



BALCH COLUMN

Thomas Balch Library ■ 208 W. Market Street ■ Leesburg, Virginia 20176
703-737-7195 ■ Fax: 703-737-7150 ■ Email: balchlib@leesburgva.gov

News FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



As we bring to a close the second decade of the twenty-first century we can look back with pride at all of our accomplishments and forward to the many possibilities of 2020 and beyond.

On a clear crisp day in October a large gathering of people joined together to participate in the dedication of a memorial bench, pink dogwood tree, and plaque to Mary Bettis Fishback (1954-2019) in the Agnes and B. Powell Harrison Garden at Thomas Balch Library. This memorial was made possible by Blake Landscapes, President Jay Frye, Thomas Balch Library Endowment Foundation, Thomas Balch Library staff, Town of Leesburg, Ida Lee Parks and Recreation staff, and the Town of Leesburg Street Division Staff. When winter turns to spring and summer be sure to come visit this gem of a garden in downtown Leesburg. On November 3 Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission and Thomas Balch



Library celebrated the 27th annual Loudoun History Awards. Lee Lawrence and Carol Lee were the honored recipients of this year's awards. Lee Lawrence was recognized for her dedication towards the restoration of a historic structure located on the Fauquier-Loudoun county line in Upperville, Virginia. The building, most likely a quarter for the enslaved, or perhaps a free family's home, was in dilapidated condition. Lawrence began researching its history, speaking with descendants, and engaged in the restoration of the small structure. Without her hard work and dedication, the building was certain for demolition. In addition, Lawrence and her husband have helped to restore a former church in historic Mountville. Lawrence, who served for three years on the Board of Directors of the Mosby Heritage Area Association, was also recognized for her invaluable legacy as editor and transcriber of two local women's diaries that have become invaluable to Loudoun's history. *Society of Rebels* and *Dark Days in Our Beloved Country* are first-person accounts of the hardest times in Loudoun's history. They now serve as vignettes for living



history interpretations. Carol Lee was recognized for being the driving force behind listing the village of Willisville to the National Register of Historic Places. Willisville is an early 19th century African American settlement in Loudoun, which pre-dates the Civil War. Proud of her family's heritage and with a vision of documenting the historic village, Lee partnered with the Mosby Heritage Area Association to list Willisville to the National Register. In order to raise awareness and funds to support the effort, Lee organized a celebrated gospel concert, which brought in almost \$30,000 to help establish the Willisville Preservation Foundation, a 501 c(3) to oversee the Willisville cemeteries and promote the heritage of the village. Willisville was listed to the State Landmarks Register on September 20, 2019 and is soon to be Loudoun's only African American village individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

While we are currently recruiting to fill a full-time Library Genealogy Associate position, three of our part-time staff vacancies have been filled since my last letter: Patricia Di Filippo and Kelly Arford-Home as Senior Library Associates and Jennifer Calamos Smith as a Library Administrative Associate. Patricia has a BA in English Literature from the University of Dallas and has completed work for an MA in Ibero-American Literature at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. With many years of cultural immersion in Latin America - Mexico and Argentina - she is fluent Spanish to English/English to Spanish and previously pursued a career in professional translation services for editorial, technological, medical, governmental and business fields. Patricia grew up in Loudoun County and is a graduate of Loudoun County High School. Kelly Arford-Home received her BA in Anthropology with a minor in History from the University of Maryland and an MA in Archaeology and Heritage from the University of Leicester, England. She is a member of the Register of Professional Archaeologists, the Archaeological Institute of America, and the Society for American Archaeology. Most recently her professional work has included archaeological field, research, and lab work with Montgomery County Parks, AECOM (URS Corporation), Joseph Hoskins Associates, and College of William and Mary. Jennifer Calamos Smith received her undergraduate degree in Geography from the University of Mary Washington. She has previously worked for the Arlington County VA Government as a cartographer and as a Deputy Chief Customer Service agent with the US State Department while in Greece.

As a reminder to all researchers who may be planning on travelling to Leesburg this spring and summer, there is good news. In August the Library extended its Thursday hours to 8PM providing three days with evening hours - Tuesday through Thursday.

The library is a destination for local residents and visitors from across the country and around the globe. It is a gathering place for local historians, genealogists, and researchers. Programs for this upcoming season offer a variety of exciting opportunities. I look forward to welcoming you when visiting the Library or when attending programs and exhibits.

Alexandra S. Gressitt
Library Director

Due to Health and Safety recommendations during the Covid-19 outbreak, all March, April, May and June Thomas Balch Library Programs have been canceled.



Programs sponsored by Thomas Balch Library are held in the lower level meeting room and are free unless otherwise noted. Due to limited seating, we recommend registering in advance by calling 703/737-7195. For updated news on events, visit our website at: www.leesburgva.gov/ThomasBalchLibrary/publications or find us on Facebook. Books are available for purchase at book talks.

IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH
Jason Nichols

Sunday, 23 February 2020, 2PM

In celebration of Black History Month, Jason Nichols of the University of Maryland will be our guest speaker. Jason Nichols is an award winning full-time lecturer in the African American Studies Department at the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) and was the longtime editor-in-chief of *Words Beats & Life: The Global Journal of Hip-Hop Culture*, the first peer-reviewed journal of Hip-hop Studies. He co-edited *La Verdad: An International Dialogue on Hip-Hop Latinidades*. Nichols has been recognized by the University of Maryland community to develop. In 2018, the Office of Faculty and the Student Services awarded him the M. Lucia James Award. He was given the Faculty Advancement Award by NAACP. Nichols, a progressive, has been featured in *Public Independent Journal Review*, *Baltimore Sun* and current radio show on WPFW 89.3



of William and Mary in Williamsburg, he is a strong believer in melding the classroom, the community, and historic sites through heritage education. The tour leaves from Thomas Balch Library parking lot at 10AM. *Note: This tour requires good walking shoes.*

TOO MUCH FOR HUMAN ENDURANCE: THE GEORGE SPANGLER FARM HOSPITALS AND THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

Ronald D. Kirkwood

~~Sunday, 15 March 2020, 2PM~~

CANCELED



After years of research, many books, and several generations, there was still uncharted territory about the battle until *Too Much for Human Endurance: The George Spangler Farm Hospitals and the Battle of Gettysburg*. The author highlights the crucial importance of the hospitals to Union victory, which had been overlooked. The tour covers the roads and the Army's movements and the battle's aftermath. The author will discuss the book's impact on the battlefield and the lives of the soldiers during and

CANCELED



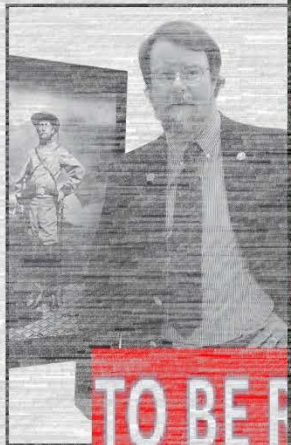
newspaper in a Gettysburg Civil War Field Guide of Dowagiac/ Michigan University, and journalism classes as a series.

ALL MARCH AND APRIL PROGRAMS ARE CANCELED

CIVIL WAR WALK

Richard Treat Gillespie

~~Saturday, 14 March 2020~~



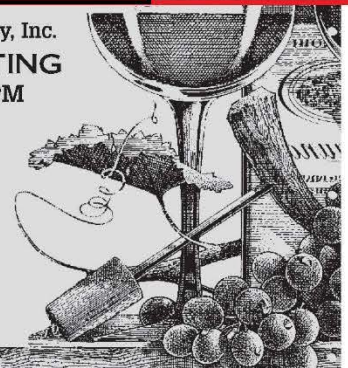
TO BE

they were a chronological tour will provide ample spots to sit for the weary and will paint some vibrant historic portraits to keep people enthralled. Included in the tour will be three skirmish sites, outside stops at two churches, the courthouse lawn, "the best street in town," Harrison Hall where General Lee stayed, and the Episcopal cemetery.

Richard Treat Gillespie, former Executive Director for Northern Virginia's Mosby Heritage Area, is a founding member of Loudoun's Civil War Sesquicentennial Steering Committee. Before joining the Mosby Heritage Area Association in 2004, he taught US History and Economics for 30 years at Loudoun Valley High School in Purcellville, VA. A graduate of the College

Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc.
25TH ANNUAL MEETING
Sunday, 12 January 2020 2-4 PM
(Snow date 26 January 2020)

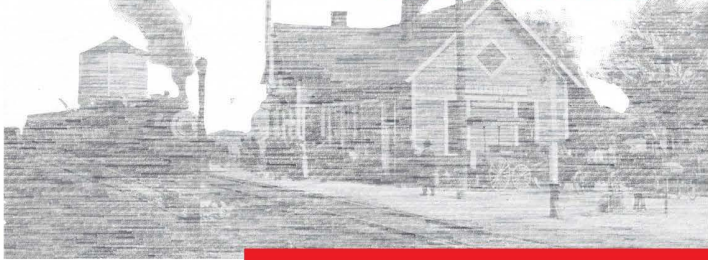
The meeting program will be "Oral History Series: Loudoun's First Vineyard-An Interview with Lew Parker." Following the program, members of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library will elect the 2020 board of directors.



RAILROADS IN NOVA: WHY THEY WENT WHERE THEY WENT, AND WHEN THEY WENT THERE

Charlie Grymes

~~Sunday, 22 March 2020, 2PM~~ **CANCELED**



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posed for southern Lo
choosing where to bui
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MURDER, INC.:

JOHN F. KENNEDY

James H. Johnston

Sunday, 19 April 20

Late in life, former Pres
Lyndon B. Johnson to
he didn't believe the V
Commission's finding
Harvey Oswald acted
killing President John
Johnson thought Cuba
Fidel Castro was behin
all, Johnson said, Kenn
running "a damned M
in the Caribbean," givi
reason to retaliate. *Mu*
tells the story of the C

assassination operations under
Kennedy up to his own assassination and beyond. James H.
Johnston was a lawyer for the Senate Intelligence Committee in
1975, which investigated and first reported on the Castro assas-
sination plots and their relation to Kennedy's murder. Johnston
examines how the CIA steered the Warren Commission and
later investigations away from connecting its own assassina-
tion operations to Kennedy's murder. He also looks at the effect
this strategy had on the Warren Commission's conclusions that
assassin Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone and that there was no
foreign conspiracy. Based on in-depth research into the "secret
files" declassified by the JFK Records Act and now stored in the

National Archives and Records Administration, *Murder, Inc.* is
the first book to narrate in detail the CIA's plots against Castro
and to delve into the question of why retaliation by Castro
against Kennedy was not investigated.

James H. Johnston is a lawyer, journalist, and lecturer
in Washington, DC. His writings have appeared in the *New
York Times*, *Washington Post*, *White House History*, *Howard
Law Journal*, *Legal Times of Washington*, *American Lawyer
Magazine*, *Corporate Counsel*, and the *Maryland Historical
Society Magazine*. His publications include *From Slave Ship to
Harvard: Yarrow Mamout and the History of an African American
Family* and *The recollections of Margaret Cabell Brown
Loughborough*.

ALL MARCH AND APRIL PROGRAMS ARE CANCELED

YES:
PAPERS

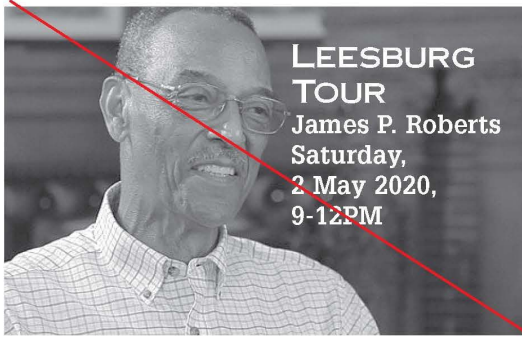


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Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch library, Inc. 3RD ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE Saturday, 1 February 2020, 10-4PM

The theme is Preservation of Historic African American Sites
and Stories, featuring Friends of the Arcola Slave Quarters
(FASQ). The Black History Committee will share resources
available at Thomas Balch Library for conducting African
American Research and Genealogy. Representatives from FASQ
will discuss efforts to save the Settle-Dean Cabin and the Arcola
Slave Quarters and tell the history and genealogy of the people
associated with these sites and the African American families
and community in Arcola.

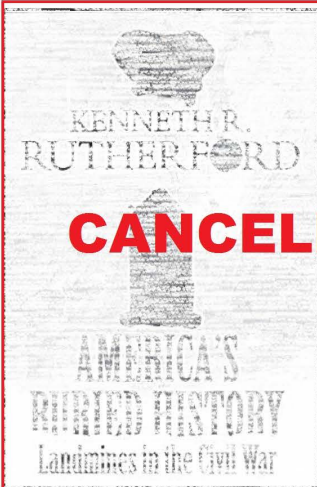


**LEESBURG
TOUR**
James P. Roberts
Saturday,
2 May 2020,
9-12PM

James Roberts, a native of Leesburg, former member of Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission, 2008 recipient of a Loudoun History Award, and recognized in 2011 by Loudoun Laurels, will lead a walking tour of Leesburg. The tour is an insider's look at the town's history, and points of interest both in and around Leesburg. Roberts highlights the ways in which Leesburg has undergone changes in its architecture, economics, and race relations. Factual, historical, and anecdotal information is intertwined and presented in storytelling fashion as only someone who lived through it and thoughtfully observed it can do. This unique tour will leave from Thomas Balch Library parking lot at 9AM. *study walking shoes are recommended.*

CANCELED

**AMERICA'S BURIED HISTORY:
LANDMINES IN THE CIVIL WAR**
Kenneth R. Rutherford
Sunday, 3 May 2020, 2PM



Despite thousands of books

**ALL MAY AND JUNE
PROGRAMS
ARE CANCELED**

and other research from archi
to demonstrate that the Civil
in world history to see the w
America's Buried History trac

from their first use before the Civil war, to the early use of
naval mines, through the establishment of the Confederacy's
Army Torpedo Bureau, the world's first institution devoted to
developing producing, and fielding mines in warfare.

Kenneth R. Rutherford, who holds a PhD in Government
from Georgetown University, and BA and MBA degrees from the
University of Colorado, is Director of the Center of International

Stabilization and Recovery at James Madison University, where
he also serves as Professor in the Department of Political Science.
He began his international career as a Peace Corps volunteer in
Mauritania. In 1993, he worked as a humanitarian relief officer
in Somalia, where he was injured by a landmine resulting in
medical evacuation – an experience that fundamentally altered
the Survivors Network, escorted
humanitarian mission to visit
Bosnia and Herzegovina in August 1997, and
International Campaign to Ban
Nobel Peace Prize. He currently
of Friendship Industries,
people with disabilities in the
as published more than 40
and policy journals and published
Buried History: Landmines in the

**JR, LOUDOUN
HOUSE HISTORIC**

SUSPENDED

as Balch Library by 1:45PM. Eric
anager for the Clerk of the Circuit

Court, will lead a tour of the Clerk's Office and the Historic Court
Building. He will discuss the extent of Loudoun County's records
holdings, where to look for records of births, deaths, marriages,
and deeds, and how to use these records in research. You will
need to pass through security so the group will leave the library
promptly at 1:45PM. *Reminder: Cell phones and cameras are not
allowed in the Court House.*

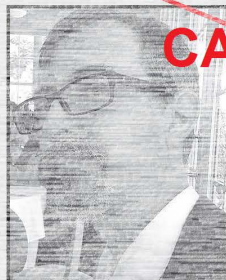
**5th Annual Spring Genealogy Seminar
RESEARCHING FAMILY HISTORY WITH MILITARY RECORDS**

Jonathan Webb Deiss
Wednesday, 20 May 2020,
9-4PM

**Fee: Pre-registration
\$25 members of
Friends of the
Thomas Balch Library;
\$30 non-members;
\$35 at door;**

**Lunch on your own;
Seating is limited;
pre-registration and
pre-payment will
guarantee a place**

This seminar will explain how to use military records most effectively in researching your family history.
The instructor will lead you through the intricacies of searching for family members in military records –
how to locate a family member, how to understand the records you find, and what to do when you don't
find records.



CANCELED

Jonathan Webb Deiss is a professional independent researcher. He is a Federal
Records Specialist with an emphasis on military, Native American, land, court and
legislative records. He runs a small research firm, and serves on the Board of
Directors of Reclaim the Records, a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to providing public-
domain documents to the general public. He has been involved with lineage society
work for many years, and was most recently the Staff Genealogist for the National
Society Colonial Dames of the 17th Century. From 2002-2005, he worked at the
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution on the President General's
Project to prepare the society's large collection of membership applications for
digitization. He is a member of the National Society Sons of the American
Revolution. Deiss who has developed a unique relationship with the National Archives was honored in
December 2010 with the title Citizen Archivist, by the Archivist of the United States, in recognition of
"...exceptional service promoting public awareness of NARA records and historical research."

THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

2020 Classes

RESEARCHING HISTORY AND GENEALOGY AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

CARE AND PRESERVATION OF TEXTILES

Thursday, 6 February 2020, 10AM
MC Mairena, Senior Library Associate, Thomas Balch Library. Do you have old family dresses, uniforms, quilts, or baby clothes, and you're unsure how to take care of them? Join us for a workshop to go over basic techniques for caring and storing your family textile heirlooms.

DIGITIZING FAMILY PHOTOS 101

Thursday, 5 March 2020, 10AM
Gina McNeely, a volunteer at Thomas Balch Library, has been a picture researcher and photo editor since 1995. In 2007, she established Gina McNeely Picture Research to assist clients in finding and licensing compelling photos and footage for media projects. Her close proximity to the vast public domain collections at Washington, DC's National Archives and the Library of Congress enable her to provide clients with quick, high-quality, and publication-ready digital imagery, often with no licensing fees. Gina will share help with your family photos.

CANCELED

RESEARCHING USING COURT RECORDS

Jeanette Irby, Loudoun County Circuit Court Judge and former Leesburg Town Attorney will discuss how to use court records and other resources for data that are frequently overlooked in genealogical and historical research. Irby will demonstrate how to mine court records for clues that can be used to collect information for genealogical research. Examples of these records include real estate records, chancery suits, estates, and indexes. Jeanette Irby has researched land records dating from the 1700s and participated in genealogical seminars sponsored by the Warrenton Court House Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution of which she is past Regent. Irby currently serves as secretary of District VI of the Virginia DAR Chapters. She holds a BS from Central Michigan University and a JD from Thomas Cooley Law School in Lansing, MI.

CANCELED

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Thursday, 7 May 2020, 10AM
Exploration of Memorial Preservation and Loudoun County Panel Discussion
TO DECEMBER
Planner: **Town of Leesburg, Heidi Siebenritt**, Loudoun County Preservation Planner, and **Steve Thompson**, Loudoun County Archaeologist.

DIGITAL HISTORY

Thursday, 4 June 2020, 10AM
What new digital tools are available to help access and understand historic documents and data? Senior Library Associate, **Joanna C. Lee**, will introduce the digital side of historical research, including how to create basic visualizations, use GIS-based mapping tools, and the benefits of crowdsourcing. Whether you are a "digital native" or technology-wary, this workshop will explore different digital humanities' methodologies that are accessible and friendly to all users.

GENEALOGY RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Thursday, 6 August 2020, 10AM
Speaker TBA - check the Library website for updated details

IDENTIFICATION AND CARE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Thursday, 1 October 2020, 10AM
Laura E. Christiansen, Curator of Manuscripts and Archives, will guide participants through a practical approach to the identification and preservation of photographs from the daguerreotype to the inkjet print.

PRESERVATION FOR HOME ARCHIVES

Thursday, 5 November 2020, 10AM
Gabrielle Sanchez, Contract Archivist and former Library Reference Associate at Thomas Balch Library, will introduce participants to the basics of preservation and discuss the best ways to house and protect personal archives.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN THE TOWN OF LEESBURG

Thursday, 3 December 2020, 10AM
Lauren Murphy, Preservation Planner with the Town of Leesburg

Exhibits 2020

MARGARET MERCER ROOM

JANUARY

David Norton Pottery

FEBRUARY

History of African American Voting Rights
Black History Committee/Alicia Cohen

MARCH

Leesburg Garden Club
Judy Gerow and Rosalie Leigh

APRIL

~~George C. ... Foundation
Cody Youngblood~~

CANCELED

MAY

~~Leesburg Memorabilia
Mary ...~~

CANCELED

JUNE

Loudoun Preservation Society
Retrospective

JULY - AUGUST

Loudoun County Civil War Artifacts
John Creamer

SEPTEMBER

Barefoot Weaver - Beth Wilson

OCTOBER

1781 Siege of Yorktown - Jeff Thomas

NOVEMBER

Selections from the Collections in the Rust Archives - Laura Christiansen

DECEMBER

Friends of Leesburg Arts
Mary Pender

LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM

JANUARY - MARCH

Watercolor, Oil, Pen & Ink
C M Taylor and Marci Green

APRIL - JUNE

~~...~~
Loudoun Photography Club

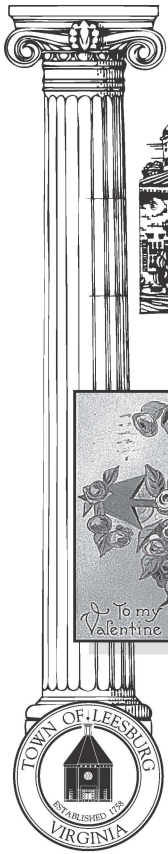
CANCELED

JULY - SEPTEMBER

Friends of Leesburg Arts (FOA)
Mary Pender

OCTOBER - DECEMBER

A Step In Time
Paintings by Beth Widom



THE BALCH COLUMN

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WINTER/SPRING 2020 LECTURES AND EVENTS

Other Activities AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION sponsors the annual Loudoun History Awards. Meetings are held at the library the second Wednesday of each month at 7PM. The public is always welcome.

THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION a 501c3 established in 2015 to receive, maintain, and administer assets in perpetuity to support programs and outreach services of Thomas Balch Library. Meetings are held as needed, the third Tuesday of alternating months at 12 noon.

FRIENDS OF THE THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY, INC., a 501c3 organized to provide support for Thomas Balch Library, meets at the library every other month, sponsors an annual fundraiser, and publishes a quarterly newsletter *The Chronicle*. For more information visit www.balchfriends.org or call 540/579-2825.

BLACK HISTORY COMMITTEE OF FRIENDS OF THE THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY, INC., meets at the library the first Saturday of every month at 10AM. The public is always welcome. For more information visit www.balchfriends.org or call 540/579-2825.

LOUDOUN COUNTY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE meets the second Tuesday of each month, March - December at 7:30PM. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in Loudoun County's history during the American Civil War. Guests are welcome to attend two meetings without charge. Annual family dues are \$25. Meetings are held at Thomas Balch Library unless otherwise noted. For further information visit: <http://lccwrt.wordpress.com>

THE 2020 VIRGINIA FORUM, focused on Crafting History, will hold its fifteenth annual conference **SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2020**, at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond. The Virginia Forum, an interdisciplinary conference, offers an opportunity for scholars, teachers, writers, museum curators, historic site interpreters, archivists, librarians, and all those interested in Virginia history and culture to share their knowledge, research, and experiences. Direct further inquiries about this meeting to: virginiaforum@gmail.com. Additional information, including previous conference programs, is available online at www.virginiaforum.org.

LIBRARY HOURS:

10am-5pm - Monday & Friday
10am-8pm - Tuesday & Thursday
2pm-8pm - Wednesday

11am-4pm - Saturday
1pm-5pm - Sunday