

April 2025

Illuminated Stacks

The official newsletter of the Stoneham Public Library

Stoneham Public Library

431 Main Street Stoneham, MA 02180

Adult Services | (781) 438-1324

Mon., Tues., Thu.: 9 am - 9 pm

Wed., Fri.: 9 am - 5 pm

Sat.: 10 am - 2 pm

Children's Services | (781) 438-1325

Mon., Tues., Thu.: 9 am - 7 pm

Wed., Fri.: 9 am - 5 pm

Sat. 10 am - 2 pm

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[Click here to visit our website!](#)

Follow us on social media:



The Month at a Glance

Health & Wellness Fair

Saturday, April 5, 11am-2pm

Stoneham Town Hall Auditorium

Interested (or concerned) about mental and physical health? The Stoneham Chamber of Commerce will be hosting its 15th annual health and wellness fair at the Stoneham Town Hall Auditorium on April 5th. [Click here to learn more about this event.](#)



The Trustees of the Library

Will meet at 7 PM on Monday, April 14th, in the Stoneham Room. A hybrid option is also available. All members of the public are welcome to attend to comment or just listen to the proceedings.

If you are interested in viewing a meeting virtually, use the following link to join: <https://bit.ly/SPLTrustees> or call in at +1 (646) 931-3860.

Meeting ID: 876 9866 6972

Passcode: 823496

[Click here to learn more about our Trustees,](#)
[as well as to view minutes from past meetings.](#)

Closures

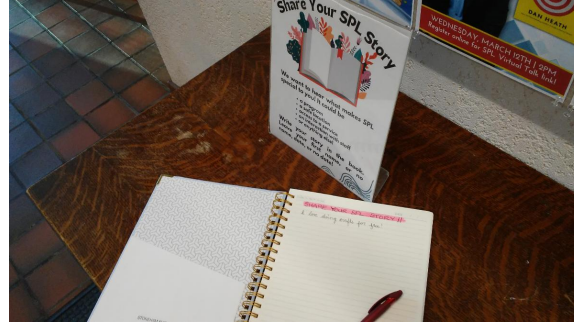
Monday, April 21st (Patriots' Day)



Share Your SPL Story

The Stoneham Public Library would love to know what patrons love about the library! This can be a program that you've attended (or

continue to attend), a positive interaction that you've had with staff, or something as simple as just being here to read, relax, or conduct research.



If you have a special experience that you would like to share, a pen and a notebook have been set down on the small wooden table next to the self-checkout machine in the lobby.

Library of Things Expo

Binoculars by Athlon Optics

Are you the outdoorsy type? Do you enjoy observing wildlife, but don't want to get too close? These Midas roof-prism binoculars by Athlon are perfect for bird-watching and mountaintop views. [Click here to learn more about, or to request, this item.](#)



Adult Programs

Mondays

Art with Erica

April 7th @ 7 pm
The Stoneham Room

Join this arts & crafts program for adults 18+, led by local artist, Erica Flores. Come hang out and get creative. This month's craft is [subtractive drawing](#). We meet on the first Monday of every month. All supplies are provided. [Registration required.](#)



Movie Night

Pride (2014)
April 14th @ 6:30 pm
The Stoneham Room

We will hold a viewing of this month's Film Club choice, *Pride* (2014).

"U.K. gay activists work to help miners during their lengthy strike of the National Union of Mineworkers in the summer of 1984."

All film screenings are free and open to the public. Snacks will be provided. Registration not required.

Rated: R | Run Time: 1h 59m | Genres: Biography, Comedy, Drama, History, Romance | Directed by: Matthew Warchus
Written by: Stephen Beresford | Starring: Bill Nighy, Imelda Staunton, Dominic West

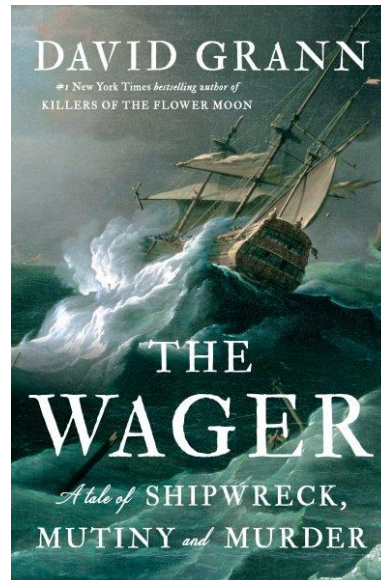


Monday Night Book Group

April 28th @ 7 pm

The Stoneham Room

This month's nonfiction selection is [*The Wager* by David Grann](#), author of the widely acclaimed title, [*Killers of the Flower Moon*](#). Grann tells the story of *The Wager*, a British vessel that shipwrecked on a secret war mission in 1740. The book "...is a grand tale of human behavior at the extremes told by one of our greatest nonfiction writers".



The Monday Night Book Group invites you to join us. We look forward to welcoming you to the discussion. Registration not required.

If you have questions, contact Maureen:
(781) 438-1324 | saltzman@noblenet.org.

Tuesdays

Creative Writing for Adults

April 1st @ 11:30 am

The Stoneham Room

Do you like to write? Want to get into writing? Need some inspiration?

Whether you're struggling to complete your first novel, trying to make your poetry collection sing to the world, or just want to write for fun, everyone aged 18 and older has the opportunity to share their current writing projects and receive feedback. The group also engages in writing exercises as well as discussions about writing. Registration not required.



If you are interested, or have questions related to writing, contact Matthew: msowyrda@noblenet.org or call 781-438-1324.

Wednesdays

Documentary Wow! Discussion

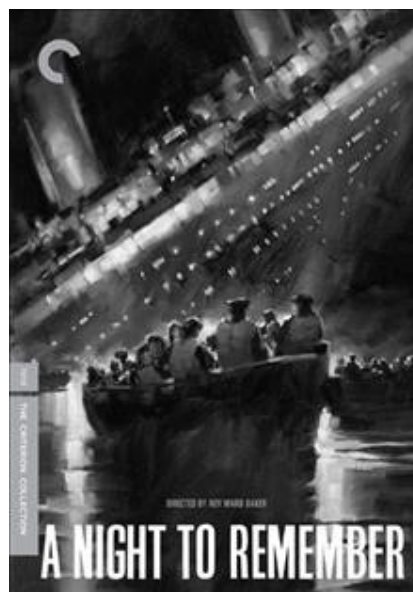
A Night to Remember (1958)

April 9th @ 6:30 pm

Zoom

Join us as we discuss this month's Documentary Wow! selection, *A Night to Remember* (1958).

"On her maiden voyage in April 1912, the supposedly unsinkable RMS Titanic strikes an iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean."



Rated: Not rated | Run Time: 2h 3m

| Genres: Drama, History, Period Drama, Tragedy | Directed by: Roy Ward Baker | Written by: Walter Lord, Eric Ambler | Starring: Kenneth More, Ronald Allen, Robert Ayres

See under **Fridays** for our public screenings. [Registration required.](#)

Film Club Discussion

Pride (2014)

April 23rd @ 6:30 pm

Zoom

Join the Film Club to discuss this month's selection, *Pride* (2014). Dave will send out the GoToMeeting link on the day of the discussion. [Registration required.](#)

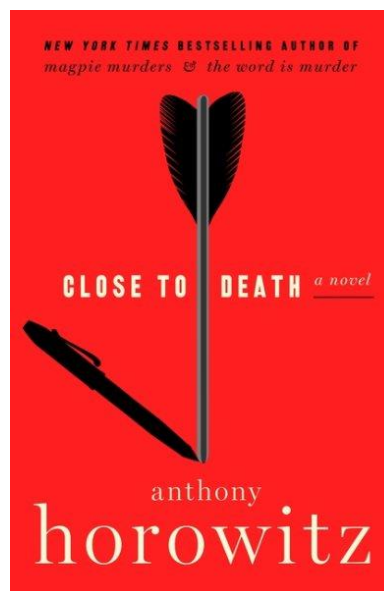


Mysteries Around the World Book Group

April 3rd at 7 pm
The Stoneham Room

This month's selection is [Close to Death](#) by [Anthony Horowitz](#). In a "picture-perfect community a resident is found dead "on his own doorstep". The novel raises the interesting question, "How do you solve a murder when everyone is a suspect"?

The Mystery group always looks forward to welcoming new members. Please consider joining us. Registration not required.



For information, contact Maureen:
(781) 438-1324 | saltzman@noblenet.org.

Chess Club for Adults

April 10th @ 7 pm
The Stoneham Room

Are you interested in learning how to play chess? Looking for something new and fun to do?



Do you like to play chess, but don't have anyone to play with? Chess players of all kinds -- beginners and experts, casual and serious -- are welcome to attend the Stoneham Public Library's Chess Club for Adults! While some chess boards will be provided, players are encouraged to bring their own. **No registration required.**

Contact Matthew:
msowyrda@noblenet.org
781-438-1324

The Enchanted Pages Society

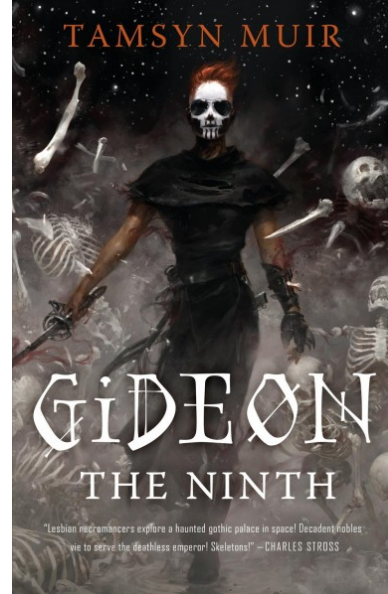
Reads: *Gideon the Ninth*
by Tasmyn Muir
April 24th @ 7 pm
The Stoneham Room

Join our newest book club, The Enchanted Pages Society, where

fantasy lovers unite to explore magical worlds and unforgettable adventures. Dive into spellbinding books, discuss captivating plots, and connect with fellow readers! We meet on the last Thursday of the month! Pick up a copy of this month's title, [*Gideon the Ninth* by Tasmyn Muir](#), at the main circulation desk. **Registration is required.** People ages 16 and up are welcome.

[Click here](#) to learn more about this title, and to register for this program.

Questions? Contact Anna:
apowers@noblenet.org.



Fridays

Documentary Wow!
Screening
A Night to Remember (1958)
April 4th @ 1 pm
The Stoneham Room

This month's Documentary Wow! selection is *A Night to Remember* (1958).

"On her maiden voyage in April 1912, the supposedly unsinkable RMS Titanic strikes an iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean."



All film screenings are free and open to the public. Snacks will be provided. **Registration not required.**

Rated: Not rated | Run Time: 2h 3m | Genres: Drama, History, Period Drama, Tragedy | Directed by: Roy Ward Baker | Written by: Walter Lord, Eric Ambler | Starring: Kenneth More, Ronald Allen, Robert Ayres

Movie Matinee
Pride (2014)
April 18th @ 1 pm
The Stoneham Room

We will hold a viewing of this month's Film Club

choice, *Pride* (2014).

"U.K. gay activists work to help miners during their lengthy strike of the National Union of Mineworkers in the summer of 1984."

All film screenings are free and open to the public. Snacks will be provided. Registration not required.



Rated: R | Run Time: 1h

59m | Genres: Biography, Comedy, Drama, History, Romance |
Directed by: Matthew Warchus Written by: Stephen Beresford |
Starring: Bill Nighy, Imelda Staunton, Dominic West

Saturdays

Creative Writing for Adults

April 5th @ 12:30 am
The Stoneham Room

Do you like to write? Want to get into writing? Need some inspiration? Whether you're struggling to complete your first novel, trying to make your poetry collection sing to the world, or just want to write for fun, everyone aged 18 and older has the opportunity to share their current writing projects and receive feedback. The group also engages in writing exercises as well as discussions about writing.

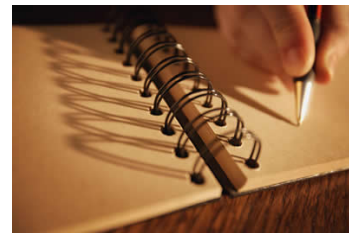


If you are interested, or have questions related to writing, contact Matthew: msowyrda@noblenet.org or call 781-438-1324. Registration not required.

Bullet Journal Club

April 12th at 10:30 am
The Stoneham Room

Join us for the Bullet Journal Club for Adults on the first Saturday of each month! We will have stencils, markers, washi tape, and stickers for you to use (supplies are not take home, please leave them at the library). Bring your own journal and imagination! This is a drop-in style program, meaning a staff member will not be leading it. You can come any time between 10:30 am and 12:30 pm and the materials will be set out.



Registration not required.

Embroidery with YuChin

April 19th @ 11 am

The Stoneham Room

"Embroidery with YuChin" is a monthly workshop sponsored by the Stoneham Public Library.

The event takes place from 11:00

am - 12:30 pm on the third Saturday of each month, though the date may change due to holidays or weather conditions. Since its inception in October 2024, many members have found it a source of fun and joy. Beginners and new members are encouraged to join, with hours for new members from 11:45 am - 12:30 pm. Registration is required. Material will be provided for new members for their first session. Please stop by to learn more about embroidery. [Click here to register!](#)



Age limit: 15 and older.

Do not attend the workshop if you're experiencing any sick symptoms.

****We have a limited number of kits left. After they are gone, attendees will have to bring their own materials.** All materials are provided for newcomers. If you have attended this program in the past, make sure to bring the kit you received with you. We cannot give more kits to people who already received them.**

Special Programs

Job Networking Group (Ages 50+)

Wednesday, April 2nd @ 9 am (Zoom)

Wednesday, April 16th @ 9 am (Zoom)

Are you aged 50 years or older? Still looking to stay in the work force, or to re-enter it at full force? Then the Massachusetts Library Collaborative's 50+ Job Seekers Group is for you! This networking group is facilitated by Deborah Hope, MBA, PCIC, an experienced executive career coach.

Join Deborah on Zoom as you confer with peers in a safe and comfortable



environment that is conducive to developing new relationships, skills, and strategies to help in your career transition. Activities include presentations, interactive workshops, guest speakers, access to hiring managers, small group breakout rooms, and one-on-one guidance.

If this program is what you've been looking for, sign up! [Registration required. Click here to view the meeting schedule and to register.](#)

Wordsmith and Wonder: An Author Talk with Jodi Picoult

Wednesday, April 2nd
7 pm | Virtual*



Step into Spring with us as we chat with the highly acclaimed New York Times bestselling author Jodi Picoult about her newest novel, [By Any Other Name](#). Told in intertwining narratives, it is a sweeping tale of ambition, courage, and desire that asks what price each woman is willing to pay to see their work live on—even if it means they will be forgotten.

Jodi Picoult is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of twenty-nine novels, including [Mad Honey](#) (co-authored with Jennifer Finney Boylan), [Wish You Were Here](#), [The Book of Two Ways](#), [A Spark of Light](#), [Small Great Things](#), [Leaving Time](#), and [My Sister's Keeper](#), and, with daughter Samantha van Leer, two young adult novels, [Between the Lines](#) and [Off the Page](#). She lives in New Hampshire with her husband.

[Click here to register and join the conversation!](#)

*PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A VIRTUAL PROGRAM. See our calendar for more details. This program is funded by [the Friends of the Stoneham Library](#).

Local Farms, MA:

Produce, Meats, Dairy, Oh My!

Monday, April 7th
7 pm | Zoom



Join the growing number of people who are buying their produce, meats, dairy products from local farms! Not only are they fresher and organic, supporting our local farms creates a more sustainable eco-system. Sure, you might not get raspberries

in December, but when you get them in August, they will be the best tasting raspberries you could ever have! Working with Ashland's Town Sustainability Coordinator, Samantha Riley, we'll have a panel of farmer's who will help us understand the benefits of shopping locally grown AND give us suggestions for reputable growers in our area. Hope you can join us for this important discussion as climate change affects the way we live our daily lives.

Joining us will be representatives from [Natick Community Organic Farm](#), [Medway Community Farm](#), and [Tangerini's Spring Street Farm](#) (Millis).

[Click here to register for this program.](#)

You'll receive the link in the confirmation and reminder emails - make sure to check your spam folder for them, the email will be coming from Zoom.

This program is brought to you in collaboration with the a multitude of MA & NH Libraries.

The Stories, Science, and History of Trees with Smithsonian Gardens Greenhouse Horticulturalist Matt Fleming

Tuesday, April 8th
2 pm | Virtual*

Join us as Smithsonian Horticulturalist Matthew Fleming guides us through the secret world of trees as is revealed in the beautiful and absorbing guide to the giants of the plant world — [The Tree](#)



Smithsonian

[Book: The Stories, Science, and History of Trees.](#)

Trees occur naturally throughout the world and have been a part of human history for almost as long as humans have existed. Used for shelter, tools, fuel, and food, they also help supply the atmosphere with oxygen and form astonishingly diverse ecosystems, as well as some of the world's most beautiful landscapes. Now the intricate world of leafy woodlands and abundant rainforests is revealed in this extensive visual guide to trees, exploring their key scientific traits and their ecological importance, as well as their enduring significance in human history and culture. From ancient oaks and great redwoods to lush banyans and imposing kapoks, *The Tree Book* reveals the anatomy, behaviors, and beauty of these incredible plants and habitats in detail.

Combining natural history and a scientific overview with a wider look at the history, uses, symbolism, and mythology of trees, this book is a new kind of guide to these fascinating organisms.

Matthew Fleming has been a horticulturist at the [Smithsonian Gardens Greenhouse Facility](#) in Suitland, Maryland since 2010. In addition to serving as a supervisory horticulturist, he manages three greenhouses with nearly a thousand tropical specimens that are displayed throughout the many Smithsonian gardens and landscapes along the [National Mall](#) during the warmer months. He has given talks on a wide variety of plant-related topics at the Smithsonian ranging from indoor pests to overwintering tropical plants. Prior to coming to the Smithsonian, Matt was a purchasing agent and garden center assistant manager for a full-service landscaping firm. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from [Penn State University](#)'s College of Agricultural Sciences where he studied Horticulture and Landscape Contracting.

[Click here to register for this program.](#)

***PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A VIRTUAL PROGRAM.** See our calendar for more details. This program is funded by [the Friends of the Stoneham Library](#).

The Intersection of Climate Action and Romance Novels: A Panel Discussion

Thursday, April 10th
7 pm | Zoom

We are thrilled to welcome authors

Nikki Payne, Tara L. Roí., and L.E. Sterling to discuss how genre fiction, specifically romance, can have an impact on Climate Action! Have you ever wondered how authors weave very important topics, such as environmental issues, into their books so that we learn about something while also enjoying a "light" read? Join us as our panelists discuss their books, research, and hopes for using their writing to have a broad impact on our thinking.



[Click here to register for this program.](#)

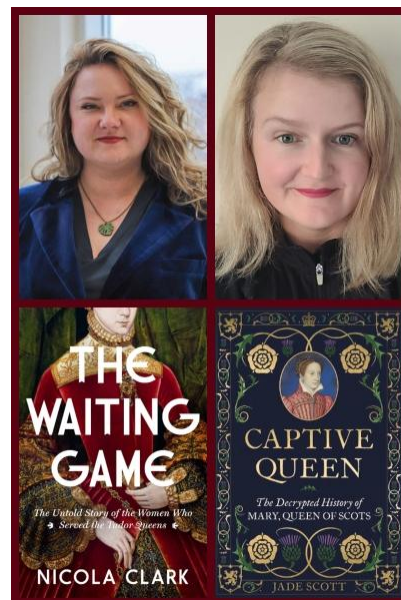
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This program is brought to you in collaboration with the a multitude of MA & NH Libraries.

Tudor Queens and Ladies in Waiting: A Discussion with Authors Nicola Clark and Jade Scott

Saturday, April 12th
10 am | Zoom

We are so excited to welcome authors Nicola Clark and Jade Scott to our virtual stage to discuss one of our favorite topics - the Tudor Queens and their Ladies in Waiting! Nicola's book, *The Waiting Game: The Untold Story of the Women Who Served the Tudor Queens* and Jade's book, *Captive Queen: The Decrypted History of Mary, Queen of Scots* delve into the true lives of these historic women, digging into their lives in those times and the challenges of being in the Tudor monarchy. [Click here to register!](#)



About Nicola: Nicola Clark has a PhD in Early Modern History from [Royal Holloway](#) and is a Senior Lecturer in Early Modern History at the [University of Chichester](#). Her research focuses primarily on women's dynastic and political roles across the late medieval and early modern period. She has

spoken about her research at events for [Historic Royal Palaces](#) and the [National Archives](#).

Her book, [*The Waiting Game*](#), explores the daily lives of ladies-in-waiting, revealing the secrets of recruitment, costume, what they ate, where (and with whom) they slept. We meet María de Salinas, who traveled to England with Catherine of Aragon when just a teenager and spied for her during the divorce from Henry VIII. Anne Boleyn's lady-in-waiting Jane Parker was instrumental in the execution of not one, but two queens. And maid-of-honor Anne Basset kept her place through the last four consorts, negotiating the conflicting loyalties of her birth family, her mistress the Queen, and even the desires of the King himself.

About Jade: Dr. Jade Scott is a historian specializing in Mary, Queen of Scots, and an expert on her letters. She is an affiliate in History at the [University of Glasgow](#), an associate fellow of the [Royal Historical Society](#) and Secretary of the [Scottish History Society](#), researching early modern Scottish women and their correspondence.

In [*Captive Queen: The Decrypted History of Mary, Queen of Scots*](#), Jade Scott draws on hundreds of these ground-breaking letters to create a vivid picture of one of history's most fascinating personalities. She interprets Mary's complex relationships with friends and enemies alike throughout the years of her imprisonment, illuminating Mary's strategic vision while bringing her captivity to life like never before.

[Click here to register for this program.](#)

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The Two Nerdy History Girls Ride Again!

Monday, April 14th
7 pm | Zoom

We're at it again! We keep having so much fun with Loretta and Susan that we had to keep bringing them back for encore performances. You know them as the Two Nerdy History Girls - authors [Loretta Chase](#) and Susan Holloway Scott were the originators of [the infamous blog](#). We, once again, have Loretta

History Talk

WITH TWO NERDY HISTORY GIRLS



LORETTA CHASE &
SUSAN HOLLOWAY SCOTT

and Susan here to answer all of our burning questions. How do they find interesting tidbits of historical lore, which libraries of the world have they visited, and how do they avoid the inescapable "rabbit hole"? We can't wait for what we know is going to be a fascinating conversation between these two friends and researchers.

Loretta Chase has worked in academe, retail, and the visual arts, as well as on the streets—as a meter maid—and in video, as a scriptwriter. She might have developed an excitingly checkered career had her spouse not nagged her into writing fiction. Her bestselling historical romances, set in the Regency and Romantic eras of the early nineteenth century, have won a number of awards, including the [Romance Writers of America's](#) RITA® and Vivian®.

Susan Holloway Scott is the author of over fifty historical novels and novellas. Her bestselling books have received numerous awards and honors, and with more than four million copies of her books in print, she has been published in nineteen foreign countries around the world. She has also written under the pseudonyms [Isabella Bradford](#) and [Miranda Jarrett](#).

[Click here to register for this program.](#)

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This program is brought to you in collaboration with the a multitude of MA & NH Libraries.

The Thrill of Writing Action, Adventure, and Suspense: A Conversation with Bestselling Author Gregg Hurwitz

Thursday , April 24th
7 pm | Virtual*

Do you love action-packed adventure? Are you ready for the thrill? You're invited to a riveting conversation with New York Times bestselling author

Gregg Hurwitz as he chats with us about his *Orphan X* series and his life as a writer of suspenseful storytelling.

[*Orphan X*](#), the series opener, introduces the world to the Nowhere Man. He is a legendary figure spoken about only in whispers. It's said that when he's reached by the truly desperate and deserving, the Nowhere Man can and will do anything to protect and save them. Now ten books in, fans cannot get enough of the *Orphan X* world and Hurwitz can't wait to tell us all about it.



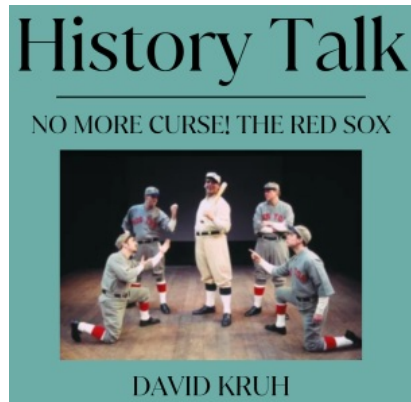
[Click here to find out more about the author,](#)
[and to register for this program.](#)

*PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A VIRTUAL PROGRAM. See our calendar for more details. This program is funded by [the Friends of the Stoneham Library](#).

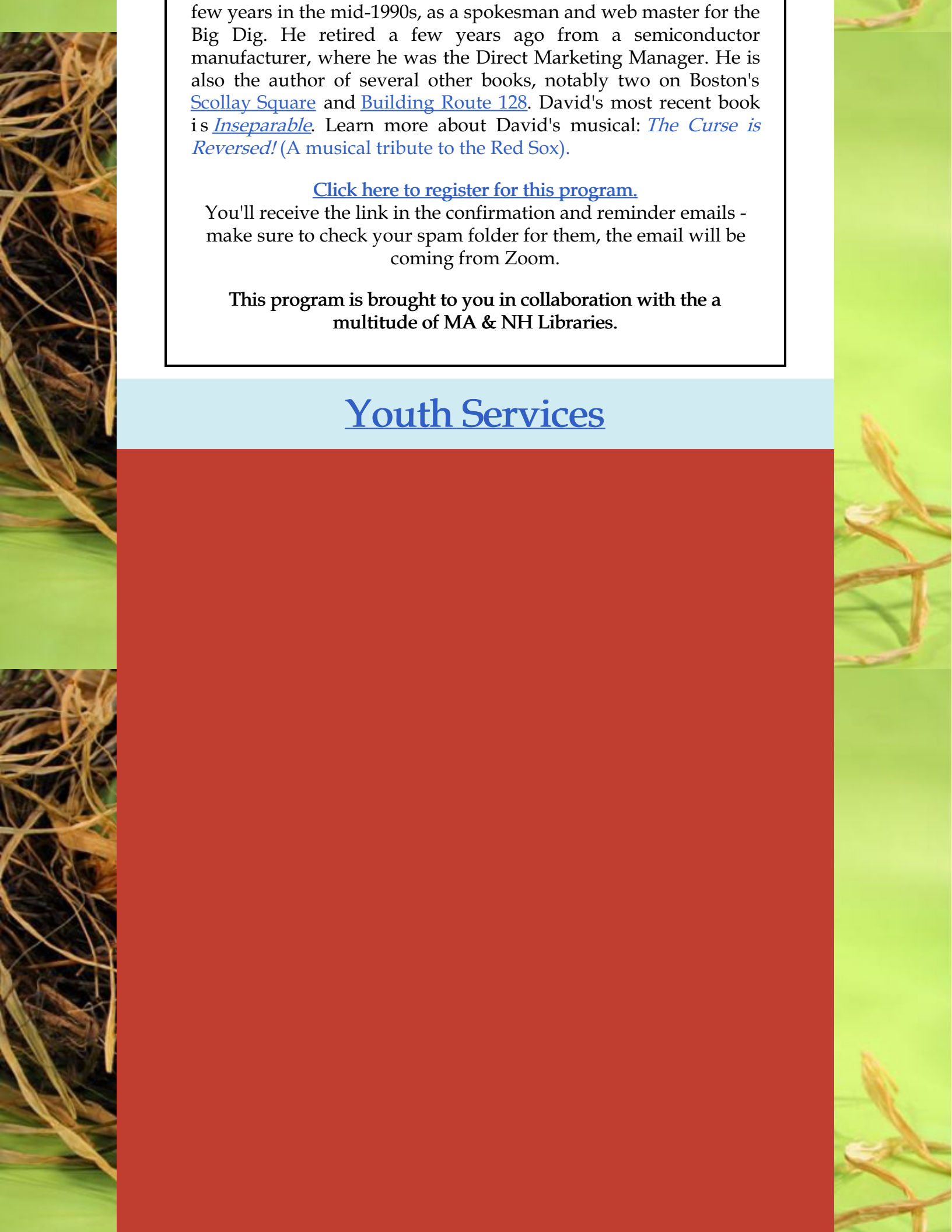
No More Curse! A History of the Red Sox with Author and Historian David Kruh

Monday, March 28th
7 pm | Zoom

Take me out to the ballgame with one of our favorite speakers, David Kruh! Based on his research for his musical, David takes us to the roots of Boston baseball, when, just like today, the team captured the hearts of the people of Boston. We will look back at the real story behind Harry Frazee and his sale of slugger Babe Ruth. Relive the (sometimes frustrating) saga of the Boston Red Sox and their ultimately successful struggle for a World Series championship.



David Kruh is a former New Yorker and a 1978 graduate of the [University of Maryland](#). While earning his Masters in Computer Engineering at [Boston University](#), David worked as an engineer at [WRKO Radio](#). He has also worked full time as a copywriter, computer programmer, radio producer, radio engineer and, for a

The page features a decorative background with green foliage and a red banner. The foliage is visible on the left and right sides, while the red banner spans the bottom. The text is centered within a white rectangular area at the top.

few years in the mid-1990s, as a spokesman and web master for the Big Dig. He retired a few years ago from a semiconductor manufacturer, where he was the Direct Marketing Manager. He is also the author of several other books, notably two on Boston's [Scolly Square](#) and [Building Route 128](#). David's most recent book is [Inseparable](#). Learn more about David's musical: *The Curse is Reversed!* (A musical tribute to the Red Sox).

[Click here to register for this program.](#)

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[Youth Services](#)



The Junior Library renovation is on hold.

Due to some funding issues, the Junior Library renovation is on hold.

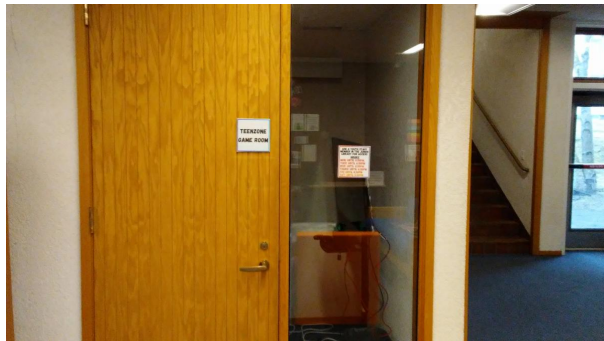
Administration and our Board of Trustees are working alongside town officials to reassess this project. As this is a fast moving situation, we appreciate the patience and flexibility as we work to manage this project. We are eager to bring news to our patrons, as soon as we are able to.

At this time, we plan to continue our programs as scheduled. Keep an eye on our calendar and don't forget to sign up for events to stay up to date.

Questions? Concerns? Contact our Director, Rachel at roverbeck@noblenet.org or our Head of Youth Services, Katie at kbardascino@noblenet.org.

Teen Zone Game Room

The small space in the library's lower level that was being used as a 1-2 person study



room has been converted to a video game room for our teenaged patrons. This re-purposed space now houses the T.V. and the Nintendo Switch. Patrons who wish to use this space must ask permission from Junior Room staff. See below for a time table.

For adult patrons who were accustomed to booking this room,

don't forget about the [Meeting Pod](#) and the [Glass Office](#), as well as the many booths on the Lower Level and Mezzanine (upper floor).

ASK A YOUTH STAFF MEMBER IN THE JUNIOR LIBRARY FOR ACCESS HOURS:

MON: UNTIL 6:30PM

TUES: UNTIL 6:30PM

WED: UNTIL 4:30PM

THURS: UNTIL 6:30PM

FRI: UNTIL 4:30PM

SAT: UNTIL 2:30PM

Book Lists



[The Day of Fools](#)

Comedy (film, stand-up)

[Well-Vers'd](#)

Lives of the poets and works of poetry



[Yours Truly](#)

Published letters and

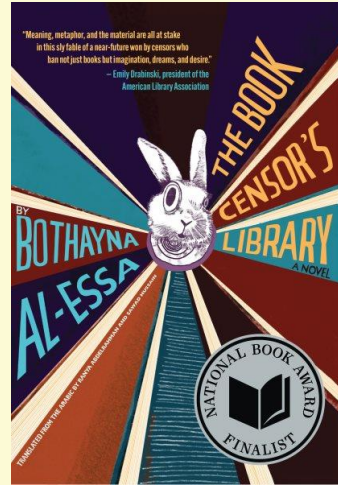


Staff Reviews

The Book Censor's Library by Bothayna Al-Essa

Debbie W.

The Book Censor's Library is a short book that packs a powerful punch. Set in a world after the fall of a democracy, where technology and the written word are rationed. The book censor scrutinizes books and written material for illegal references to everything that came before. After all, books are poisonous; it's his duty to keep society sterile, and people free from intrusive thoughts. However, by night, the book censor finds himself devouring the same illicit materials. As the list of banned words grows, the book censor's fascination expands.



It is hard for the reader to imagine a world where all books are banned, a world where knowledge is forbidden. However it is not surprising to understand how mesmerizing something as simple as learning the names of things around the book censor becomes. "Before [Zorba the Greek](#), trees had been anonymous, but now he called them by the names he'd read in a book...the world was recreating itself in front of his eyes". This book highlights the importance of language and the freedom to use it. Words and stories have power and this book showcases that power.

This is not only an evocative story, but the book also has an interesting structure, using three classic books to anchor each section. Set in an Orwellian sphere with kafka-esque strangeness. *The Book Censor's Library* is a thought provoking read for those who enjoy dystopian worlds. Available as an immediate downloadable ebook or audiobook from Hoopla via your Stoneham Library card.

Gene Hackman:
1930-2025

Dave Huygens

Gene Hackman said he knew he wanted to be an actor at the age of ten, after seeing a James Cagney movie. Like Cagney, he was a compelling presence on the screen. But the road to success wasn't easy. He left home at 16, lying about his age to join the Marine Corps. After his 1951 discharge, Gene studied under the GI Bill, then returned to his native California to join the Pasadena Playhouse, where his fellow students voted him "least likely to succeed" and his instructors gave him low marks.

Gene Hackman

1930 - 2025



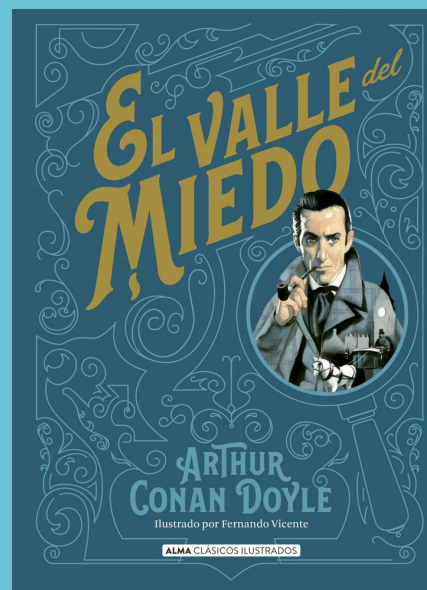
These discouragements only motivated the young actor to try harder. It was television's Golden Age, and he got bit parts in several series, breaking through in a hit Broadway play, *Any Wednesday* (1964), starring Sandy Dennis. More TV followed, as well as feature films, including *Downhill Racer* (1967), and *The Gypsy Moths* (1968). *I Never Sang for My Father* (1970), co-starring Melvyn Douglas, got Gene his first Academy Award nomination. He won the following year for his iconic portrayal of Popeye Doyle in *The French Connection* (1971).

Over the next several decades, Hackman cemented his movie star status in such iconic films as *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), *The Conversation* (1974), *Young Frankenstein* (1974), *Hoosiers* (1986), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), *Unforgiven* (1992), *Get Shorty* (1995), *The Birdcage* (1996) and *Runaway Jury* (2003). Often compared to Spencer Tracy, Gene Hackman was a reluctant celebrity but a fine actor, exhibiting a naturalistic and relatable "everyman" quality. He did his job, and did it well--and in doing so, became a screen legend.

El Valle del Miedo *(The Valley of Fear)* by Arthur Conan Doyle

Matthew Sowyrda

Having studied Spanish for a few years, I thought that I would read at least one title from the library's Spanish collection, to see how much (or how little) I could comprehend. Browsing the shelves, I speculated that *El Valle del Miedo* (The Valley of Fear) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, while I have never read it in English, seemed to be elementary enough.



Translated by Silvana Appeceix, and illustrated by Fernando Vicente, this slim volume (just over 200 pages) features *el detective famoso* Sherlock Holmes who, with the help of his *mejor amigo*, Watson, investigates the murder of one John Douglas at an English manor house in the rural English village of Birlstone. They are joined by Inspector MacDonald from Scotland Yard and local policeman White Mason, who offer valuable information as to what kind of man Douglas had been - an extensive traveler with a lot of money, a high profile, and a mysterious past.

Through interviews with everyone who lives in the house, theories about motives and perpetrators abound, ranging from a secret society that Douglas may have associated with (and ruffled the feathers of) at one time, to a conspiracy of homicide between Douglas's wife and his best friend. Matters are further complicated by the appearance of ciphered letters, recurring numbers and symbols found on Douglas' belongings, and a dark saying about "the valley of fear". As they dig further into the case, our heroes of deductive reasoning find themselves in a maze of deadly characters, half-truths, and lies, out of which only the light of logic can guide them.

This book is great for: English-speakers who are learning Spanish, but want to keep to the familiar; readers who already know some Spanish and are looking for a challenge; and native Spanish speakers (*hispanohablantes*) who want an introduction to the English classics. For the first two groups, I also recommend consulting the [VOX Spanish and English School Dictionary](#) whenever you have trouble with translation. The library has [an English translation](#) as well, for readers who just want to enjoy the story in the original language.

[Out of the Past \(1947\)](#)

Dave Huygens



When he was asked in later years about the somewhat convoluted plot of *Out of the Past* (1947), the film's star, [Robert Mitchum](#), responded, "Two or three pages were lost in the mimeo department." That reply was typical Mitchum. He was a star who brought that same laconic, bemused attitude to many of his performances. Having come up the hard way in [Hopalong Cassidy westerns](#), Mitchum had scored several good supporting roles in major films (and an Academy Award nomination) when *Out of the Past* came along—his first big starring role.

Originally offered to [Humphrey Bogart](#) and Dick Powell, the role



of former private detective Jeff Bailey seems better suited to a younger man. Running a service station in the sleepy Northern California town of Bridgeport, Jeff has gone off the grid. He's about to get serious with a local girl, Ann (Virginia Huston) when he receives a summons from Whit, a New York mobster he once worked for ([Kirk Douglas](#)), now living at Lake Tahoe. Driving to Tahoe with Ann, Jeff narrates a compellingly dark, romantic tale of his past with Witt and Witt's beautiful, complicated girlfriend, Kathie (Jane Greer), with whom he was once in love.

Ranging from New York to Mexico to Los Angeles, and back to Northern California, *Out of the Past* isn't boring for a second. Along with [Double Indemnity \(1945\)](#), it's considered a seminal film noir, and one of the pinnacles of the genre. As Mitchum's character is drawn back into his past, we, too, are drawn into the movie's elaborate, fatalistic web of double crosses and emotional entanglements. With wonderful performances by the stars, a great score by Roy Webb, and beautiful cinematography by Nicholas Musuraca, *Out of the Past* is director Jacques Tourneur's masterpiece, and a highly enjoyable classic film.

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