

# A triple word score

---

*By Christine M. Quirk   April 14, 2011   Publication: Times & Courier (Lancaster-Clinton, MA)   Page: 1   Word Count: 713*

'Did you go?'

"I have no vowels."

"That's because I have seven of them."

Welcome to Monday night Scrabble at the Thayer Memorial Library.

For about six months now, players have been meeting to share word tiles and company.

The group was born out of a love of games.

Marie Espinola, one of the core members, said she attends lunch at the Sterling Senior Center each Tuesday because they have game time.

"I was talking to Nancy [assistant director Nancy Hayes Clune] and she said they were going to try to start it here," Espinola said.

The first meeting included Espinola and Sandy Nowicki, who were soon joined by Joy Zendzian and husband and wife, Joe and Marcy Brathwaite.

They have become the core group and they joke that they each have their own special roles: Joe Brathwaite is the scoring champ, Zendzian is the humor champ, Marcy Brathwaite is the scorer, Nowicki is the word champ and Espinola is the heart of the group.

Most of the time, the players meet in the staff room on the first floor for letters and conversation.

"We did have some games upstairs in the adult fiction section," Zendzian said, "but unfortunately, our voices are not library quiet."

The group uses the Super Scrabble version of the game, which has twice the letter tiles, more than 400 spaces (compared to the original 225), and quadruple word and letter spaces. Though they come armed with the official electronic Scrabble dictionary, the games are friendly and social. The players often help one another and pass around a "cheat sheet" which lists two letter words, J, X and Z words and words with at least 66 percent vowels, among others.

"We play for fun," Zendzian said.

She added that her motivation is not only a love of words; it's also to exercise her brain.

"I love Scrabble, but part of the reason I come out is because I have MS [Multiple Sclerosis]," Zendzian said, adding that the cognitive exercise helps keep her sharp.

"It's good it's a warm environment - I'd be discouraged otherwise. I do better when I'm not pressured, I think."

The group meets at 6 p.m. and usually plays until the library closes at 8. Most of the time, given the expanded board and the laughter and conversation, there's enough time to get one game in.

"We've made three new friends that we wouldn't have made otherwise," Marcy Brathwaite said.

Scrabble is not the only activity available for adults at the library. There is also a monthly book club and, Adult Librarian Nancy Hayes Clune said, several other programs running throughout the year, partially funded by the Friends of the Library.

"We do a lot," she said. "We have a great group of Friends - they make lots of money at the book sale and they give us thousands of dollars."

Programs are also paid for through a grant from the Rosemary Davis Memorial Fund. Davis was a Lancaster resident who left part of her estate to the Greater Worcester Community Foundation to be used specifically for wildlife, nature and environmental programs. This year, the library was granted \$5,000.

"Most towns have no funds for programs; they have to rely on their Friends groups, but we have the grant too," Clune said. "We are really fortunate."

Combined with \$3,000 from the Friends, Clune has been able to fund several programs. Coming up in the next month alone are Native American flute music, an Earth Day celebration featuring stories and songs, a slide show about the life cycle of loons and two health and wellness programs.

There truly is something for everyone: In the coming months, the library will both host a program about shingles and a presentation called "Motown and the Civil Rights movement." A full list can be found at the library or at [thayermemoriallibrary.org](http://thayermemoriallibrary.org).

"Some people go to all our programs, some are family friendly, and some are informational," Clune said.

Attendance at the programs varies, but Clune pointed out that each of them encourages people to come out and meet others with like interests. She pointed to the Scrabble group as an example.

"So many things in the world are impersonal, but this is real people in a room around a table," Clune said. "I think we need more of that. "

---

**Times & Courier (Lancaster-Clinton, MA)**

**Date:** April 14, 2011

**Page:** 1

Copyright, 2011, CP Media Inc. d.b.a. Community Newspaper Company. No content may be reproduced without the owner's written permission.