

THE CHECKOUT

FALL 2025

ISSUE #14

A REVIEW SOURCE WRITTEN BY LIBRARY
PATRONS FOR LIBRARY PATRONS

A PUBLICATION
OF THE
KENMORE
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LIBRARY



GROWING UP SOCIAL

BY CHLOE H.

Never Let Me Go

by Kazuo Ishiguro

Chilling and poignant, this sci-fi/mystery/coming-of-age hybrid takes place at Hailsham, a boarding school in the English countryside for kids with a special purpose. All education is geared toward conditioning students to accept their destiny, which is surrounded by mystery for the first half of the book. Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy were students as children, and the book begins with Kathy in her thirties reflecting on her time at the school, understanding her complicated relationships with Ruth and Tommy, and her life's purpose in the wake of what was engrained in her by the school.

From finding out what exactly was going on, to the evolving relationship dynamic between the three characters, to the reveal that leaves you with an empty, hollow feeling at the ethical dilemma it presents, this was a fantastic read!



CONNECTIONS

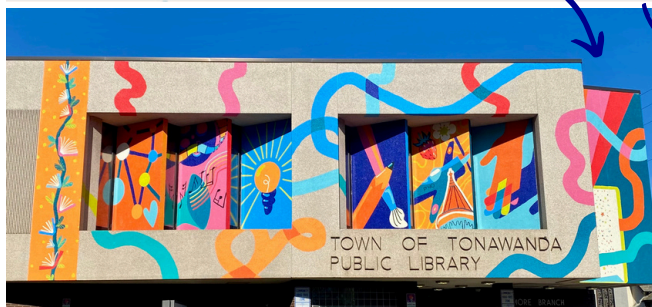
BY SUE K.



Colum McCann is one of my favorite writers and his newest novel, **Twist**, is a masterpiece. His narrator is a writer stuck in a downward spiral of writer's block and alcohol (with some life regrets thrown in). His publisher offers him an intriguing lifeline: he is to join a ship in South Africa tasked with working on repairs to the undersea internet cables off the coast of the Congo. The author, as well as I suspect many of his readers, had no idea that so much of our online communications travel not between towers, but far under the sea. As the ship searches for the broken cables, we are immersed in a complicated friendship between the writer and the head of the ship's crew. There are many twists and turns in the plot, which touches on climate change, complex relationship dynamics, and the art of free diving-diving deep without the benefits of supplemental oxygen. All in all a great read.

LIBRARY TIP #1

MAKE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE KENMORE LIBRARY'S BEAUTIFUL NEW MURAL BY MOLLY REAGAN (GOODNEIGHBORART.COM)! HER COLORFUL DESIGN CELEBRATES LITERACY, CONNECTION, AND COMMUNITY—EVERYTHING THE LIBRARY STANDS FOR!



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CUTESY CRYPTIDS

BY MELISSA F.



Love and Other Conspiracies

by Mallory Marlowe

Bigfoot, Mothman, and other creepy cryptids might be spooky and mildly dangerous, but they don't come close to Hallie's toxic ex. After he dumps her and Hallie loses her spot as producer on the online docuseries they created together, she's desperate for a brilliant new idea she can present at the company competition—or risk losing her job.

Enter Hayden, a podcaster and expert on all things paranormal. When Hallie convinces him to give a new cryptid web show a try, their on-screen chemistry inspires the production team to send the two of them on a road trip exploring legends, creatures, and ghost stories across the country. Hallie's skeptical nature and Hayden's boundless enthusiasm bring their show to life, attracting the attention of both viewers and Hallie's bosses. But ghost hunting—and relationships—aren't always easy, and they'll both have to figure out their own insecurities along the way.

Cutesy romance and Loch Ness monster lore make for an unexpected but creative combo in this fun fall read.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

FOR THE LOVERS, THE DREAMERS, AND YOU

BY JULIE ANN D.



Before You Leap

A Frog's-Eye View of
Life's Greatest Lessons



I have been feeling a bit down lately, so I decided to visit with an old friend...Kermit the Frog. **Before You Leap: A Frog's Eye View of Life's Greatest Lessons** (2025) is the third reissue of Kermit's best-selling memoir, updated to include current Muppet facts. It's divided into two parts: the first is about Kermit's humble beginnings as a tadpole and how the Muppets assembled, and the second is about life lessons for you! The advice is delivered in a warm, genuine manner that only the Muppets could pull off, featuring insights from Kermit and his eclectic group of friends. Sprinkled with humor and through clever references to their shows and films, the message is clear and relatable even if you're not familiar with the Muppets themselves.

Kermit writes, "I want you to leave your swamp, and set out on that most amazing and surprising journey: your life." His words of encouragement and belonging truly make you feel welcome and accepted. After all, the Muppets don't care who you are, what you look like, or what you can do. All are welcome, no matter how strange or obscure. There's a comforting reassurance in staying true to who you are while striving to make the world a better place. Kermit offers thoughtful tips and examples on how to live authentically, touching on themes like the different kinds of love and the importance of his found family.

Kermit's words lifted my spirits, reminding me to search for my own "rainbow connection" and never give up. It's a message of hope that's just as timeless as the Muppets themselves, who coincidentally are celebrating 70 years.

DOLPHINS AND TIGERS AND HAWKS, OH MY!

BY DONNA D.



Sy Montgomery is a naturalist and award-winning science writer who has traveled the world researching animals for her books. Her work has taken her from the rain forest of French Guiana to study tarantulas, to the Amazon where she swam with dolphins, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) where she was chased by an angry gorilla, and to her own backyard in New Hampshire where she formed close relationships with the animals on her farm. She has written over 35 books for both adults and children. Here are three of my favorites:

The Good Good Pig follows the life of a tiny pig, the runt of the litter, who Montgomery brought home in a shoebox and named Christopher Hogwood. This smart, curious little piggy (who did NOT go to market) grew to 750 pounds and became a beloved member of the entire community, attesting to the importance of our interaction with animals.

In a recent best-seller, **Of Time and Turtles**, Montgomery shared her experiences volunteering with a turtle rescue group where hundreds of injured, sick, and abandoned turtles were given a second chance. We witness dramatic rescues and inspiring miracles as the dedicated turtle rehabilitators' motto is "never give up on a turtle."

The Soul of an Octopus is one of Montgomery's best-known books. She befriended octopuses at Boston's New England Aquarium, and scuba dived with wild octopuses in Mexico and French Polynesia, sharing amazing stories about their intelligence and creativity.

If you are ready to learn more about animals, and be amused and inspired along the way, pick up any book by Sy Montgomery.



WAR'S HORROR

BY SUE K.



The new book **Hold Strong** by triple authors Robert Dugoni, Jeff Langholtz, and Chris Crabtree is one of those books you wish you never read. Not that it isn't extensively researched and well-written, if a bit lengthy where a bit of careful editing might have strengthened the story. The horror the book chronicles does not touch the devastation of the atomic bomb drops, but it exposes another morally corrupt wartime decision little known to me and probably many other Americans. The two primary characters are an engaged couple, one who is trapped in the Philippines as a serviceman when MacArthur pulls his troops and the other is a code breaker for the US government and an expert at the complicated Japanese codes. As the Japanese shift American POWs around the Philippines on ships which the US thinks are full of weaponry, the US arranges to torpedo them. Even as the US government suspects there are POWs aboard, they do not change plans because they fear that would expose the fact that they have broken the codes. So it knowingly sinks ships carrying the POWs as part of the war effort. Ironically, the serviceman character is one of a handful of survivors who manage to row 250 miles to China. In the story, Sam is the only survivor of the Arisan Maru, while in reality there were nine survivors of the 1800 aboard. The ending with the codebreaker and the serviceman getting married is rather contrived, as if that takes care of all the horror of the US's decisions because these two get a happy ending. I cannot fully recommend this book except that exposing the continual horror of war's terrible compromises needs to be told.

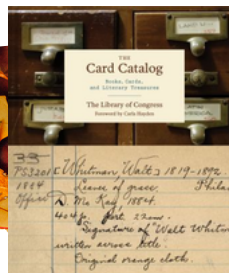
WHO REMEMBERS CARD CATALOGS?

BY KAREN B.

The Card Catalog: Books, Cards, and Literary Treasures

by Peter Devereaux

Dr. Carla Hayden, the well-respected and admired former Librarian of Congress (who also happens to be the first woman, the first person of color, and the first person to have a library degree in that position), has given her stamp of approval to this charming little history book. In its preface, she reframes the card catalog—the ubiquitous wooden file cabinet full of 3x5 inch cards designed to help patrons find books in the library before the digital age—as an instrument of accessibility to knowledge. Using this framework, the author then explains how the organization of library collections began and grew over time. Full of more pictures than text, this book offers brief snapshots of Mesopotamian clay tablets, ancient Egyptian papyrus scrolls, and medieval vellum manuscripts, followed by numerous images of famous works of American literature with their accompanying catalog cards.



Readers will learn how organizing efforts that started as lists of books morphed into the more familiar author, title, and subject classifications used today. For people who remember using a library card catalog, this book seems set to serve as a nostalgic memory point. And for people who do not have these memories, it serves as a guide to human ingenuity in organizing information by harnessing technological changes over time. In either case, it is an enjoyable read full of delightful details and engaging images. Worth a browse!

THE ART OF ILLUMINATION

BY KAREN B.



Book of Colours
by Robyn Cadwallader
(only on Hoopla)

This novel tells the intertwined story of William, a limner (an illuminator or painter) of medieval manuscripts, and Lady Mathilda, the woman who commissioned a book of hours (a prayer book) from his place of employment in 1320s London. During the time period of this novel, famine, drought, and sickness have taken hold while a civil war is brewing between King Edward II and his barons. Will and Mathilda's stories layer upon each other and interlace throughout this time of trouble. Will's story narrates his earlier escape from Cambridge and his new work in London, while Mathilda's story unfolds in the aftermath of the military conflict in which her husband, now branded a traitor, died on the battlefield, forcing her to flee to safety elsewhere. The book of hours connects these two people and their two different worlds through a shared appreciation of the beauty of art and a recognition that art contains emotions that speak to other human beings.

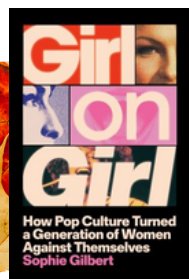
Chapters begin with a brief entry on the art of illumination that describe the ideas behind the paintings in manuscripts, what they are meant to convey, and how the different colors and pictures are created. Despite social, political, economic, and military turmoil, this art endures. Well worth the read for anyone interested in the history of manuscript illumination and its very human creators.



ARTWORK BY KATIE F.

WHAT HAPPENED TO FEMINISM?

BY JULIE ANN
D.



Girl on Girl: How Pop Culture Turned a Generation of Women Against Themselves by Sophie Gilbert explores the evolving intersection of feminism and pop culture, particularly from the 1990s through the early 2000s. With a sharp eye for key cultural moments, Gilbert dissects how various media—music, movies, fashion, and art—have shaped and, at times, undermined feminist progress. From the misogynistic rap of the '90s to the empowerment narrative of Lilith Fair, from the oversexualized teen comedies to the Kardashian empire, and even the financial crises of the 2000s, the book contends that feminism has been under attack.

It begins with the underground “riot grrrl” movement, the angsty women-led punk bands that heralded the third wave of feminism. In response, the music industry wanted nice marketable girls. Make way for the postmodern teen sexuality of Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. Their “sexy virgin” personas—carefully curated for the male gaze—were marketed as feminist empowerment, but only reinforced age-old stereotypes. This juxtaposition is just one of the many contradictions Gilbert explores.

As the book progresses, it becomes clear that the constant drive for fame and the need to be ever more provocative leave women overexposed and commodified. The influence of Madonna’s **Sex** book, for example, blurred the lines between art and pornography, setting a tone for the following decade. Public and private boundaries were increasingly eroded, especially with the rise of reality TV, where women’s lives were laid bare for consumption. As a result, women are portrayed as sexual commodities whose value is largely determined by their appearance.

Gilbert also touches on the dangers of beauty-obsessed culture, where women are routinely encouraged to undergo makeovers in the pursuit of “plastic perfection.” Reality TV and social media influencers exacerbate this, creating an environment where women are not only judged for their looks but often reduced to shallow, marketable versions of themselves. The supposed “empowerment” of women having control over their narratives often comes with the caveat of being labeled as “oversharers,” a tactic that trivializes their voices and contributions.

What’s next for feminism? Gilbert seems to hope that a cultural correction is on the horizon, one that can reclaim the true spirit of feminism and empower women in a more authentic and meaningful way. I hope so too.

Content and sensitivity warning: Sexual abuse, eating disorders, sexism.

LOCAL MYSTERIES

BY KEN W.



The seven-book **Lily Dale Mystery** series takes place right here in Western New York, in the spiritualist community of Lily Dale near Fredonia. The books all are cozy mysteries that use one of the oldest spiritualist communities in the country for their setting. It is delightful to read stories that take place so close to Buffalo. I have made several visits to this community through the course of the last 45 years—the setting and landmarks seem to be fairly accurately portrayed, while the author develops a cast of fictional characters to populate her world. The Dale is the affectionate name for this community populated by spiritualists—mediums who conduct individual and group readings for people who want to communicate with those who have passed on. The characters in the book consist of mediums, as well as people who live nearby who are not part of that profession.

The main character Bella Jordan is an innkeeper who provides lodging to visitors who want to take advantage of the programs offered at the Dale. She is a widow who stumbled upon The Dale with her young son and who ends up managing the Valley View Guesthouse. Some of these guests have specifically come to seek a spiritualist to consult about someone they lost and wish to communicate with.

In all, the characters are likable and the plots are interesting. It is a light-hearted series where the characters evolve and romantic interests develop, and it’s a fun look at an interesting community close to home.

READING SLUMP? TRY BOOKS IN VERSE!

BY CHRISTINA
L.

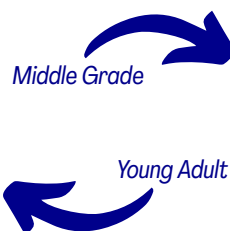
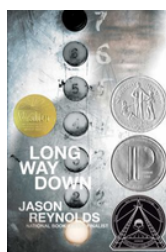
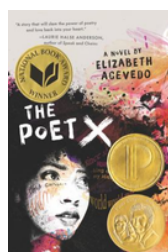


As an adult, I have found many middle-grade and young adult verse novels to be compelling, fast-paced, and difficult to put down. They convey so much emotion without the need for extra words, while still delivering all the essential storytelling elements, such as setting, characters, theme, and topic. Also, many of the themes are timely and offer a unique first-hand look at how children and young adults overcome obstacles and grow.

One that stands out above the rest is **And Then, Boom!** by Lisa Fipps. 6th-grader Joe Oak is no stranger to struggles. He enjoys hanging with friends and drawing strength from superhero stories to face the many challenges life has thrown his way. Joe is being cared for by his grandmother, who is working tirelessly just to keep a roof over their heads. Joe also has a small group of friends and a couple of amazing adults, who offer companionship and help with little things that go a long way. Just when life seems to settle down, BOOM! another terrible thing comes his way. Like a superhero, Joe will need all the strength he can muster to remain positive and keep pushing on, simply to stay safe and keep his basic needs met each day.

You should know that nothing is sugar-coated here. This is an emotional read with themes of food insecurity, homelessness, and even a natural disaster. Fipps sheds an important light on the lives of many schoolchildren living in poverty, while also remaining hopeful that kids like Joe can overcome extreme challenges and look ahead to a better future. The library has several copies of this title, and I recommend checking it out!

Other middle-grade and young adult books in verse to explore!



CAT HAIR AND COFFEE

BY MELISSA F.

Cat's People

by Tanya Guerrero



Cat is a stray without a family. Cat travels the streets of Brooklyn day and night. And Cat sees all. Told from alternating points of view, Cat and the five humans who care for him start to connect in beautiful and unexpected ways. Cat notices who is leaving those “secret admirer” notes for Nuria, the barista who feeds him on the sidewalk. Cat sees Omar, the mailman, going through a midlife crisis, and Cat follows Lily, the girl visiting from Georgia on a quest to find her long-lost sister. Cat visits Bong, the kind bodega owner mourning his deceased wife, and Cat finds comfort in the quiet alleyway next to Collin’s house as the shy, reclusive author musters up the courage to venture out for a cup of coffee—and possibly more.

When Cat becomes ill, all five of his people finally meet in a heart-warming effort to save their friend. This sweet story brings home the importance of human connection in a delightful collection of character perspectives and feline wisdom. Reading this with a cat in your lap is highly recommended. Also you might need a tissue, but in a good way.



MURDERLAND: COME FOR THE SERIAL KILLERS, STAY FOR THE CATASTROPHIC ECOLOGICAL DISASTER

BY STEPHEN C.

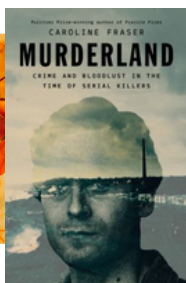
Murderland: Crime and Bloodlust in the Time of Serial Killers

by Caroline Fraser

The 1970s in the Pacific Northwest of the United States seems like it was just awful at every turn. I wasn't there so I can't say for certain, but luckily for us (but less so for her) author Caroline Fraser was raised in the Tacoma, Washington area and she's here with a brilliantly written report.

On the surface, her book is an examination of a strange and deadly anomaly: the explosion of active serial killers in a relatively concentrated area of the country. In the 1970s and 1980s Ted Bundy, the Green River Killer, the I-5 Killer, the Night Stalker, the Hillside Strangler, and Charles Manson all appeared and began killing. All had ties to the Pacific Northwest.

If Fraser's retelling of these monsters' origin stories was the only aim of this book, it would still be a worthy read. The real magic here lies partly in the author's personal recollections, but more so in her desire to solve the mystery of how these men were created in the first place. This leads Fraser to examine the impact of heavy metal manufacturing in the area, especially around Tacoma. She argues, very convincingly, that the extremely elevated lead levels found in the people of the Pacific Northwest thanks to that manufacturing could be to blame.



Murderland transcends a true crime retelling of familiar stories and becomes a warning of potential consequences of abusing the planet for short-term gains. It also makes me thankful that I wasn't raised, and am now raising a child, in an area rife with former heavy industry sites.

Library Fun Fact: Check out aisle 17 next time you're at the Kenmore Library and peruse our government documents for public review section. Included are things like Brownfield Cleanup reports that detail efforts to reverse the environmental damage done to the land of former industrial sites in Tonawanda. Neat!

THE CHECKOUT: FALL 2025

THE ZOMBIE ROOSTER IS ACTUALLY KIND OF ADORABLE, OKAY?

BY MELISSA F.



A Witch's Guide to Magical Innkeeping

by Sangu Mandanna

Sera Swan is a powerful witch—quite possibly the most powerful in all of Britain. Rather, she used to be. Resurrecting a dead relative and losing most of her magic caused Sera's exile from the witch's guild and initiated a long tumble into a raging storm of self-doubt. Sera longs for a future that's no longer possible while helping her (formerly deceased) aunt Jasmine run their enchanted yet haphazard Lancashire inn.

When Sera learns of an old spell that could potentially revive her lost abilities, she enlists the help of inn guest and magical historian Luke, who may be able to interpret the spell's mysterious meanings. As they work together to restore Sera's magic, they have to navigate life with the inn's oddball guests, keep tabs on a morally gray talking fox who desperately wants to be human (again), make sure the undead rooster doesn't escape or get run over by a car, and avoid capturing the attention of the all-powerful witch's guild—who don't necessarily want Sera's magic to return.

If you enjoyed **The Very Secret Society of Irregular Witches**, you'll love this perfect, cozy autumn read.

LIBRARY TIP #2

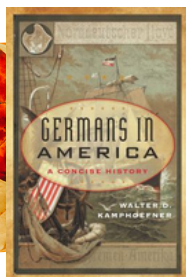
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ISSUE #14

GERMAN-AMERICANA

BY KAREN B.



Germans in America: A Concise History

by Walter D. Kamphoefner

Plenty of people in Western New York as well as throughout the United States have German ancestry. This book tackles the idea of how the largest ethnic group in American history could now be its least visible. This narrative begins in colonial times, chugs through the mass migration period of the 1800's, contextualizes the anti-German hysteria of the World War I years, and ends on a note of twilight ethnicity. Along the way, readers will learn many interesting details of who some of these immigrants were, why they left, where they went, and how they adapted to American life. Issues of religious freedom in the earliest days when Germans first came to rural Pennsylvania are relayed, as are later economic drivers like crop failure and political drivers like the unsuccessful 1848 German revolution.

The wide-ranging diversity of what being German meant becomes clear as differing views on education, religion, politics, and class status are examined, as are the very different lifestyles of immigrant farmers and city-dwellers. Further woven in are discussions about the role of the German press in the US, and how various German immigrants perceived women's work, inter-ethnic relations, and military duties to their new homeland. The points of consensus among these disparate groups were anti-Prohibition stances (because they saw beer gardens as family relaxation, not the devil's work), singing societies for entertainment, and gymnastic clubs for health and exercise.

Mentions of Buffalo are sprinkled throughout the sections that generally deal with urban life, but they are folded into a much wider panorama of German-American history. Recommended for anyone wondering why their ancestors may have immigrated here from Germany, as well as anyone interested in how they ultimately assimilated so fully into American culture.

EVIL EQUINES?

BY JILL J.



The Scorpio Races

by Maggie Stiefvater

I have two words for you: murder horses.

OK, here are a few more words. When I first picked up **The Scorpio Races** by Maggie Stiefvater, I was wary. So many young adult books focus (in my opinion) on romance over character development and actual plot. But I should've trusted Stiefvater—she's the author of one of my favorite YA series **The Raven Cycle**, and she knows how to weave complex plot, multi-faceted characters, and even a little romance together into a beautifully-written cohesive narrative.

The Scorpio Races focuses on two characters, Puck Connolly and Sean Kendrick, who share both narration and a love of horses. Puck is an orphan with two brothers, and her small family is on the verge of losing their home and drifting apart when her older brother plans to leave their tight-knit island of Thisby. Sean is a laconic horse rider and trainer at the esteemed Malvern Yard, who desperately wants to break free from his shady employer and finally own his beloved horse, Corr.

The narrative intertwines the voices of Puck and Sean as they navigate this year's Scorpio Races—a deadly race that takes place every November on the cold Thisby beach. People and horses have died in the races, including Sean's father. How are the Scorpio Races so deadly? Enter the murder horses (technically water horses), or *capaill uisce*. These horses rise from the choppy November sea every year, and every year some are trained for the races. Oh, and they subsist on blood. The descriptions of the *capaill uisce* are genuinely unsettling, but you eventually grow fond of (some of) them as the book goes on.

I'm not a horse girl. But **The Scorpio Races** turned me into a murder horse girl.

AN IRONWORKER ACCIDENTALLY KIDNAPS A MERMAN & JOINS THE CIRCUS

BY MELISSA F.

When the Tides Held the Moon

by Venessa Vida Kelley

First of all, the artwork in this book is fantastic. Also, a story about an early-1900s Coney Island circus with merfolk in the East River? I'm seated.

Benigno "Benny" Caldera is an interesting, loveable, and wonderfully imperfect main character—an immigrant from Puerto Rico working as a talented blacksmith, he's tasked with creating an exceptionally large framed tank for a client. The client—a circus showman—has a grand plan for a new sideshow attraction, and Benny finds himself caught up in a chaotic seaside adventure that results in a new job maintaining the water tank for a captured merman. Río, as Benny calls him after the merman refuses to reveal his true name, is not just aquatically handsome but also clever and compassionate, and the two develop a deep friendship and fall into a bittersweet romance.



Benny finds himself struggling with a terrible decision, because to free Río means losing his own security and position in a city that isn't always welcoming to people like him. With time running out as Río's condition deteriorates, Benny must choose what to do while also confronting the mysteries and insecurities of his own past. This was a fun read, a little slow at times but with with interesting fairy tale-like elements and engaging characters.

Content and Sensitivity: Storyline includes elements of racism and intolerance toward persons with disabilities.

HOW TO GET SUCKED IN BY AN AUTHOR

BY MARY ANNE B.



The Crash

by Freida McFadden

When you pick up a book by an author who you have read before, chances are you will like the book. I have read a few Freida McFadden books and **The Crash** is the one I just finished. I have found that when I pick up a book and the author grabs my attention by throwing out all sorts of storylines, I have to find out where they lead to. And that is what happened with **The Crash**.

As I read deeper into the story, I was drawn into the characters. I am the kind of person who, as I read the book, I picture what the people look like. This book's characters include a young pregnant woman, her brother, a young scholarly lawyer, his sleazy client, a former nurse turned homebody (due to the "incident"), her "Paul Bunyan" husband, a neglected little girl, and her alcoholic father. Now you might ask how all these characters can be in one story—they are all connected in one way or another.

While I had to keep reading to find out how all these people came together, parts of the book are repetitive and I found myself thinking, "How many times does this have to be said?" Freida always leaves little bits of information, which make you wonder why and where it will fit in. When the story comes to the end, you find out things that you never saw coming!! Not only does Freida tie up all the loose ends and end the book with a lot of surprises, she also leaves some secrets between the characters that only you, the reader, are aware of.

It is not surprising that Freida McFadden is a very popular author—her characters are just everyday people who get put in everyday situations with surprisingly bad outcomes.

While Freida McFadden is not necessarily a complex author, she knows how to suck you in and then give you an ending you never see coming.

IT ALL BEGAN WITH HER DIARY...

BY DONNA D.

The Frozen River, written by Ariel Lawhon in 2023, is an historical mystery. It was inspired by the life of Martha Ballard, an 18th-century midwife and healer who kept a detailed diary documenting the births, deaths, and happenings in the town of Hallowell, Maine.

The novel begins with the discovery of a man floating in the icy Kennebec River during a harsh winter. Martha is called to examine the body and declares he was murdered. When it is discovered that this man was one of two men accused of raping a woman, Martha's diary may be able to provide evidence at trial. The laws in place and the general attitude toward women make it doubtful that justice will prevail, but Martha pursues the truth with strength and determination.

While a mystery moves the story forward, **The Frozen River** offers a fascinating picture of life shortly after the American Revolution. I enjoyed reading about this time period—the court system, medical practices, customs of courting and marriage, the role of a midwife, and the struggles of women who were expected to be seen and not heard. Unusual for a woman at the time, Martha was literate and her diary provides insights into life in a small rural community in 18th century America.



Ariel Lawhon adds notes at the end of the book explaining how she first learned about Martha Ballard and subsequently spent a year researching and writing. She notes that “roughly 75 percent of what happens on these pages closely follows the historical record.” The rest is Lawhon’s version of what could have happened.

For those who want to learn more about this remarkable woman, she recommends reading **A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812**, a Pulitzer prize-winning book by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich.

MIGRATION MYSTERIES

BY KEN W.



Flight Paths by Rebecca Heisman provides information about the complicated nature of bird migration. Growing up in Western New York, I learned as a child that some birds fly south for the winter. Heisman provides in depth information about the birds that bi-locate during the year. She also addresses the fact that some birds have changed their migratory behavior. She explores the history around the interest in bird migration and shows how little we knew until fairly recently. Scientists and bird enthusiasts added to the sum of knowledge available. As with much developing understanding, one discovery provided information that led to more searches and more new knowledge. Scientists began seriously tracking and charting bird migration with basic observational data, and then were able to piece together some more of the parts to the puzzle thanks to communication with people in distant areas. As time progressed they started using bird banding to track bird movement. This relied on people finding the banded birds and reporting back to those who had banded them. Some scientists figured out how to attach transmitters to birds to track their progress. They perfected the types of transmitters and the size so more birds could be tracked. More tracking stations were added to the networks and more complete pictures of the birds’ travels could be made. Many others’ methods for finding the answers to the puzzles were employed. Today many different techniques are used. New answers have been found as well as new questions. Though highly technical in parts, much information can be gained reading this book.

THE INNOVATOR OF WOMEN'S SPORTSWEAR

BY JULIE ANN D.

Claire McCardell revolutionized womenswear in the United States starting in the 1930s, and her contributions can still be seen in fashion today! The book **Claire McCardell: The Designer Who Set Women Free** by Elizabeth Dickinson dives into her life and story, much of it taken from letters and correspondence between McCardell and her family.

McCardell attended the Parsons School of Design and studied in Paris. She would come back to New York with sketches of what she saw for designer houses to copy. Paris led the way in fashion, but when World War II broke out, scouting new designs ceased and restrictions were put on raw materials. People were now looking to American designers and McCardell was at the forefront.

Opposite of haute couture, McCardell said “we are a mass production country and I want to give the best to everyone.” Her fashionable designs highlighted women’s mobility and active lifestyles and were praised for their practicality. Her first hit was called the Popover Dress, a wrap dress with a large patch pocket. The success of the Popover led her to design all her women’s clothing with pockets. She encouraged mix-and-match separates, used zippers, designed Capezio ballet flat shoes that could be worn outside of dance, introduced women to the potential of denim, designed cat-eye sunglasses, made playsuits that could be worn in the water and on land, created pedal pusher pants for biking, designed patterns for home sewers, and originated the first athletic top with a hood, modernly called a “hoodie.”



McCardell changed how women feel in clothes. Furthermore, she thought corsets were slow strangulation of women, and that we should work with our own body shapes. One thing I always say is “Wear what makes you happy,” and my sentiment comes directly from McCardell.

BINGO DABBERS & CLAW HAMMERS

BY JILL J.



Too Old for This

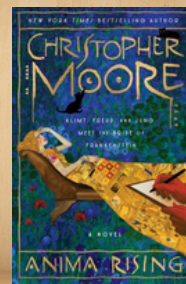
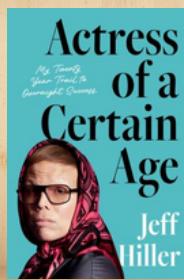
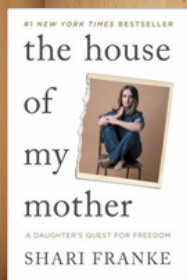
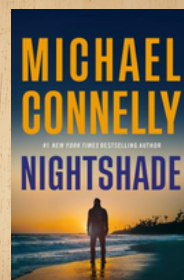
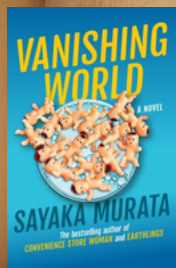
by Samantha Downing

Lottie Jones is an unassuming old lady who lives by herself. She gardens, goes to bingo, and frets about what to cook for her church group’s meetings. Except one day, everything changes when a documentarian named Plum knocks on her door asking about the murders that she’s committed.

Too Old for This was such a fun read. The character of Lottie is a fascinating portrayal of a sociopath—a cunning, retired serial killer who tries to blend in as a typical older woman, but who can’t help herself when it comes to murdering those who she perceives as having wronged her in some way. Her inner monologue is sometimes snarkily funny, sometimes sad as she navigates not only the indignities of getting older, but trying to cover up her crimes. Once Plum is killed, everything starts to spiral for Lottie. Her lies compound upon each other until you’re not sure she can find her way out of the mess that she’s created. The side characters who make up Lottie’s small world are interesting foils to her, whether intentionally antagonistic (Burke, the retired detective who never believed in her innocence) or benevolently in the way (Morgan, her very young, pregnant future daughter-in-law who comes to stay with Lottie while planning her wedding).

This is a novel that I unintentionally read in one sitting. The intrigue and humor had me hooked and kept me up past my bedtime. If you’re looking for a thriller that isn’t formulaic and actually has some surprises up its bloodstained sleeve, check this one out.

QUICK TAKES



Vanishing World by Sayaka Murata

In this futuristic version of Japan, sex between married couples has vanished and all children are born by artificial insemination. This troubling and wacky novel has a disturbing ending.

The House of My Mother: a Daughter's Quest for Freedom by Shari Franke

A fascinating look into the world of influencers, and specifically, the behind-the-scenes madness of Ruby Franke's YouTube channel empire. It's a sobering account of how the desire for attention through our screens can lead to the destruction of the very families being portrayed as "perfect."

Ballerina by Patrick Modiano

A short read with the titular unnamed protagonist The Ballerina at the forefront, dancing away from her past struggles in 1960s Paris.

Actress of a Certain Age: My Twenty-Year Trail to Overnight Success by Jeff Hiller

A fun read (and even better audiobook!) by the actor of the hit HBO show **Somebody, Somewhere** where he talks about growing up gay in Texas in the 80s and how he found acting success unexpectedly in his 40s. Sweet, funny, and heartfelt, this book was a joy to read.

Nightshade by Michael Connelly

If anyone out there is unfamiliar with Michael Connelly, be sure to check out his Amazon series, **Bosch**. There are dozens of books featuring his detectives Harry Bosch and Rene Ballard. This one features a different officer, Stillwell, stationed somewhat in disgrace on California's Catalina Island. Great characters, gripping plots, and worth a look!

Anima Rising by Christopher Moore

Christopher Moore is back with his fun absurdist writing about modern artists in **Anima Rising**. Just think if Klimt, Schiele, and Kokoschka walk into a bar...and meet the Bride of Frankenstein. Moore also has a book called **Sacre Bleu** with Van Gogh and Lautrec!



BUFFALO GALS, WON'T YOU COME OUT TONIGHT—

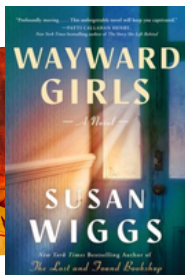
TO TAKE DOWN SOME MEAN NUNS
AND FIGHT THE PATRIARCHY

BY MELISSA F.

Wayward Girls

by Susan Wiggs

The Good Shepherd Home for Wayward Girls in Buffalo, New York offers shelter to teenage girls from all walks of life... whether they want it or not. As sixteen-year-old Mairin discovers, behind its iron gates and barbed wire the Home is actually an industrial laundry run by the Sisters of Charity, with little to offer its residents in the way of either education or kindness. After her older brother is drafted to serve in Vietnam, Mairin is sent to the Good Shepherd to remain safe from her threatening stepfather.



While determined to escape the merciless nuns, the predatory Dr. Gilroy, and the endless toil and abuse, Mairin finds herself drawn into the tragic lives and spirited stories of the other residents at the Good Shepherd. Each chapter is a haunting and hopeful journey through the lives of these wayward girls, with Mairin's experience at the center as she plots to finally break free from the Home. Enhanced by rich local history and courageous characters, **Wayward Girls** offers a thrilling and inspiring story of friendship, love, and redemption.

Content and Sensitivity: Storyline includes elements of child abuse, sexual assault, pregnancy, forced adoption, and religious trauma.

LIBRARY TIP #3

ARE YOU A LOCAL
AUTHOR LOOKING TO
CONNECT WITH OTHER
INDEPENDENT AUTHORS?
CHECK OUT INDIE
AUTHOR DAY AT THE
CENTRAL LIBRARY ON
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER
15TH!

INDIE!
AUTHOR DAY



DIGITAL DETOX

BY CHLOE H.



Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World

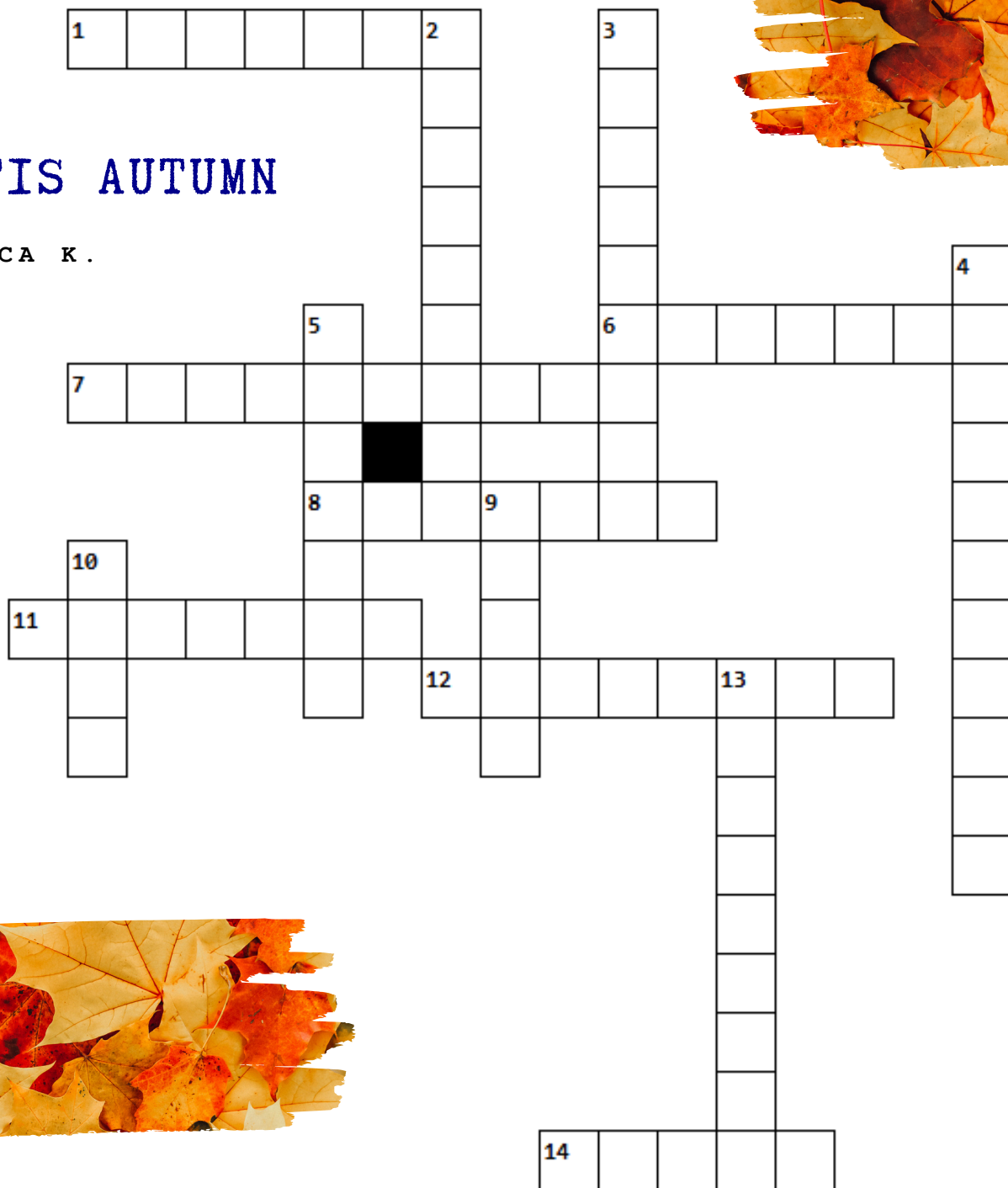
by Cal Newport

In a world where we are constantly learning how bad everything digital is on our digital devices in our digital-first world, it can be hard to read books like this that suggest the idea of giving it all up. Cal Newport presents the idea of a 30-day digital detox, completely getting rid of what he describes as new technologies—websites, social media, blogs, text messaging, etc. all fall in this category for him. After 30 days, he says to put each technology through a screening and if it passes, you can gradually start to reintroduce it into your life with a clear mind and guidelines around its usage, mainly that it brings value to your life and is the best vehicle to bring that value. He has a couple people go through this detox, tell him their findings during it, and describes the results along with his own musings on the topic.

While interesting to hear his proposition as well as stories from the people that went through the study, the author tends to get his own bias in the way despite addressing it towards the start of the book. He doesn't address how these technologies are integrated with our work lives, and what impact that has on our behavior outside the office. He has also never used social media, which does skew the book and his commentary on those who went through the detox. However, some of his tidbits are nice nuggets of information for those looking to adjust their relationship with technology. The detox being centered around improving your quality of life with a structure to follow is also refreshing and can be customized to what you are trying to achieve.

LO, 'TIS AUTUMN

BY REBECCA K.



Across

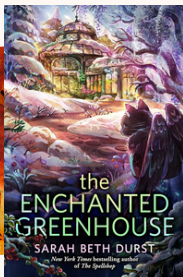
1. Fall fruit turned into a coach
6. First state to recognize Thanksgiving as a holiday
7. Thanksgiving table decoration
8. Item of clothing brought out this time of year
11. *Leaves of Grass* author
12. Pet that evokes superstition
14. Last name of the school teacher in *Sleepy Hollow*

Down

2. "Quoth the Raven..."
3. Animals start to prepare to do this in autumn
4. German festival celebrated in the fall
5. Day of the week that school starts historically
9. Quintessential fall fruit
10. Popular spiced black tea beverage
13. Treat popular during Halloween

FLYING CATS & TALKING ROSES

BY MELISSA F.



The Enchanted Greenhouse by Sarah Beth Durst

As punishments go, being turned into a wooden statue because you got lonely at work and used a magic spell to create a sentient spider plant seems a bit excessive. Librarian Terlu Perna learns this the hard way. In a desperate bid for companionship in her solitary life at the Library of Alyssium, Terlu breaks the law of magic and ends up as a décor piece—and a warning to others—in the North Reading Room of the Library.

Until the day she wakes up, human again, alive... and freezing. Terlu finds herself on a snowy, forgotten island full of greenhouses, each one containing more plants than she's ever seen. The place is deserted, except for one begrudgingly helpful gardener named Yarrow, who is trying to figure out why the magic-infused greenhouses keep failing and plants keep dying.

This book returns us to Durst's lush world of The Spellshop, with loveable characters and cozy fantasy elements. What is causing the greenhouse magic to fail? Can Terlu and Yarrow figure out the secrets behind the island's spell? And how did Terlu even end up here in the first place? Make some tea, get a cozy blanket, and curl up with this sweet and magical fantasy adventure.

NEW DETECTIVE DRAMA

BY CHRISTINA L.



Patience

(2025-, created by Laurent Bertin & Alexandre de Seguins)

This captivating British crime drama will test your detective skills. It follows a young woman named Patience who works in the criminal records office at the York police department. After a lead detective discovers her unique and brilliant ability to recognize patterns and clues that are often overlooked, Patience becomes an important addition to the investigation team.

A new adaptation of the popular French detective series, Astrid et Raphaëlle, Patience is full of binge-worthy suspense while offering a fresh look at neurodiversity in the TV crime drama genre.



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

CROSSWORD (ANSWERS)

ACROSS

1. pumpkin 6. New York 7. cornucopia 8. sweater 11. Whitman
12. black cat 14. Crane

DOWN

2. nevermore 3. hibernate 4. Oktoberfest 5. Tuesday 9. apple
10. chai 13. candy corn

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.

