relations Consultant*. With the expansion of the business and a Web site in development, she is in the process of rebranding as *Open Door Public Relations*.

As the founder and head of this consultancy, Rita built a reputation as an energetic and creative advisor, one with a knack for instilling confidence, leveraging expertise, and building potential in small business owners and entrepreneurs. Her client list runs the gamut, from artists to doctors, financial advisors to social workers. By name, some of them include Marla Duran (a fashion designer), Edge Restaurant, Lehigh Valley Grand Prix, Creative Closets, Nacci Printing/Iron Pigs, and Blue Mountain Winery.

Rita also is the creator and leader of the Lehigh Valley Idea Web, a friendly business-brainstorming group that meets at the Whitehall Public Library to discuss marketing issues. She also organizes networking dinners and events in the Lehigh Valley, giving business owners an opportunity to connect and learn from one another, building their client base in the process. Always looking to increase the "fun quotient" in her events, Rita has organized events including indoor go-kart racing and a fashion show, and she's currently at work on a wine-tasting event. In her spare time, Rita sings lead in an a cappella chorus.

For Rita, even those who can carve out writing time only after the kids are in bed or before the sun rises should think of their endeavors as a small business, for the simple reason that they will take themselves and their efforts more seriously. Some of the matters she discusses with her writing clients include: (cont. Pg. 3, see PR for Writers)

Firehouse Fri Chair: Karen Rose
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2008

MEETING SCHEDULE

Saturdays

Palmer Library

9:45 am

(speakers subject to change)

MEETING DATES

June 28—Spotlight: Fern Hill will read a chapter from her recently published book, *Charlie's Choice: The Life and Times of Charley Parkhurst*.

September 27—"How Bookstores Work"—Karen Rose
Spotlight on Angel Ackerman

October 25—"From Niche Writer to Book Author: Leaping the Great Divide"—Cindy Ross

November 22—"Finding Your Voice"—Diane Fleming

WRITERS CAFE

2nd Wed. Every Month

Borders, Whitehall Mall

7 – 9 pm

As always, see more information on our website, www.glvwg.org and postings on our Yahoo GLVWG group.

FIREHOUSE FRIDAYS AT TOUCHSTONE

Dates TBA

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Summertime, and the livin' is Easy...

Every spring I have this reoccurring dream. I'm sitting on the deck with my laptop. Notes and papers are on the table along with a cool drink. There is a tiny umbrella leaning out of the glass at just the right angle. Birds twitter and insects buzz as I tap away at the keyboard—the writer at work.

And every year, I try to make that dream a summer reality. I've already started. I'm on the deck, typing away. The cool drink is orange juice (no umbrella at 9:30 am), and the one page of notes for this piece has blown into the yard where the dog is chasing it. My chance of retrieving it is slim. It is a bit cool, and I may have to slip on a sweatshirt—things are not going well.

I know what is happening. My early attempt to bring my dream to life is already crumbling under the weight of reality. From my perch upon the deck, I can see that the lawn needs to be mowed, the garage door could use some paint, and there is a hole being dug in the impatiens—evidently my dog has plans to archive my notes.

I am in my den now where it is warmer. Books, piles of notes, a printer, scanner, and mail surround me. It is a familiar and comfortable writing environment. This article will be finished before noon as I resign myself to writing indoors where walls serve as blinders from the distractions of the day.

But the dream never dies—not completely. There is a reason vacations are called getaways. A week at the shore gets me away from the lawn, the garden, and the mundane chores of daily life. Free from distractions, I can sit, ankle deep in sand on a beach chair under an umbrella tilted at just the right angle, notes pinned down by a conch shell as I peck away at my laptop—the writer at work.

As I dream of that summer day when I can sit in the sand and write, reality rears its ugly head. I know what salt water, sand, and Coppertone 50+ can do to a keyboard. And a computer screen becomes black in the glare of the sun. The alternative is a notebook and an inexpensive, lightweight, portable, air-cooled, hand-operated word processor with the little rubber text-editing feature on the end.

It is the same every year. The distractions at home are replaced by distractions on the beach. I look up from my notebook, pencil in hand, and see a girl in a bikini, a sea gull chasing a crab, a kid with a kite, and—did I mention the girl in the bikini? I give up. I grab some postcards and scribble hollow messages to friends and relatives at home. My wife picks up her camera and takes my picture. It goes into our vacation photo album—the writer at work.

Have a good summer everyone!



(PR for Writers, cont)- What has the author already done to promote and sell his/her books?

- What marketing material already exists? Are there existing business cards, a Web site, brochures, book cover samples, bookmarks, testimonials, and book signings? Is there a photo "head shot" and bio? A media kit?

- Is the author's message getting across the way he/she wants it to be received?

- How has the author branded him/herself? Is it consistent?

- Is the author's book tied to classes, talks, or workshops? Are they branded together as a package?

- Does the author continue to explore different audiences for his/her writings?

Join GLVWG on June 28, 2008, for tips on how you can promote yourself and your work; determine if hiring a publicist may be right for you; and learn how to screen potential publicists for the job. To sign up for Rita's business networking e-newsletter, contact her at idealady@verizon.net.

GLVWG VOTING TIME JUNE MEETING

CANDIDATES AT THIS WRITING (YOU MAY STILL BE ADDED TO THE BALLOT)



President – Angel Ackerman
Angel R. Ackerman has spent the last fifteen years exploring newspapers in the Lehigh Valley, working for NJN Publishing, Blue Valley Times, the ill-fated Chronicles and the now defunct Lehigh Valley

News Group. She has freelanced for The Morning Call, The Newark Star-Ledger, business publications and corporate clients. In addition to teaching her friends and critique partners the nuances of grammar via the Ackerman school of hard knocks, Angel volunteers as secretary and advisory board member for the Penn State Cooperative Extension of Northampton County and works part-time coordinating after school computer literacy programs and public relations for the YWCA of Bethlehem. She handled PR at two of our conferences. Her creative interests typically revolve around paranormal chick lit, and she pitched her trilogy at The Write Stuff as "imagine Stephen King rewriting "The Devil Wears Prada."

Vice President – Julia MacAdam

Julia MacAdam writes children's literature, children's poetry and young adult fiction. She is a computer technician at Allentown School District. Julia has been a member of GLVWG for three years and is currently the Writer's Cafe Chair. She has also served on various community boards, including the Lehigh Valley Figure Skating Club, the Absecon Galloway Jaycees, the New Jersey Jaycees, Jarrets Run Academy Board of directors and the US Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Secretary – Joan Brownell

Joan Brownell is a retired elementary school teacher. She has created and edited a church newsletter; created a curriculum program for pre-school-aged children approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education; served as secretary for the YMCA; and participated in writing school curricular guidelines. She lives in Laurys Station with her husband and West Highland terrier. They have two daughters and two granddaughters. At the present time Joan writes spiritual books and children's stories in which the characters learn life lessons by making wiser choices.

Treasurer – Peggy Adamczyk

Peggy Adamczyk has been a member of GLVWG since the beginning. Since then she served on many conference committees and has been the Program Chair. For the past three years, she's been the sitting Treasurer. As a member of Pennwriters, a state-wide writing organization, she served as Secretary for two and a half years, then as President for another two years. Peggy attended Warren County Community College and is currently published in Newsletters and Newspapers. She is working on her fourth Science Fiction novel.

Member Rep — Patrick Russamano

Member Rep — Jerry Waxler

Member Rep — Rachel Thompson

Rachel Thompson is a freelance writer and artist with fiction and nonfiction credits in newspapers and magazines. She is a long time human rights and gay rights organizer and activist. Rachel is a former board member or officer of LV Pride, HAVEN, Altogether Now, SPARK, and Habitat for Humanity. She also volunteers for other arts and equality concerned organizations. Rachel was the chair of our highly successful 2008 Write Stuff Conference and has also served on the board as our Library Chair. She is currently writing a young adult fantasy as well as a nonfiction book based on her "Construction Guru" column.

Member Rep — Tiffani Burnette-Velez

Tiffani Burnett-Velez has been a freelance writer for more than a decade. Her work has appeared in *Pennsylvania Magazine*, *Country Discoveries*, *St Anthony Messenger*, *Canticle Magazine*, *Catholic Planet*, and she has written and edited for several niche periodicals and newspapers throughout the country. She founded and has edited an online Catholic magazine called *Nicean* for nearly a year now, and is currently ghost-writing a biographical book on domestic violence. She has published one novel, *Budapest*, through her own Little Flower Press, the first Catholic Literary Press on the East Coast. Tiffani studied English Literature at Toccoa Falls College and Immaculata College. She has taught both creative writing and creative nonfiction writing classes and workshops through local venues, and is currently working with local fellow authors to create the Jim Thorpe Writer's Guild.

Member Rep — Precie Schroyer

For the past nine years, **Precie A. Schroyer** has worked as a technical writer, handling documentation, web sites and marketing materials for a local computer software company. She has a Ph.D. in English Literature from Lehigh University and has taught Composition & Literature, as well as Creative Nonfiction. She has had short fiction published in the online literary magazine *Every Day Fiction*, and she is currently writing two novels.

URGENT APPEAL

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GLVWG needs a Membership Coordinator ASAP to help provide a smooth transition into our next season.

Responsibilities are:

- ❖ Track membership dues payments on Excel spreadsheet, which is already prepared.
- ❖ Mail post card reminders when necessary for over-dues, and keep treasurer and newsletter editor informed when memberships are cancelled. Memberships are cancelled when 3 months overdue, but may be reinstated as new memberships for \$40.
- ❖ Contact John Evans of your interest in this minimal labor job.

We remind all members to pay your dues annually during the month which appears after your name on your newsletter address. Renewals are \$30. To join is \$40.

WRITERS SHOWCASE

Let us showcase your stuff. Members only. Send us what you have. Essays, articles, memoirs, short fiction, nonfiction, poetry. Limit to 1000 words, preferably shorter. We reserve the right to suggest slight editing changes, but

will always check with you first. Content Rating: PG. Please send your stuff (electronic only) to Janet at planetj@ptd.net. Monthly deadlines are the 5th of the month. We do not publish in July, August, March or December.

Close, But No Cigar

by Gene Richards



The scraggly old Rhode Island Red stood on the weathered fence-post, stretched its scrawny neck into the early morning mist and crowed as loud as his frail,

feathered body would allow. It was 5 a.m. The gray light of dawn was just breaking across a still mostly black sky. Friends and relatives of the bride and groom, determined not to be late, had already begun to arrive. They were a noisy bunch. Determined to get a good seat, they clamored into the chicken house which had just been swept and lined with wooden folding chairs from the Slumber Valley Funeral Parlor. They scurried about trying to secure a good place from which they could see the ceremony. Strings of glaring light bulbs stretched across the low ceiling and dangled close above their heads, affording some warmth in the chilly morning air and a festive atmosphere for the blessed occasion.

The preacher, little old Amos Alexander from the Miracle Creek Community Church stood off in the far corner rehearsing his reading of the service.

Skinny Jane with the long white neck sat up straight as a poker in the chair at the left end of the first row. She was the designated photographer. She was dressed in her new bright red and white print sheath. She held a big old camera with a big potato-masher flash which she gripped by its neck as if it were a chicken she was about to pluck.

Aunt Maggie, who had been appointed wedding consultant, bustled about with her stop-watch, timing every move and directing everyone regarding their role and proper position. She had allotted just 30 minutes for the entire ceremony. It had to be done within that time, because she had a previous commitment to lead the church choir in a car wash at the local Sinclair Station.

Cousin Beulah from New York was going to sing. She was not a professional, so to speak, but she did live close to Lincoln Center, and that was enough to qualify her for the featured performance. She came with a limited repertoire, but she did know When the

Lights Go Out All Over the World, and everybody admitted as to how that would be most appropriate.

Billy Joe, the prospective groom, had just slopped the pigs and Amy Lee, the bride-to-be, had just milked the cows. Aunt Maggie took them aside and impressed upon them the critical nature of her commitment to the car wash, and advised them to change immediately into their “Sunday best” so they could commence with the service. When next they appeared, Amy Lee was all dolled up and Billy Joe was pretty near ready, but he was having trouble with his tie. Every time he tied it, the knot came out too big. Finally, someone suggested he take it off and tie it so he could see what he was doing, then slip it back over his head and neck and slide it in place. He did that, and while he was tying the tie Skinny Jane stood up to take his picture. “Hold it Billy Joe,” she called out. “I need to focus. Don’t move. It’ll just take me a second or two.....or three. Okay,” she said: “Smile.” She pressed the shutter release. The camera clicked. “Did the flash go off?” she asked.

“No!” everyone shouted.

“Oh dear. Let me try again.” She cranked the camera and tried again.

“Did it go off that time?” she asked.

“Can’t you tell?” asked Aunt Maggie.

“No,” said Skinny Jane. “I close my eyes so I don’t get blinded by the flash.”

“It didn’t go off,” someone yelled.

“Hold on Billy Joe,” Skinny Jane said. “Let me check the flash.” She opened the battery compartment. There were no batteries. “There aren’t any batteries!” she cried. “There aren’t any batteries!”

“Marlene,” someone shouted, “go in the house and get the camera that’s on the dining room table.” Marlene was Billy Joe’s 12-year-old sister. Moments later she returned with the camera. It was a brand new cardboard disposable camera from S-Mart.

“That’ll get it,” someone yelled.

“They’re good. I got one just like it,” someone else yelled.

Skinny Jane snapped the picture. Billy Joe got his tie in place. Amy Lee told him he was really handsome. He told her she was beautiful.

Reverend Alexander began the service. Cousin Beulah began When the Lights Go Out

“Stop!” Aunt Maggie yelled. “Times-up. I’ve gotta’ go to the car wash.”

“But what about the wedding?” cried Amy Lee.

“We’ll have to do it next month,” shouted Aunt Maggie, as she headed out the door. “Check your calendar.”

Manna from Heaven

By Mike Boushell

(Note: Mike has given us permission to print his Writer's Digest Contest Entry - Contest #11 **Writing Prompt was: A character walks into a kitchen and finds something that isn't supposed to be there.** 750 words or less.)

*Members: Would you like to submit a prompted story to Showcase on GLVWG OFFLINE? See 302 writing prompts at <http://www.creativewritingprompts.com/>. When you sweep your cursor over the 302 numbers, prompts pop up like gifts from your muse. Choose one that grabs you and write a 750 word story, or a poem, and send it to Janet at planetj@ptd.net for publication. Now, back to Mike's **Manna from Heaven...**)*

In Tannersville there were three kinds of poor: “poor,” “dirt poor,” and “Swopes poor.” The latter stigma included a belly so empty that a pot of potato soup on the stove meant it was either payday at the sawmill or Christmas. Since it was a just another rainy Monday in March, it was neither, so the pile of dollar bills on the table made Esther Swopes - - Aunt Esther to the eight runny-nosed youngsters she’d been caring for since her kid sister's death while giving birth to her fifth child before the age of nineteen - - even more confused than was normal, even for the easily befuddled Esther.

Her first thought was that her husband “Sticks” had hit it big in the late night poker game over at the pool hall. But even Esther knew that Sticks would no sooner leave his winnings out in the open than give up gambling. Besides, he rarely stumbled in before eight, and it was just twenty-five past six in the morning. No, this was a real noggin buster. She couldn’t begin to unravel the likes of it before she’d had her first cup of coffee.

Now Esther might have been a bit slow on the uptake, but she wasn’t daft. She fisted the mysterious treasure off the table, stuffing the bills into the pocket of her worn-out chenille robe. Then she shuffled silently across the cold linoleum floor, jammed a few sticks of firewood into the

kitchen stove, lit it, and headed to the bedroom to wake the kids for school. The bus wouldn't wait around for no Swopes, and today she'd have extra errands to run.

Susie and Emily were sound asleep in the corner, snuggled together beneath the quilt Granny Burns had used to keep warm back when she and Mason had kept house over in Reeders.

Shanaya, Mikaya, and Bethesda each had their own cots now that they were starting to become young women.

She could hear Petey, Teddy and Curtis stirring in the next room, the three were whispering about something, but when she shouldered open the door they pretended to be asleep.

Esther played along. She began to talk to herself as if unaware of their ploy.

"My goodness these children are an ugly brood," she said. "My poor sister must have mated with a goat."

Petey and Teddy were giggling softly, stirring, though almost imperceptibly. Curtis stayed stone still. So naturally he became Esther's target.

"I wonder if this one is even breathing," she muttered, moving her hand palm-up just inches above the boy's nose. "Nope, just as I suspected, he's dead. Just as well too. He was always the worst of the lot."

With that she leaned over Curtis and began tickling him to life by digging her fingers playfully into his meatless ribs.

"Must have been wrong," she said. "He just looks dead. Maybe some cold water will bring him back. I'll go fetch the bucket."

"No. No. I'll get up, Aunt Esther," pleaded the now laughing boy. "I promise I'll get up."

"Well, ain't that some kinda miracle," said Esther. "I must have the power of 'The layin' on of hands.' Umm, umm, umm. The Lord He do work wonders." And with that the house seemed to stir to life.

Not long afterwards, everyone waited hungrily at the kitchen table as Esther rationed out the last of the warm bread.

"Go easy on that jar of peanut butter," she said. "The Good Lord willing we'll have a fresh one by tonight, but for now we got to stretch it out a bit."

"Mama," said Susie, "Are we as poor as they say?"

"As poor as who say?" asked Esther.

"Everybody. They all say we're as poor as church mice."

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Well girl, we ain't got much, I do suppose. But if being church mice is bad, I'll take being poor over a lot of worse things. Anyhow, girl, we ain't as broke as we were yesterday. Seems we got a guardian angel watching over us. Anybody know who that guardian angel might be?"

Nobody said a word. If anyone knew he wasn't talking.

"Shanaya, Mikaya, anything you have to say?"

"No Auntie."

"Susie, Emily, Bethesda?"

"No, Mama."

"Well, boys?"

"No, Auntie Esther."

"What about you, Curtis? You served your first mass yesterday."

"Could be a miracle, said Curtis. "Father James said yesterday there are angels all around us."

"Yes, Curtis, I believe he's right."

SUCCESS STORIES



Note: another *GLVWG Membership entitlement*. All *GLVWG's success stories* will receive mention in this column. Just E-mail planetj@ptd.net and reserve your space. You'll also get publicity on our website.

Fern J. Hill is delighted to announce the publication of *Charley's Choice*, a fictional biography of a stagecoach driver during the California gold rush era who, upon death, was found to be a woman. Fern will be reading a chapter from *Charley's Choice* at the June meeting as our spotlight presenter. The book will be available for purchase at that time. For the occasion, a celebratory cake created by our own Melanie Gold will be a part of our hospitality fare.

Dave Keehn. At GLVWG's April 26 meeting, Dave mentioned that *North & South*, a major Civil War-related magazine, would soon be issuing a feature article he wrote entitled "Strong Arm Of Secession: The Knights of the Golden Circle in the Crisis of 1861". For those who are interested, the relevant issue, Volume 10, Number 6 has just hit Barnes and Noble and other bookstores and news stands (or can be ordered through the web).

The K G. C. was a militaristic secret society with around 100,000 members that operated before the Civil War and played a key role in precipitating the secession of several

Southern States and forming the nascent Confederate Army. At a GLVWG workshop Dave attended, Steven Fried suggested he should first try to publish a magazine article as a way to interest publishers in the related nonfiction book he is working on. This seems to be good advice since yesterday Dave received a strong expression of interest from a major university press.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Long time members: Be sure to introduce yourselves at our next meeting, or at Writers Café, or Firehouse Fridays to our most recent GLVWG members:

Dan Putkowski of Folsom, PA writes *Mainstream*. **Susan Mickley**, who lives in Whitehall, PA, and **Lee Upton**, who teaches at Lafayette College. Lee has presented many workshops and programs for GLVWG.

ATTENTION NEWBIES

To receive your invitation to GLVWG's Yahoo groups, please contact Becky Bartlett (perdita1989-email@yahoo.com). We currently have Yahoo groups for board members, membership at large and for critique groups.

GETTING TO YOU KNOW YOU

From New Member, Janet Robertson, Ph.D

"...and watch out for good things, because sometimes you don't know what they are." – Janet's son at age 4

I am female, going gray, losing muscle tone, (just bought reading glasses), and I'm a radical gardener. I had a career and it ate me. Now, I am starting a second career, trying to balance in tree pose, and learning to dye my hair. I am attempting to write books for 8 to 13-year-old children. My goal is to write a book that stays with the reader as he or she grows into an adult. I want to

teach children the lessons of life while they are young enough to learn them. I first became interested in GLVWG when I learned that critique groups were available. My favorite quote comes from my son. He was 4 when he said this. "Watch out for bad things. And watch out for good things, because sometimes you don't know what they are."

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

From new Member, Daniel Putkowski

I discovered the Greater Lehigh Valley Writer's group over a year ago while searching for a group of people to share the writing experience. Since I travel a great deal, it is difficult to be a reliable member. However, I've decided to join and enjoy the events as often as possible.

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My novel, *An Island Away*, was published in May 2008. It is the third one I've written and falls into the mainstream category. That said, my first book (not yet published but maybe soon) was a crime novel, an area I dabble with from time to time. Other areas of interest include historical and some detective fiction as well as a touch of political intrigue.

Thankfully, I don't suffer from writer's block. I usually have two, sometimes three, stories going at one time, which can be a problem too. It's nice to visit with some characters and then leave them for others. Of course, the result is that it takes much longer to finish a story. Mine are quite long. The original manuscript for *An Island Away* was 274,000 words. My editor talked me into clipping it to around 200,000. I'm not a fan of today's brevity cult. Slender gems, as some people are calling these short books today, belong in short story collections, not as stand-alone works.

I look forward to meeting new people and improving my writing skills. If I've learned anything through this process, it's that there's always something new to learn. My website is www.danielputkowski.com where you can find excerpts and more info.

Publishing Opportunities

Source: "Writer's Relief, Inc. is a highly recommended author's submission service. Established in 1994, Writer's Relief will help you target the best markets for your creative writing. Visit their website at <http://www.writersrelief.com> to receive FREE Writers' Newsflash which contains valuable leads, guidelines and deadlines for writing in all genres."

Anthologies and Special-Themed Journals Seeking Submissions

Deadline: 08/01/08.

Submit to: *Alive Now*. JoAnn Evans Miller, Editor. E-mail (preferred) to: alivenow@upperroom.org mail to: 1908 Grand Avenue, Box 340004, Nashville, TN 37203-0004. Theme: The Prince of Peace; MUST BE about Christian spirituality; NO adult language or sexual imagery. Theme listed on each page of submission. Type: Poetry (40 lines MAX), short shorts (400 words MAX).

Deadline: 10/31/08

Submit to: "Voices of" Anthology via Web site: <http://www.lachancepublishing.com/submissions.php>. Theme: Dogs. MUST be educational, inspirational, and emotional. Visit Web site for complete information and submission guidelines: <http://www.lachancepublishing.com/guidelines.html>. Type: Essays, true-to-life stories (3,000 words MAX).

**GREATER LEHIGH VALLEY
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**Read
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(no
squinting)**

HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE

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We meet at the **PALMER LIBRARY**
3 Weller Place, Palmer Township.
Refreshments at 9:45 a.m., business
meeting at 10, program at 11.

Coming from the east or west on Route 22,
exit at the 25th Street Easton exit. Follow
Route 248 west to Newburg Rd which is
the second stoplight beyond Palmer Park
Mall. Turn left at the light, then left into
Palmer Municipal Center. Coming from
Nazareth and points north, take Route 248
east, turn right at Newburg Rd, then left
into Palmer Municipal Center. From
Bethlehem, you can follow Route 191
north to the Newburg Inn, turn right onto
Newburg Road (east) and follow it until
you see the Palmer Municipal Center on
the right, about a block before it meets
Route 248.