

"Time is never wasted in a library. Libraries are the keepers of our history as well as the promoters of a literate and well-educated future for the people of the world," Grace Meeth once said. Unfortunately, in this day and age, libraries aren't viewed in this way. The education and entertainment provided in a library cannot be found in any other place, but despite this, time is found worthier when spent on hours on a computer or television. Sadly, the beauty of the library is now a foreign concept to today's generation, and as technology advances, that beauty may never be restored. Libraries used to be a fun and free way to educate yourself and get together with your community. It was a wonderful place to meet new people, discuss current events, and just socialize in a peaceful environment.

In the May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1963 issue of the *Independent Leader* newspaper, we see that libraries were taken as a level of high importance. In Colonia, the principal of School 22 and the P.T.A library chairman hosted a Library Open House "...in celebration of the third anniversary of the school's central library and in observance of National Library Week," as stated on page 7. In the 1960s, they actually felt obliged to celebrate National Library week. Events like this brought a community together, seeing that they all understood the importance of a library. In this article, guests at this event were listed, and it shows how significant it was at the time. Guests would gather together in celebration for libraries, because they truly enjoyed it, and wanted to praise it. An event like this hasn't taken place in today's community for years. An activity like this would be another opportunity for the community to get together, and it was very valuable to them. In a similar article regarding National Library week on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1967, we see, once again, that a library is a very frequently visited and enjoyed place that is being granted \$10,000 "...to develop more fully its reference and adult non-fiction book collection," as stated on page 6. \$10,000 is an abundant amount of money, but improvements are worth it. This just goes to show how much money, effort, and time was spent into making the library the best possible place to be. It was a very treasured place back then, and brought the society together.

Furthermore, there is an obvious difference between the uses and importance of a library since the 1960s to today. The 1963 issue of *Independent Leader* perfectly demonstrates

how seriously libraries were considered, and how it brought people together at an open house. Also, they used to be the only way to obtain information, since computers weren't around at that time. If you had a report due, or needed a little help on a subject, you'd open up a book, not a website. This concept is so uncommon nowadays that you never see many kids going to the *library* for help. In my opinion, the purpose of libraries back in the 1960s seemed like a lovely way to come together as a community in an efficient learning environment. The best part was, it was free! It didn't cost you a penny to educate and entertain yourself. Unfortunately, today, no one realizes what a priceless thing the library really is.

In addition, the role that libraries play currently is far less effective and essential as it once was. I personally volunteer at the Woodbridge Main Library every Saturday, so I see how it's not given the respect it really deserves. First of all, it is not a frequently visited place by many. It is somewhat isolated, due to the fact that it is unnecessary to obtain your information from a book rather than easily typing it into Google and finding a million results in a few seconds. I understand it may be simpler and less work, but it is definitely not worth abandoning the library. Books are always a more trustworthy source rather than the Internet. Today, a library is just a place either our parents force us to visit, or we very occasionally show interest in. Volunteering there is an interesting experience because I see how little it is appreciated by the people who go there, and how parents usually seem like they are forcing children against their will. It is a sad scene, which is why I think it would be very fascinating to experience the comparison in libraries from the 1960s to now.

In brief, Grace Meeth's quote is true in multiple ways. Libraries are excellent educators, if only people would be more mindful of the time they waste on technology. It is now a lonely place that is never visited unless it is the last possible option. What happened to the fun we used to have there? What happened to bringing our community together? Libraries could provide us with an amazing future if we take the time and effort to visit it, free of any charge. Books are basically all we need to educate ourselves, along with determination. As I previously mentioned, the advancement of technology is not necessarily a great thing if it tears us away from our libraries. The articles from *Independent Leader* in the 1960s are evidence of what we

miss out on if we distance ourselves from it, because after all, a library is the heart of a community, and its time we restore it to its former glory.

