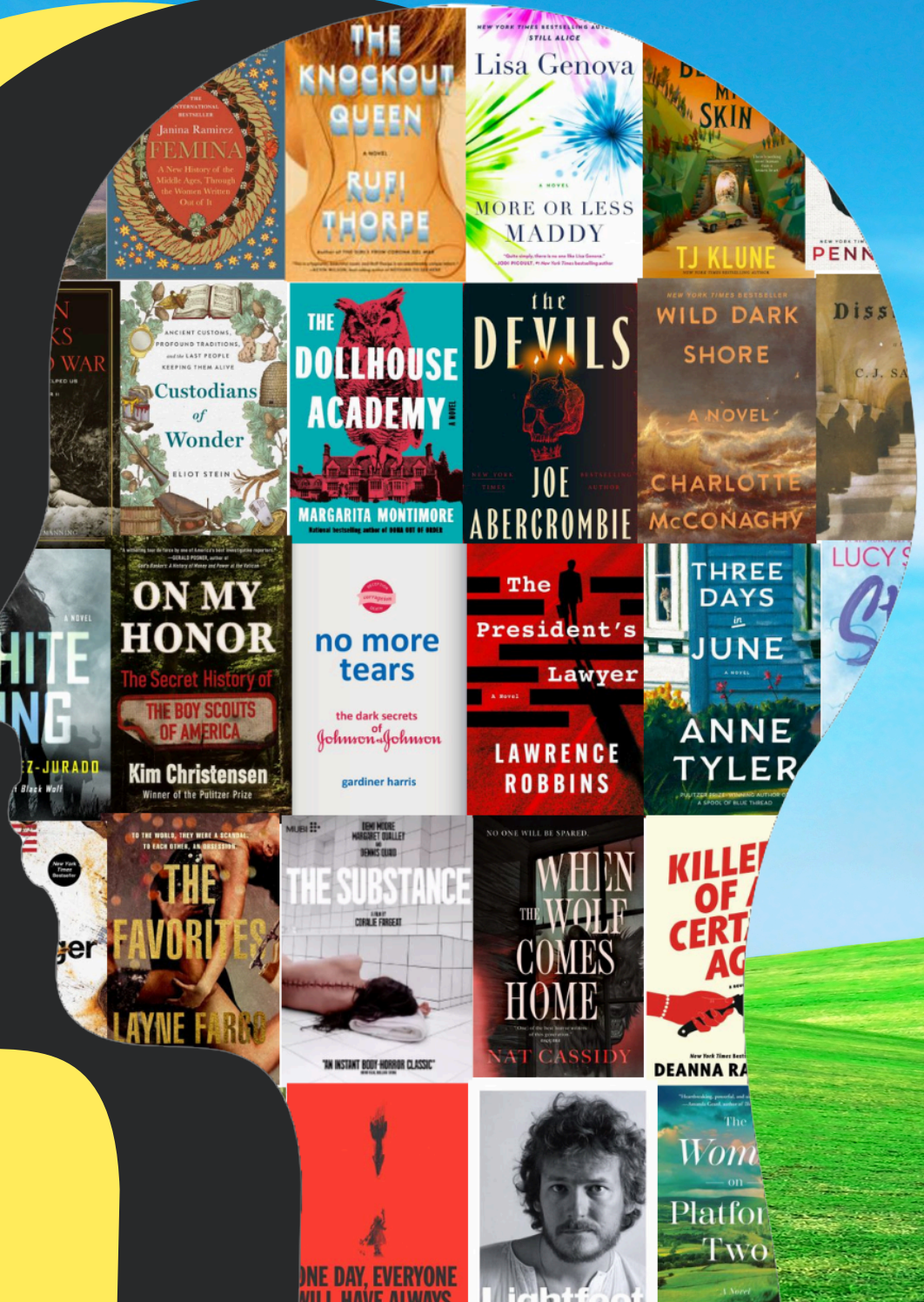


THE CHECKOUT

SUMMER 2025

ISSUE #13

A REVIEW SOURCE WRITTEN BY LIBRARY
PATRONS FOR LIBRARY PATRONS



A PUBLICATION
OF THE
KENMORE
BRANCH
LIBRARY

KNOCKOUT READ

BY CHRISTINA H.

The Knockout Queen

by Ruffi Thorpe

Narrated from his future adult life, the story begins when Michael is forced to move in with his aunt in the affluent North Shore neighborhood after his mother is sent to prison for stabbing his father with a paring knife. Not sure he fits in anywhere, Michael finds an unlikely friendship with the girl next door. Bunny is tall, beautiful, and intriguing, with Olympic volleyball dreams and a rich father in real estate. The unlikely friendship grows, and both Bunny and Michael find they need each other more and more as they navigate their rocky teenage years with very little adult supervision. After a culminating event occurs, Bunny and Michael find their friendship strained, and the future they dreamed of quickly changes.

In **The Knockout Queen**, Thorpe delves into important topics such as social class, childhood trauma, gender, and sexuality. She brings characters to life in a way that is so honest and real that it can be jarring at times. This book is gut-wrenching, provocative, and tragic. It will have you thinking of the characters and story well after the final chapter.



LIBRARY TIP #1

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN
VIEW LIVE SPEAKING EVENTS
WITH SOME OF YOUR
FAVORITE AUTHORS ONLINE?
GO TO

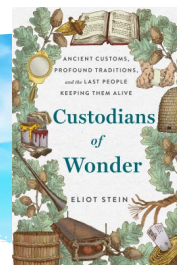
[HTTPS://LIBRARYC.ORG/BUFFALOLIB](https://libraryc.org/buffalolib)

OR USE THE QR CODE
TO REGISTER FOR
UPCOMING EVENTS OR
VIEW PAST SPEAKERS!



TEN THINGS TO FASCINATE YOU

BY STEPHEN C.



Custodians of Wonder: Ancient Customs, Profound Traditions, and the Last People Keeping Them Alive by Eliot Stein

For me personally, the best nonfiction can do a couple of things. First, it can teach me about a previously unknown (to me, anyway) subject. Show me something in the world that I never knew existed and I'm there. Second, it can send me on a journey of further exploration on the thing I didn't know existed but am now obsessed with. **Custodians of Wonder** did these things and then some. And it did it ten times.

Through examining ten very different people from all over the globe, journalist Eliot Stein not only introduces us to fascinating people, but also the age-old customs they are keeping alive. Included are a Malian man, latest in a family line tasked with keeping the music and history of an entire people alive; one of the few women who holds in her memory the recipe for an intricate, venerated, type of pasta; a man who is the last master builder of centuries-old Incan bridges; the first woman, in a family of craftspeople who create a special type of metallic mirror; an English beekeeper who continues to "tell the bees" of life-changing events; one of the few families still producing the original, and superior, form of soy sauce; a night watchman tasked with keeping his village safe night after night; the people charged with keeping Cuban cigar rollers entertained by reading to them, unintentionally becoming bonded to and educating the working class in a time of repression; a German mail carrier who delivers letters from the lovelorn to a tree in the middle of the forest; and Taiwan's master painter of movie posters who is trying to keep an artform alive.

Every time I finished a chapter of this book, I swore that the next topic couldn't be as interesting as the last, and I was wrong every time. My very tolerant wife was subjected to untold interruptions during her quiet crossword time so I could tell her how we've never really had real soy sauce, or how all of the mirrors we have in the house are garbage mirrors and I need to spend a lot of money on new ones that a really cool woman in India makes.

If, like me, you love a book that will send you in all kinds of directions looking further into fascinating subjects, I cannot recommend **Custodians of Wonder** highly enough.

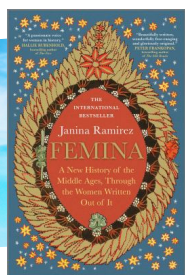
WRITING WOMEN BACK INTO HISTORY

BY KAREN B.

Femina: A New History of the Middle Ages, Through the Women Written Out of It

by Janina Ramirez

This is a book of biographies. It is also a book about how to write history. As fascinating as each of the individual women featured in it are, equally fascinating is what we know or don't know about them from previously written history, and what we can still learn about and from them. The medieval women described here encompass warriors, musicians, theologians, outlaws, diplomats, and entrepreneurs from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries in Europe. They include the Loftus Princess, Aethelflaed of the Mercians, the Bayeux Tapestry embroiderers, Hildegard of Bingen, Cathar women, Hedwig of Poland, and Margery Kempe, among others. Each chapter includes a modern discovery about the woman, a re-creation of the world in which she lived, and a fresh look at her life through new archaeological techniques and a re-reading of earlier written works. Readers come away with not only a deeper understanding of the individual woman, but also a fuller understanding of the constraints that she lived under, the challenges she needed to meet, and the contributions she ultimately made.



The author makes a compelling case for stripping away earlier preconceptions about these women, and instead trying to understand them both in their own time and for what they can still teach us today about the lived experiences of women. She also advocates for finding the voices hidden in the history of women who have not yet been heard. Although a lot of information is packed into these pages, the writing is not dry, but passionate. Recommended for nonfiction readers interested in learning more about the medieval world on many levels.

THE SKIN-NY ON KLUNE'S NEWLY RELEASED BOOK

BY JULIE ANN D.



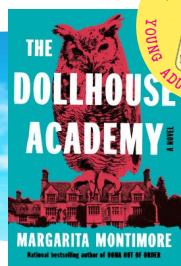
The Bones Beneath My Skin was originally submitted to an indie publisher in 2017. They deemed it too “weird” and different from Klune’s other works. So it got self-published... reluctantly, in 2018. Now it’s been re-released in 2025.

If you’re like me, you’re a fan of TJ Klune’s work because it’s like a warm hug with charming found families, and an accepting cast including LGBTQ+ main characters. **The Bones Beneath My Skin** covers his basics, but the story is simply different. It follows Nate, a journalist who inherits a cabin in the woods and old truck from his tragically-dead parents. They were unwilling to accept that he’s gay, so Nate has been estranged from them for years. He goes up to inspect the cabin and to clear his head and finds a surprise - a young girl and her bodyguard, a rugged man named Alex, are holed up there. Much of the book is a mystery thriller with these three endearing main characters who bond over eating lots of bacon and referencing Louis L’Amour westerns. They eventually take to the road to escape the secret government force trying to experiment on them. There’s a military showdown with a doomsday cult. Don’t worry - as always, Klune gives us a happy ending.

Without spoiling too much, the book is about feeling alone and finding yourself. You create the family you want. The themes are much more adult and intense than his other works. If you are a fan of **Stranger Things**, **The X-Files**, and **Firestarter** by Stephen King, you’ll enjoy this book.

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

BY REBECCA K.



The Dollhouse Academy by Margarita Montimore is a new twist on a tale as old as time. Two friends are off to seek fame and fortune at the Dollhouse Academy, a boarding school for adults owned by a huge studio juggernaut (Dahlen Entertainment) that promises that if you can make it there, you can make it in any one of their entertainment divisions and achieve renown and acclaim. Ramona and her best friend Grace have been together most of their lives, so they are excited to start their joint quest for the big time after being discovered by Genevieve Spaulding, a one-time child star and now head of Dahlen Entertainment. Both grew up idolizing Ivy Gorden, main commodity of Dahlen Entertainment, who is not only the star of the hugely popular and long-running television show *Inside the Dollhouse*, but also a mega-popstar. The story unfolds in real time and via Ivy's diary entries, and all is not what it seems. Several reviews liken the story to **The Stepford Wives** meets **Valley of the Dolls**. The pressures and challenges of living in this highly stressful and intensely competitive environment start to take their toll on Ramona, while her friend Grace rises to the top. As Ramona spirals and is cut off from Grace, she realizes that The Dollhouse isn't out to help them achieve greatness but to monetize and control their employees at all costs. Does that stop Ramona from trying? No! Surely, Genevieve can be trusted because she knows how hard it was to be a child star and how actors are preyed upon; she mustn't be the one making these decisions. Oh, and wait, how could that be Ivy outside my window when I know she is in L.A. for a concert? The characters and the reader start to understand that no one can be trusted and nothing is as it seems.

MURDER & MAGIC IN THE MOUNTAINS

BY MELISSA F.



When the Bones Sing

by Ginny Myers Sain

Dovie doesn't believe in magic. At least, not anymore. Not after her mother left. Not after her father started locking himself away in his glassmaking shop, preferring the company of hikers and tourists. She doesn't believe in the mountain magic her grandma sings about, or in the creepy, cryptid tales of the Ozark Howler, a looming, red-eyed harbinger of death. Dovie doesn't believe in much of anything, except her own morbid, uncanny ability to locate the bones of murdered hikers lost to the mountains. And it's definitely not magic that lets Dovie hear the strange, vibrating songs of those bones. It's not magic that has allowed her to lead the sheriff to the remains of over two dozen people buried throughout the hills. It's not magic that torments her childhood friend, Lowen, with shadowy, ghostly figures only he can see. Because Dovie knows magic isn't real. But in the humid, muddy darkness of their nights spent wandering the woods, Dovie and Lo find that they've both been keeping secrets. And the answers they're searching for are darker and more intertwined with their own lives and families than they could have imagined. This book offers a satisfyingly creepy journey through the mysterious Ozark mountain town of Lucifer's Creek, Arkansas, accompanied by all the ghosts that lurk in its shadowy hills.

Content and sensitivity warning: contains descriptions of human remains and acts of murder.

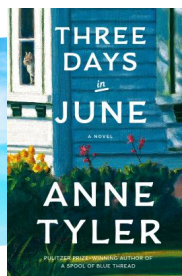
SHORT & SWEET READ

BY CHLOE H.

Three Days in June

by Anne Tyler

The book is its title: three days in June following a socially-awkward 60-year-old mother the day before, during, and the day after her daughter's wedding in Baltimore. In under 200 pages, the rich character study of Gail Barnes explores second chances at life and the complexities of marriage. At the start of the book, Gail learns she is being passed over for a job opportunity at the school she teaches at due to her age. She walks out, making it unclear if she lost the job or quit, straight into her rehearsal dinner for her daughter Debbie, who is marrying into an affluent family. Then, Gail's ex-husband Max arrives unannounced at her house asking if he can stay for the duration of the wedding with a foster cat in tow. As if that isn't enough to deal with, Debbie learns something about her husband-to-be, which stirs up the past between Gail and Max.



Humorous, witty, and impactful, this is a great short read filled with characters that feel like your friends who will leave you with the courage to live every day to the fullest.

WHAT CHER HAS TO SAY

BY KEN W.



Cher: The Memoir Part One

by Cher

The thought of a biography about Cher was appealing to this long-time fan, so I requested it and became immersed in the content. It is hard to think of my own experience before Cher. She seems to be almost ever-present in my memory. Her memoir puts order into my memories and gives a much more complete picture of her life.

Cher starts the book with her early life. It quickly becomes clear that her life was full of multiple characters and influences. There were so many people who affected her life. Her mother's multiple relationships and the frequent upheavals that resulted made their lives unstable and chaotic. It becomes very clear how strong an influence Sonny was as he provided a new stability for Cher. She discusses her relationship with him and her dependence on him - he helped create her, and he often dominated and controlled her. Their 11-year age difference, the early age when she met him, and the state of women's rights at the time often helped put him in that position of control. She speaks about the time after their break up, where she didn't have the popularity gained because of their TV show. There were years where she had to reinvent herself. This information is presented in a manner where she shows awareness of her influence and popularity, but still presents her vulnerability and doubts. Cher doesn't cover up the problems or pretend they weren't significant, but seems to attempt to be open about both the good and difficult times. Most significant to me, she gives the benefit of the doubt to major players in her life - a rare quality in memoirs.

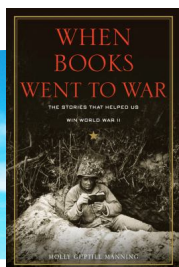


Cherry Blossoms
April 2025

ARTWORK BY SUE K.

WEAPONIZING BOOKS

BY KAREN B.



When Books Went to War: The Stories That Helped Us Win World War II

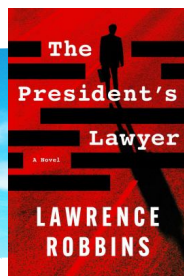
by Molly Guptill Manning

ASEs, or Armed Services Editions, were lightweight paperbacks sent around the world to American soldiers and sailors fighting in World War II. This nonfiction book tells their story. It begins with the Nazi book burnings in the 1930s and the message that sent to other nations. In response, a Victory Book Campaign initiated by American libraries began a nationwide drive to collect books for donation to the armed services. This effort then led to the formation of the Council on Books in Wartime, a non-profit organization that also included publishers who began making and sending ASEs to the troops. The ASEs served multiple purposes: they lifted morale, they offered escape and diversion, they supported education, they strengthened ties with home, and they represented a freedom worth fighting for. They also represented choice by including works of contemporary fiction, nonfiction, classics, westerns, biographies, history, science fiction, and more. Their extreme popularity underscored the idea that free people read freely.

To the author's credit, however, she notes that the manner in which freedom was expressed was not unanimously agreed-upon in the U. S. at this time. For example, the city of Boston banned two novels, one on interracial marriage and one which contained explicit sex scenes, from their own constituents while the Army continued to support the novels as ASEs. In another instance, partisan political maneuvering at election time caused legislation to be passed that severely limited the distribution of books deemed unpatriotic, leading to mass protests before the legislation was struck down. Changes in the book industry also caused dissension when the publishing of paperbacks overtook the publishing of hard cover books (then the preferred format) due to paper rationing and the need to make books more portable and easily read in inhospitable climates. For anyone interested in how books were perceived and used in WWII in ways big and small, this book is well worth reading!

A THRILLING ONE-HIT WONDER

BY DONNA D.



I love legal thrillers. While waiting for the next John Grisham book, **The Widow**, scheduled for publication in October, I searched for novels by less familiar authors and found **The President's Lawyer** by Lawrence Robbins. And what a find it is!

Jack Cutler, a former United States president, is charged with murdering his mistress. He implores Rob Jacobson, a close childhood friend and top-notch DC lawyer, to represent him. Jacobson hesitates. His lifelong friendship with Cutler has been a complicated one, and he wonders how he can defend a man who cheats on his wife, has anger management issues, and engages in unconventional sexual practices. To complicate matters, Jacobson was in love with the victim. He finally agrees to accept the case after a lie detector test shows Cutler is innocent.

The courtroom scenes are compelling and feel authentic, thanks to the author's impressive legal career. Robbins was an acclaimed trial and appellate litigator, and among his many accomplishments, he argued 20 cases in the US Supreme Court. As this high-profile case unfolds, there are several twists and turns, plenty of secrets exposed, and a shocking revelation at the end.

The President's Lawyer was Robbins's first novel and sadly, it was his last. He passed away in November 2024 at age 72, shortly after it was published. So I'm back to the drawing board, looking for more legal thrillers by new authors!

A SCIENCE OF UNDERSTANDING

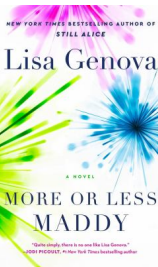
BY NICOLE B.

More or Less Maddy

by Lisa Genova

Neuroscientist Lisa Genova's books are a rare treasure - novels that blend storytelling, science, and compassion into stories that are hard to put down and that stay with you long after you're done reading. As a primarily nonfiction reader, I enjoy novels that help me learn something new about people and broaden my understanding of others' experiences, and Genova's books do just that. Her background in brain science has led her to write novels centering around specific conditions (early onset Alzheimer's, autism, traumatic brain injury, ALS, Huntington's) and act as an intimate glimpse into the world of people living with these conditions.

Her newest book, **More or Less Maddy**, centers around a young woman's new bipolar diagnosis, the confusing behaviors and somewhat traumatic personality changes that come with it, and the ups and downs of treatment. Maddy struggles with understanding which of her thoughts are "normal" and which are delusions related to her condition, and she has to learn how to create boundaries for herself and her family in order to remain independent and in control of her own life.



I always feel a sense of gratitude after I've read one of Genova's books. She helps me understand people in a way I might not have before and I would highly recommend any of her books. They can be difficult reads if the condition hits close to home, but you will always finish her books understanding more about what might actually be going on in the mind of someone living with one of these neurological disorders.

ANTONIA SCOTT'S TRAVAILS

BY SUE K.



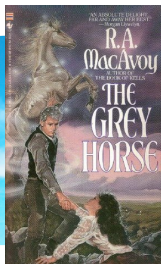
Juan Gomez-Jurado's Antonia Scott chronicles, **Red Queen** and **Black Wolf**, which were previously reviewed in *The Checkout*, come to completion in his latest book **White King**. Antonia Scott rivals Lisbeth Salander from **The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo** in her crime-solving skills and quirky personality. Thankfully, *White King* brings into focus the many loose threads left hanging in the first two books of the series. The Red Queen project was formed to solve high-level crimes that have international implications, with minimal visibility. *White King* brings the organization's origins to light and highlights Mr. White and Sandra Fajardo, two mysterious characters who escape at the end of *Black Wolf* and continue to cause havoc in this book. The series is fast-paced, never letting up on the mystery and suspense until the final page. Read the books in order for the best experience!

LIBRARY TIP #2

DID YOU KNOW THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REQUESTING A BOOK FROM THE LIBRARY AND INTERLIBRARY LOAN? REQUESTED BOOKS COME FROM OUR OWN LIBRARY SYSTEM (BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY) & INTERLIBRARY LOAN BOOKS COME FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY!

IRISH FAIRY MAN

BY KAREN B.



AVAILABLE ON



The Grey Horse

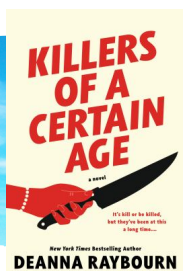
by R.A. MacAvoy

(available only on Hoopla)

Irish mythology never goes out of date and this novel is a good example of its perpetual staying power. Written in the 1980s with a setting in Ireland of the 1880s, it features a centuries-old fairy named Ruairi who can shift shapes between horse and man. Claiming that he has lived for 1500 years, he appears as a horse groomer in order to woo a woman he has watched from afar while in the form of a wild stallion in the hills of Connemara County. In addition to his beloved, he crosses paths with many Irish people who are barely subsisting, such as the old horse trainer with whom he comes to live, the trainer's faithful wife and estranged son, and townsfolk who themselves are barely scraping by. Some of these people are good-hearted, some are devout, and some are extremely small-minded. Add in to this mix the English squire's son and the rebellious nationalist priest who are both saved by the fairy, the sister of the Ruairi's beloved who only cares about her looks, and their father who barely tolerates his daughter who was born out of wedlock and the whole of humankind appears to live here. The fairy man's expansive view of all of these humans is that they are all invaders, yet he is willing to live in their midst for the sake of love even if it sometimes also involves fighting (which he manages to do fairly cheerfully). Highly recommended for anyone needing a break from modern day reality.

SENIOR ASSASINS

BY KEN W.



Killers of a Certain Age by Deanna Raybourn is a book with a bit of a twist. To me it seems Raybourn has taken note of the characters established by Richard Osman in his **Thursday Murder Club** series. She has put a new spin on the idea of seniors being involved in murder - instead of the characters solving murders, they are committing them. Raybourn's characters are women who work for an organization called the Museum. Their job has been to find criminals, like escaped Nazis, and to murder them. They also go after corrupt judges, politicians, and leaders, to name a few targeted groups. In the first book of the series, we are introduced to the main characters in present day, when they have been granted a well-earned retirement. They are together for a cruise celebration when they become aware that they are the targets for assassination by their own organization. How they become aware of this threat and their response to it is the theme of this first book. In it, we are given glimpses of their recruitment, professional development, and some of the past activities they participated in. They clearly learned to excel in this profession. Now, they need to use their career-acquired skills to successfully prevent the Museum from exterminating them. It is a book that portrays seniors (particularly women) as capable agents actively pursuing a career that requires many physical and mental strengths.

A HORROR NOVEL WITH BITE

BY JULIE ANN D.

Nat Cassidy's latest horror novel **When the Wolf Comes Home** continues his perfect amalgamation of psychological trauma and gory visuals. It follows the story of struggling actress Jessa, who moonlights as a waitress on the overnight shift. She is processing the recent loss of her alcoholic father and questioning their flawed relationship. One night she comes home to her apartment to find a terrified five-year-old boy hiding in the bushes from his abusive father. What begins as a night of compassion spirals into a harrowing, high-stakes fight for survival. As the bodies pile up in the father's relentless and bloody pursuit, the line between victim and monster begins to blur. Is the true threat chasing them - or already with her?

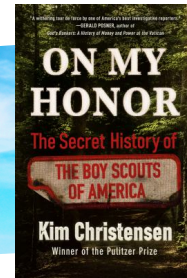
When the Wolf Comes Home will keep you on edge from start to finish, while also prompting deeper reflection on how profoundly parents shape their children. As a parent, you hope to teach your child how to understand their emotions and shield them from harm in the best way you know how. But fears evolve over time - both real and imagined - and the ways we protect ourselves and our loved ones must evolve too. Naming the fear, giving shape to the "monster," is often the first step in breaking its hold. This novel is gut-wrenching in the best way possible.



This book feels like an homage to 1980s horror, especially Stephen King's **Firestarter**, but with more thought spirals and panic attacks. Cassidy is the perfect introspective and emotional eerie story teller. I recommend everything he's written including **Mary**, **Nestlings**, and **Rest Stop**.

BE PREPARED... AND POSSIBLY ABUSED

BY STEPHEN C.



On My Honor: The Secret History of the Boy Scouts of America

by Kim Christensen

Since 1910, the Boy Scouts of America has been tasked with creating generations of model citizens and future leaders of our nation. As one of the few federally-chartered organizations in the country, along with groups like the Red Cross and the American Legion, the BSA is woven into the fabric of America itself. But along with the good turns and civic work, the organization has also provided a framework for harboring, protecting, and enabling predators.

On My Honor: The Secret History of the Boy Scouts of America details the steady rise of the BSA (now renamed Scouting America after allowing girls to join in 2019) and their much delayed, self-inflicted decline. In total, more than 82,000 victims of abuse have come forward with decades worth of stories detailing horrific betrayals by men who were entrusted to guide children safely through their formative years.

Added to all this is the revelation that the BSA kept files on leaders that were accused of molestation and, for the better part of a century, did nothing about it. At worst, these monsters were blacklisted from serving as scout leaders on paper, with no reports filed with authorities outside of scouting. Many times, even that was circumvented by the abuser simply by moving to a new town or adding a middle initial to the next volunteer application. Of course it was claimed that this sweeping under the rug was only for the benefit of the victimized children so as to avoid the stigma of abuse. Finally, in the last 25 years, the abuse and the conspiracy to hide it has come to light through litigation, forcing the BSA into bankruptcy.

As unsettling as the topic is, this book does a necessary service in shining a light on a sex abuse scandal that caused even the Catholic Church to cut ties with the scouts. Which, I mean...wow.

HOLLYWOOD BODY HORROR

BY CHLOE H.



The Substance

directed by Coralie Fargeat

Starring Demi Moore, this horror film was an unexpected pick for this last Oscar season for many reasons, but it is not to be passed over. Moore plays Elizabeth Sparkle, a former A-list TV fitness star (complete with unitard and leggings) who was recently let go by the network due to her age. The studio head Harvey (Dennis Quaid) is looking for the next young thing, which sends Elizabeth into an identity crisis and a violent car accident. While recovering from these turbulent events in her skyscraper penthouse, she receives a mysterious note about The Substance, an injection that turns you into a younger, more beautiful version of yourself. The only catch is that you can only be one of your bodies each week, alternating every other. Sue (Margaret Qualley) is then born from the injection and her glamorous life soon competes with the isolation of Elizabeth's to disastrous consequences.



The film is very on the nose with what it says about women's beauty standards and aging. Although the experience of both Elizabeth and Sue isn't necessarily new, the small details really stick with you. The constant feeling of dread along with hyper-realistic imagery is part Kubrick and part Hitchcock, culminating in a fantastic new horror classic.

THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

BY SUE K.



If there ever is a fitting time to read **Wild Dark Shore** by Charlotte McConagh, it would be close to Earth Day 2025. The world is a far different place today than it was when Earth Day was conceived, and Wild Dark Shore takes us deeply into the probable future of our planet if we do nothing, or worse - just continue on with what we are doing today. The novel is set in Shearwater Island, a fictional subantarctic island and research base where there is a seed vault. The island is returning to the ocean as the sea rises, and the family of four that remains are trying desperately to save what seeds they can in readiness for the ship that is due to them and the seeds. But Earth has other plans. The intricacies of the plot and its many twists are too complex to give away, and the characters of the four - a father and his three children - are beautifully drawn. Their lives are upended right at the book's beginning by the daughter rescuing a mysterious woman from the waves off the island near a wrecked small boat. Communications of all kinds have been mysteriously dismantled, so the five must somehow manage to survive together in the face of rising seas and their uncertain futures. The book is based on the location of Macquarie Island and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. The author took a research trip there which changed her life, and she graciously takes us there in her beautiful story.

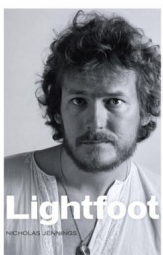
IF YOU COULD READ MY MIND: THE LIGHTFOOT LEGACY

BY LISA S.

For decades, Gordon Lightfoot captured love, loss, and life in songs that still feel as powerful today as when they were first written. I recently finished **Lightfoot** by Nicholas Jennings, and if you've ever been curious about the man behind the haunting lyrics, this biography is worth your time.

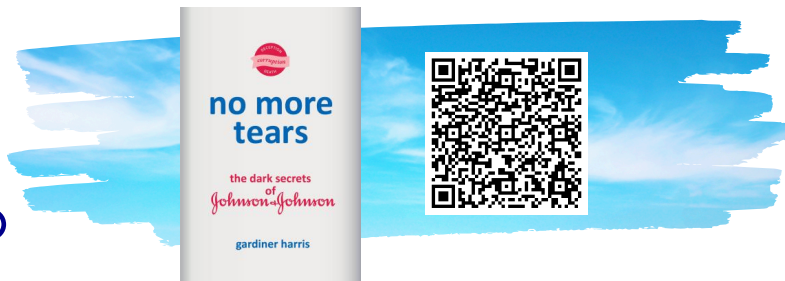
A Canadian folk legend, Gordon grew up just outside Toronto, and this book follows his story from those early childhood days through his long life and career. Told with a lot of care, Jennings doesn't shy away from the hard stuff. You get to know Gordon as a whole person: his brilliance, his flaws, and the way he kept creating through heartbreak, addiction, and reinvention. You'll also see just how deeply other musicians admired him. Bob Dylan, a fellow music great and admirer, once said, "Every time I hear a song of his, it's like I wish it would last forever."

If you'd like a soundtrack to accompany your read, grab **Gord's Gold** from the library catalog. It's full of his classics, like "Sundown" and "If You Could Read My Mind," but "The Wreck of the Edmunds Fitzgerald" is missing, and an absolutely crucial listen to get to know Gordon's work.



MOST TRUSTED BRAND?

BY NICOLE B.



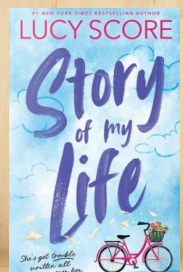
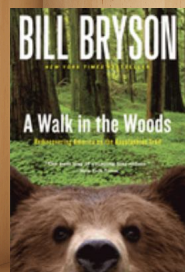
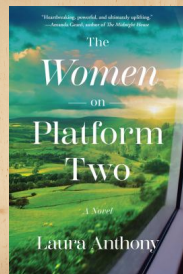
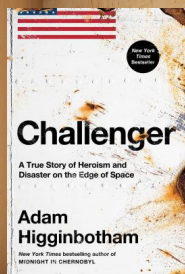
No More Tears: the Dark Secrets of Johnson & Johnson

by Gardiner Harris

Johnson & Johnson is considered one of the most trusted brands in the world, its logo and products instantly conjuring associations of health, safety, and infant care. Gardiner Harris's account of the company and its history of corporate malfeasance turns that image on its head- and for good reason. The stories behind some of their most famous products (talc baby powder, Tylenol) and some lesser known but widely used and prescribed (Risperdal, Procrit) are stunning in their disregard for patient health and safety. Greed is the true villain in this book, and you will learn time and time again that the author's description of a "social normalization of deviance" has influenced the company and its operations for many decades. The section on Risperdal and the push of this highly dangerous drug to two of our most vulnerable populations- young children and elderly people with dementia - was especially infuriating and heartbreaking. If you have a loved one in a nursing home or assisted living, this part is a must-read.

I cannot recommend this book enough- I believe it's essential for understanding how money and corporate interests in healthcare can literally be the deciders of life and death.

QUICK TAKES



Challenger : A True Story of Heroism and Disaster on the Edge of Space

by Adam Higginbotham

A thorough and fascinating look into the culture at NASA and the events that led up to the seemingly-avoidable Challenger disaster.

The Women on Platform Two

by Laura Anthony

A chance encounter on a train connects two women of different generations in a story about the fight for women's rights in 1960s Dublin, and the choices women continue to make regarding their bodies and their families.

One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This

by Omar El Akkad

A sobering account of the moral arguments of Western society and whether or not they serve people of color, all through the lens of what is currently happening in Gaza. A short but powerful book with undeniable impact.

A Walk in the Woods

by Bill Bryson

Two mildly-prepared hikers tackle the Appalachian Trail, dodging "bears," complaining a lot, and learning about nature, history, and their friendship.

Story of My Life

by Lucy Score

After a breakup and writer's block, a romance author buys a raccoon-infested fixer-upper and accidentally sparks both a new novel and a relationship with a cranky contractor.

Truth or Beard

by Penny Reid

A case of mistaken identity leads to unexpected love and the beginning of a 12-book journey through the lives of the Winston brothers in small-town Appalachia.

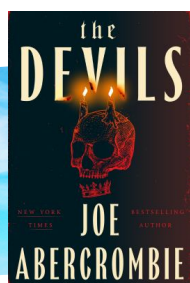
RUSH IN WHERE DEVILS DARE TO TREAD

BY JULIE ANN D.

I've heard plenty of hype surrounding Joe Abercrombie in my fantasy book groups, so you can imagine my excitement when I had the opportunity to nab an advanced reader's copy of **The Devils!** If you like your fantasy served with a side of horror and silly humor, this one is for you.

In a quasi-religious fantasy realm, set in an alternative Europe, where an impending war with elves looms, the reserved Brother Diaz is entrusted with a sacred mission - escort the newly-discovered princess to the fabled Serpent Throne of Troy. To do so, he must rely on the Devils, a ragtag congregation of outcasts feared by the righteous. Among them: a vampire, feral werewolf, necromancer magician, vanishing elf, resourceful pirate, and an immortal knight. Together, these unlikely companions will brave the unholy gauntlet through foreign lands others dare not tread, forging a devoted team on the journey. The morally gray characters are well developed, banter is crass with biting sarcasm, and some parts are grotesque and gore-filled. The plot is woven with a pulse-pounding adventure, both across brutal battlefields and on the open sea. It felt like an intense Dungeons and Dragons campaign, filled with wild highs and perilous lows.

I've just read that it will be the first in a series, I can't wait to see what other chaos the gang stirs up next.



LIBRARY TIP #3

THE BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY LIBRARY HAS A NEW LOOK! KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR EXCITING PROMOTIONS OF OUR NEW "PROFOUNDLY PUBLIC" LOGO!



VERY IMPORTANT PASS

BY CHLOE H.



Did you know you can use your library card to get special discounts across Erie County? It's a great way to get out and visit a place you may never have been before, or get a sweet deal on your favorite spots. All you have to do is show your card or input a code at checkout!

Here's what you can get with the VIP pass:

- Free admission for up to four people at the Buffalo History Museum
- One year subscription to Buffalo Spree for \$10 with code LIBRARY25
- Discounted admission and café discount at the Explore and More Children's Museum
- Free admission to Hallwalls Drawing Rally & Art Auction that happens twice a year at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center
- Discount on shop merchandise at Frank Lloyd Wright's Graycliff
- \$5 off BABEL Series event tickets through the Just Buffalo Literary Center
- Buy one, get one free admission at Penn Dixie Fossil Park & Nature Reserve
- Buy one, get one free admission or 50% regular family admission at the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site

More information can be found here:

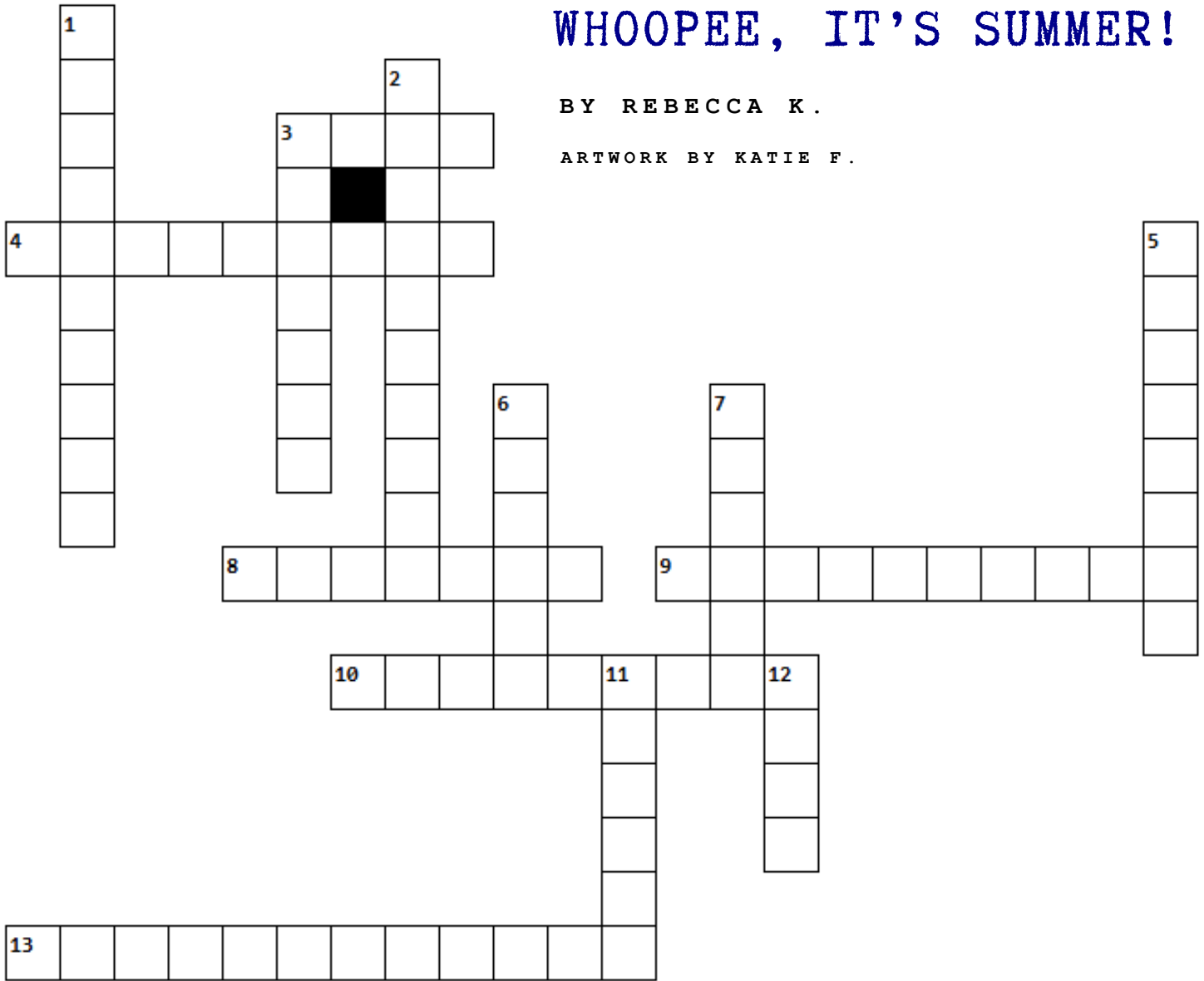


<https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/users/cen/2025/VIP%20brochure%202025.pdf>

WHOOPEE, IT'S SUMMER!

BY REBECCA K.

ARTWORK BY KATIE F.



Across

- 3. "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, ____ Fish"
- 4. Month parents look forward to by the end of the summer
- 8. Sponsor of famous hot dog eating contest
- 9. Place of next summer Olympics
- 10. Colloquial term for a book read during summer
- 13. Second rank in a graduating class

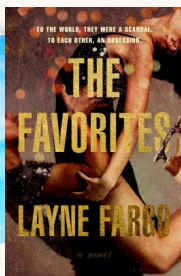
Down

- 1. The P in SPF
- 2. Commemorates the emancipation of Black enslaved people
- 3. Patriotic popsicle - red, white, & blue
- 5. "I scream, you scream, we all scream for ____"
- 6. Classic summer activity
- 7. Insect which makes its noisy appearance in summer
- 11. President who named July "National Ice Cream Month"
- 12. The Dog ____ of Summer



GOLD MEDAL DRAMA

BY CHLOE H.



The Favorites by Layne Fargo

This novel follows aspiring Olympic ice dancer Katarina Shaw and her partner Hugo Rocha as their obsession with each other captivates the elite skating world and catapults them into scandal, cutthroat competition, and lust.

The pair started with nothing, with Katarina living under her abusive brother's guardianship and Hugo in the foster care system, desperate to escape their situations. Learning to ice dance on the makeshift Chicago pond rink behind Katarina's house, they quickly become champion ice skaters who love to break the rules. Partners for life, a gruesome incident at their first Olympic appearance breaks the lovers and skating world apart.

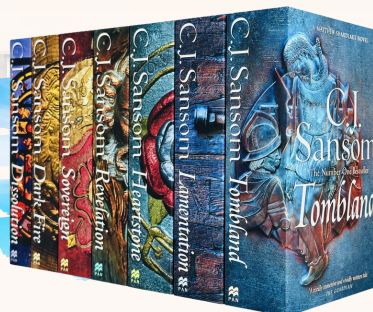
Told through present day interviews with the skating world during a documentary of the pair and Katarina's point of view during the events as they happened, this book will keep you sucked in with the levels of drama, tragedy, and musings on what it means to be truly happy.

The Goodreads description of the book calls it part *Wuthering Heights*, part *Daisy Jones and the Six* which is pretty accurate!

TROUBLED HISTORY

BY SUE K.

C.J. Sansom's Matthew Shardlake novels take you on a deep dive into the politics of Henry VIII and the Reformation. Shardlake is a hunchbacked lawyer working for Thomas Cromwell, whose brilliance and tenacity shows even when his life is threatened. The series includes *Dissolution*, *Dark Fire*, *Sovereign*, *Revelation*, *Heartstone*, *Lamentation*, and *Tombland*. Brilliant portraits of many historical figures.



INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR STAFF?
MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 1ST
THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7PM AT
THE KENMORE LIBRARY

CROSSWORD (ANSWERS)

ACROSS

3. blue, 4. September, 8. Nathans, 9. California, 10. beach read, 13. salutorian

DOWN

1. Protection, 2. Juneteenth, 3. bomb pop, 5. ice cream, 6. picnic, 7. cicada, 11. Reagan, 12. Days

THE CHECKOUT STAFF

Christina L., Chloe H., Donna D., Jill J., Karen B., Ken W., Lisa S., Nicole B., Rebecca K., Sue K., and Stuart R.

WANT TO SUBMIT A REVIEW?

SUBMISSIONS WILL BE POSTED PER DISCRETION OF THE LIBRARY.
SUBMISSIONS MAY BE EDITED FOR CONTENT OR LENGTH.

