

The libraries of Orange
County:

Chester:
Chester Public Library

Cornwall:
Cornwall Public Library

Florida:
Florida Public Library

Goshen:
The Goshen Public
Library & Historical
Society

Greenwood Lake:
Greenwood Lake Public
Library

Highland Falls:
Highland Falls Library

Middletown:
Middletown Thrall Library

Monroe:
Monroe Free Library

Montgomery:
Montgomery Free Library

Newburgh:
Newburgh Free Library

Pine Bush:
Pine Bush Area Public
Library

Port Jervis:
Port Jervis Free Library

Tuxedo Park:
Tuxedo Park Library

Walden:
Josephine Louise Public
Library

Warwick:
The Albert Wisner Public
Library

Washingtonville:
The Moffat Library of
Washingtonville

Woodbury:
Woodbury Public Library



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**ORANGE COUNTY LIBRARIES
RECEIVE FEDERAL GRANT FOR
THE BIG READ PROGRAM**

WARWICK – Poetry and tales of horror and detective fiction will be highlighted through a unique literary endeavor this October as Orange County’s 17 public libraries celebrate the short stories and poems of Edgar Allan Poe, one of America’s best-loved authors.

The countywide Big Read initiative, coordinated by the Orange Library Association (OLA), is supported by a \$17,050 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and funding from local service organization and Friends of Library groups. The 75 communities receiving grants are being formally announced today. OLA previously received a \$15,000 Big Read grant in 2008 to conduct a countywide reading of John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath*.

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Arts Midwest.

“Edgar Allan Poe is an excellent choice for Orange County’s Big Read because of his connection to the U. S. Military Academy at West Point,” says Lisa Hewel, president of the Orange Library Association. Hewel adds, “Poe appeals to readers of all ages, so let us underestimate him nevermore.”

Poe was a cadet at West Point from July 1830 through February 19, 1831, when he was dismissed. Although he did well academically, he was not

suiting for the West Point life. He was expelled for failing to attend class and skipping mandatory chapel services.

According to the National Endowment for the Arts, “No author stays internationally popular for 150 years by accident. Poe is one of the classic authors of American literature – a master of the short story, a magician of the short poem, and critic of brilliance and originality. Poe invented the detective story, perfected the horror tale and first articulated the theory of the modern short story as well as the idea of pure poetry.”

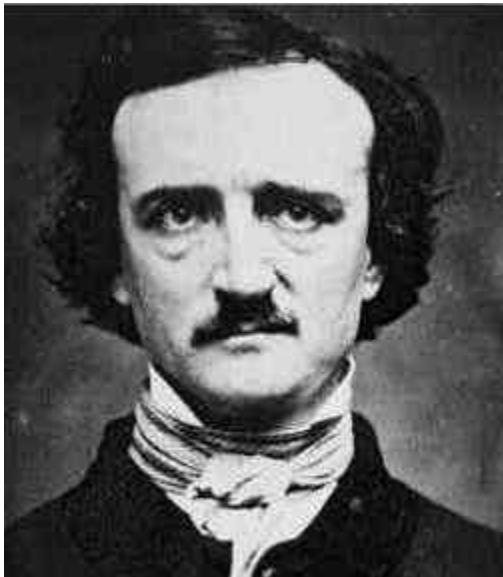
The Big Read in Orange County will include a variety of free activities, including book discussions, a theatrical production, radio programs, an art show, murder mystery dessert theater, a masquerade ball, outreach to schools, “The Big Bleed for The Big Read: Give a Pint for Poe” blood drive and more.

Activities are scheduled to run from October 1-31, with kickoff events planned the weekend of October 1-3 at the Lycian Centre in Sugar Loaf. More details are available at OLA’s The Big Read Web site: www.orangereads.org.

For more information, contact Laurie Angle at 986-1047.

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Poetry and tales of horror and detective fiction will be highlighted through a unique literary endeavor this October as Orange County’s 17 public libraries celebrate the short stories and poems of Edgar Allan Poe, one of America’s best-loved authors.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is The Big Read?

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The program provides citizens with the opportunity to read and discuss a single book within their communities. The Big Read brings together partners across the country to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment. Big Read grantees comprise a variety of organizations, including libraries, municipalities, colleges, and arts, culture, and science organizations. To date, the NEA has funded more than 500 The Big Read programs in the nation's towns and cities.

2. Why has this program been organized?

The program was created in response to the National Endowment for the Arts report *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*, which identified a critical decline in literary reading among American adults. With communities across the country as partners and by awarding grants and by improving access to the art of literature, the Arts Endowment is working toward reversing the decline in reading.

To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence, the NEA's 2007 follow-up report to *Reading at Risk*, reported that not only are Americans reading less, they are also reading less well, and these declines in reading have civic, social, and economic implications. *To Read or Not to Read* assembled data on reading trends from more than 40 sources, including federal agencies, universities, foundations and associations.

3. What is the Orange Library Association?

OLA is an organization of library staff, trustees and friends of the library from the 17 public libraries in Orange County. These libraries serve a population of 376,000 in a county bounded by the Hudson and Delaware rivers and the New Jersey border. OLA's mission is to promote library service, to encourage access to materials among all county libraries through cooperation and exchange of information, to promote state and national guidelines for library service, to educate the public about library services and funding issues, to provide regular programs, meetings and publications to educate members, and to oppose censorship and pledge active support in local areas where freedoms are attacked. OLA is interested in promoting programs and projects in which all 17 libraries can participate, which utilize our county funding and which will promote literacy and reading. Our principal activities are meetings, training for members, and the Books for Babies program.

4. How was the Orange Library Association selected to participate in The Big Read?

This year, 75 community organizations were selected by a panel of experts based on each organization's experience in building strong local partnerships, reaching and engaging new and diverse audiences, working with educators, involving local and state public officials, working with media, and excellence of plans to develop and implement a

community-wide reading program. In 2008, Orange Library Association was one of 208 communities participating in The Big Read.

5. Which organizations in our community are participating in The Big Read?

Orange Library Association, comprised of the 17 public libraries in Orange County, is the lead organization for The Big Read in Orange County. Our Big Read partners include Orange Ulster BOCES, SUNY Orange, Mount Saint Mary College, the Lycian Centre,

6. Why did our community choose to read the tales and poems of Edgar Allan Poe?

According to the National Endowment for the Arts, “No author stays internationally popular for 150 years by accident. Poe is one of the classic authors of American literature – a master of the short story, a magician of the short poem, and critic of brilliance and originality. Poe invented the detective story, perfected the horror tale and first articulated the theory of the modern short story as well as the idea of pure poetry.

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7. When will The Big Read in Orange County take place?

Events are scheduled to run from October 1-31, with kickoff activities planned the weekend of October 1-3 at the Lycian Centre in Sugar Loaf. Visit www.orangereads.org for event information.

8. What types of events will take place during The Big Read in Orange County?

The Big Read in Orange County will include a variety of free activities, including an evening with a Poe re-enactor, book discussions, radio programs, a theatrical production, keynote address, murder mystery dessert theater, movies, a masquerade party and more.

9. Where can I find more information about The Big Read?

For information on The Big Read in Orange County, contact Laurie Angle at 986-1047. Also, visit www.neabigread.org for more information about the national Big Read program, including guidelines and application deadlines. The Web site also features information about The Big Read novels, including author biographies, discussion questions, and suggestions for further reading.