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For Immediate Release:

LIBRARY COLUMN

Library staff shares holiday reading favorites

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By Tammy Wilson

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When it comes to holiday-inspired books, staff members at Catawba County Library eagerly share their favorites.

Kathy Freeman, a library services specialist II at St. Stephens Branch, loves *A Redbird Christmas* by Fannie Flagg, the beloved Southern author. This tale is about the warm and welcoming town of Lost River where townspeople perform secret good works. The tale focuses on Jack, a little redbird of a magical Christmas.

Newton's Collection Development librarian Diane Jennings prefers a touch of mystery when it comes to holiday reading. *The Twelve Clues of Christmas* by Rhys Bowen is the perfect choice: a tongue-in-cheek traditional English Christmas set in the 1930s. The "cozy" both celebrates and satirizes conventions of the English country-house mystery—a genre Diane particularly enjoys, having grown up in England.

"It's a murder mystery as well as a love story. It's fun and completely engaging," Jennings said.

For Regina Reitzel, the all-time best Christmas book is *The Gift of the Magi* by Greensboro's own O. Henry. The classic tale of reversal has been part of high school English curriculum for generations, though Reitzel remembers hearing it much earlier.

"When I was a little girl, my Mom read this to us at Christmas. Always enjoyed the story and its theme of sacrificial giving," Reitzel said. She is Information Services librarian in Newton.

Janet Sanders, a library assistant at Southwest Branch, prefers Clement Moore's *The Night Before Christmas*. "It's special to me because I read it to my children who are now in their twenties every year on Christmas Eve. My son always erupted in gales of laughter at 'He had a broad face and a little round belly that shook when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.'"

Who could overlook *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens? Not Laura Gora of Youth Services. She reads from dozens of holiday books each year in her job as library services specialist, but the Charles Dickens classic sticks with her. It's the classic Victorian tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Past is a perfect pick for the whole family.

All of these titles are part of the county library collection. Browse the website for availability at www.catawbacountync.gov/library.

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About: The Catawba County Library System, headquartered in Newton, NC, serves the citizens of Catawba County with seven branches throughout the county and is a year-round, integral provider of early literacy and lifelong learning. In addition to traditional services, the system provides a full complement of computer and digital services, classes and support to bridge the digital divide, empower job seekers, and enhance community quality of life and economic health.