

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

NOTICE

The library will be closed:

The library will be closed:
Monday, February 17th (Presidents Day)



The Trustees of the Library

Will meet at 7 PM on Monday, February 10th, in the Stoneham Room. All members of the public are welcome to attend. [Click here to learn more about our Trustees, as well as to view minutes from past meetings.](#)

Senior Tech Help

Saturday, February 15th
11 A. M. | The Stoneham Room

Saturday, February 22nd
11 A.M. | The Stoneham Room



Calling all senior citizens who wish to learn how to use their phones, tablets, or computers! Volunteers will be on hand to answer your tech questions. Be sure to bring your device(s).

Tax Forms

Tax Season is coming soon...

And the Stoneham Public Library is stocked with IRS 1040 & 1040SR forms for seniors and instruction booklets. We have stacked them on the wooden counter next to the public copier. If you're unsure of where to go, ask a librarian to point you in the right direction!



If you need additional forms or publications, please see the Reference Department. The librarian on staff will help you to access those resources.

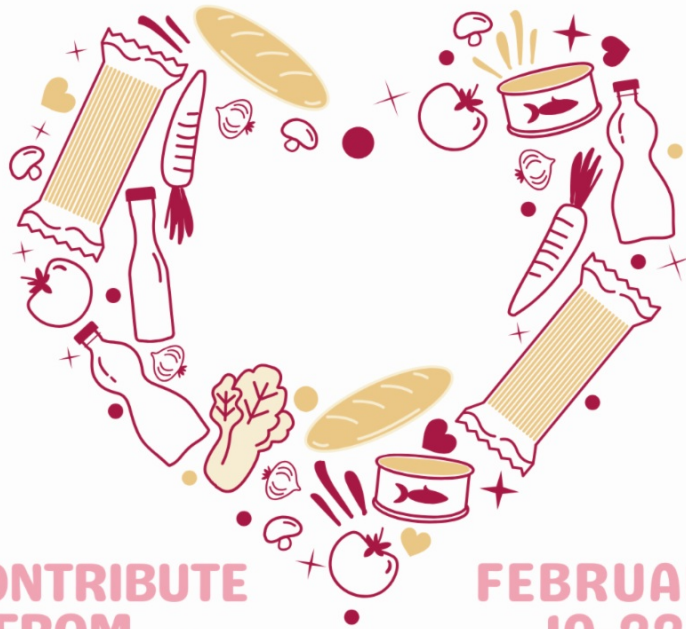
Food Drive

FEBRUARY 2025



LOVE YOUR LIBRARY MONTH

FOOD DRIVE!



**CONTRIBUTE
FROM ...**

**FEBRUARY
10-22**

**FOOD COLLECTED FOR:
Stoneham Food Pantry**

2025 Reading Challenge

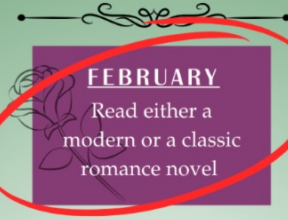
STONEHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY'S

2025 READING CHALLENGE CALENDAR



JANUARY

Read a book from a genre/subject that you wouldn't usually read



FEBRUARY

Read either a modern or a classic romance novel

MARCH

Read a play, a poetry collection, or a novel in verse



APRIL

Read a book on a scientific topic or a novel of science fiction



MAY

Read a memoir or an autobiography

JUNE

Read a book about or that takes place in a tropical climate



JULY

Read an historical fiction novel or a nonfiction book about a historical period



AUGUST

Read a prize-winning book (e.g., Booker, Cundhill, Pulitzer)

SEPTEMBER

Read a book on a topic that you wish to learn more about



OCTOBER

Read a horror novel or a nonfiction book on a paranormal topic



NOVEMBER

Read a cookbook and then try at least one recipe from it

DECEMBER

Read a mystery novel or a book about true crime



Copies of this calendar and a tracking sheet can be picked up at the Main Circulation Desk!

The 2025 Reading Challenge



JAN

NEW GENRE
BOOK:
AUTHOR:

FEB

ROMANCE
BOOK:
AUTHOR:

MAR

POETRY/VERSE
BOOK:
AUTHOR:

APR

SCIENCE FICTION/
FACT BOOK:
AUTHOR:

MAY

MEMOIR/BIOGRAPHY
BOOK:
AUTHOR:

JUN

TROPICAL CLIMATE
BOOK:
AUTHOR:

JUL

HISTORIC
BOOK:
AUTHOR:

AUG

PRIZEWINNER
BOOK:
AUTHOR:

SEP

NEW SUBJECT
BOOK:
AUTHOR:

OCT

HORROR/
PARANORMAL BOOK:
AUTHOR:

NOV

COOKBOOK
BOOK:
AUTHOR:

DEC

TRUE CRIME/MYSTERY
BOOK:
AUTHOR:



Need a recommendation? Ask a librarian!

Library of Things Expo

HappyLight Luxe Therapy Lamp

Don't you hate feeling "shut in" during the winter? Is the lack of sunlight making you tired? Is being inside all the time giving you "cabin fever"?

If you answered "Yes" to any or all of these questions, then you might just be in luck! You can borrow a HappyLight Luxe Therapy Lamp from the Stoneham Public Library. It's the best thing to



have when it's too cold to go outside, or the sun just isn't out when you need it to be! [Click here to learn more about, or to request, this item.](#)

Adult Programs

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Yoga Flow 10:30 am
3 Custodians of Wonder with Eliot Stein 7 pm Art with Erica 7 pm	4 Creative Writing 11:30 am How We Create Pandemics 2 pm	5 50+ Networking Group 9:30 am	6 Mysteries Around the World 7 pm	7 Documentary Wow! Freedom Riders 1 pm	8 Bullet Journal Club 10:30 am
10 Movie Night 6:30 pm Valentine's Day Book Recs 7 pm Trustees Meeting 7 pm	11 Dystopian Tropes from an Indigenous Perspective 7 pm	12 Documentary Wow! Discussion 6:30 pm	13 Chess Club 7 pm	14	15 Senior Tech Help 11 am
17 Presidents Day LIBRARY CLOSED	18 Yoga Flow 6 pm I am Nobody's Slave: Author Talk with Lee Hawkins 7 pm	19 50+ Networking Group 9:30 am	20 Crime of the Truest Kind 6:30 pm Inclusive & Diverse Books 7:30 pm	21 Movie Matinee: The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance 1 pm	22 Embroidery with YuChin 11 am Senior Tech Help 11 am
24 Monday Night Book Group 7 pm* Debut Author Panel 7 pm*	25 Author Talk: Nancy Reddy 7 pm*	26 Film Club Discussion 6:30 pm*	27 Author Talk: Ben Kane 2 pm* Enchanted Pages Society 7 pm*	28 *All events this week are virtual because the library will be closed (see Special Announcement)	

Mondays

Art with Erica

February 3rd @ 7 pm
The Marcy 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 watercolor cards. We meet monthly. All supplies are provided. [Registration required.](#)

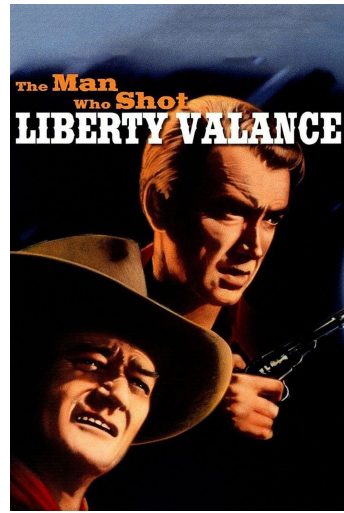


Monday Movie Night

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance
(1962)

February 10th @ 6:30 pm
The Marcy Room

We will hold a viewing of this month's Film Club choice, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), in which a senator returns to a Western town for the funeral of an old friend and tells the story of his origins.



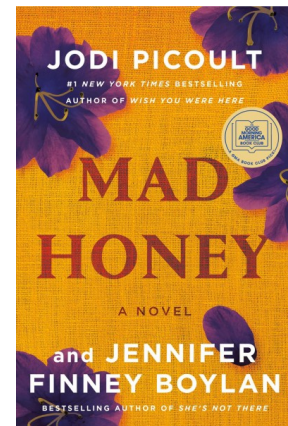
All film screenings are free and open to the public. Snacks will be provided. Registration not required.

Rated: Approved | Run Time: 2h 3m | Genres: Drama, Western |
Directed by: John Ford | Written by: James Warner Bellah, Willis Goldbeck, Dorothy M. Johnson | Starring: James Stewart, John Wayne, Vera Miles

Monday Night Book Group

February 24th at 7 pm
GoToMeeting

This month's selection is [*Mad Honey* by Jodi Picoult](#). "Olivia McAfee knows what it feels like to start over. Her picture-perfect life, living in Boston was upended when her husband revealed a darker side...She never imagined she would end up back in her sleepy New Hampshire hometown...Then one day, Olivia receives a phone call. Her son Asher's girlfriend...Lily is dead and Asher is being questioned by the police." We are ready to welcome you to the discussion.



If you have questions, contact Maureen: (781) 438-1324; saltzman@noblenet.org. Registration not required.

Tuesdays

Creative Writing

February 4th @ 11:30 am
The Stoneham Room

Attendees are invited to bring their own projects to share with the group for critiques. Activities include reading excerpts from established authors, articles about creative writing skills, and writing sessions. All skill levels are welcome. Registration not



required.

If you are interested, or have writing-related questions, contact Matthew at msowyrda@noblenet.org.

Yoga Flow with Sheila Kelley

February 18th @ 6 pm

The Marcy Room



This 60 minute Yoga Flow class is ideal for beginners. It opens with some breath work and a gentle warm up followed by flowing poses for strengthening, stability and flexibility. Breathing and functional movement are focused on throughout the class. Because yoga is an individualized practice, participants are encouraged to focus on their own bodies and needs - to always do what feels good for them! Sheila Kelley successfully completed LPY Yoga's 200-hour yoga teacher training program, which is registered with the Yoga Alliance. She is honored to have the opportunity to share your yoga practice and journey. Please bring your own yoga mat.

[Registration required.](#)

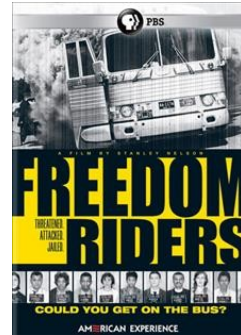
Wednesdays

Documentary Wow! Discussion

Freedom Riders (2010)

February 12th @ 6:30 pm | GoToMeeting

Join us as we discuss this month's Documentary Wow! selection, *Freedom Riders* (2010). (See [Fridays](#) for the public screening). [Registration required.](#)

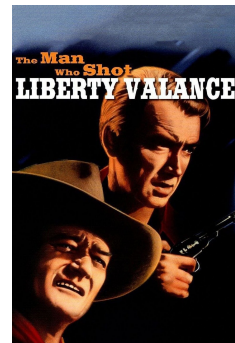


Film Club Discussion

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962)

February 26th @ 6:30 pm | GoToMeeting

Join the Film Club to discuss this month's selection, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962). Dave will send out the GoToMeeting link on the day of the discussion. [Registration required.](#)



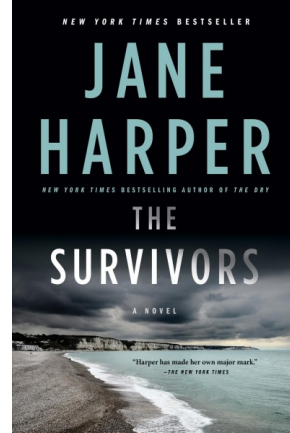
Thursdays

Mysteries Around the World

Book Group

February 6th at 7 pm
The Stoneham Room

This month's selection is [*The Survivors* by Jane Harper](#). When a body is discovered on the beach, long-held secrets threaten to emerge. A sunken wreck, a missing girl, and questions that have never washed away. We are ready to welcome you to the discussion.



If you have questions, contact Maureen: (781) 438-1324; saltzman@noblenet.org. Registration not required.

Chess Club for Adults

February 13th @ 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 chess 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 also encouraged to bring their own boards. **No registration required.**

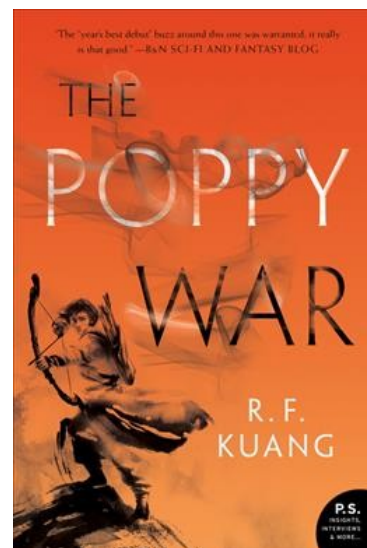


Questions? Contact Matthew: msowyrda@noblenet.org or 781-438-1324

The Enchanted Pages Society

February 27th @ 7 pm
GoToMeeting

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, [*The Poppy War* by R. F. Kuang](#), at the main circulation desk. **Registration is required.**



[Click here](#) to learn more about this title, and to register for this program. Questions? Contact Anna at apowers@noblenet.org. People ages 16 and up are welcome.

Fridays

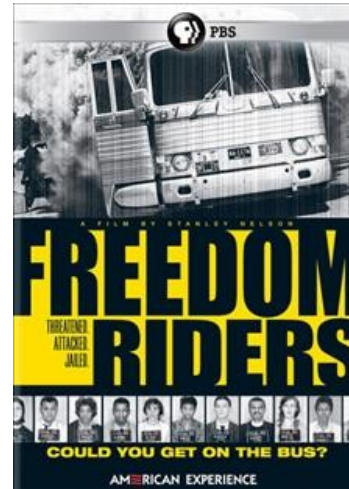
Documentary Wow! Screening

Freedom Riders (2010)

February 7th @ 1 pm

The Marcy Room

This month's Documentary Wow! selection is *Freedom Riders* (2010). "The story of the Civil Rights Movement interstate busing protest campaign." All film screenings are free and open to the public. Snacks will be provided. **Registration not required.**



Rated: Not rated | Run Time: 1h 57m | Genres: Documentary, History | Directed by: Stanley Nelson | Written by: Stanley Nelson | Starring: Raymond Arsenault, Genevieve Houghton, Gordon Carey

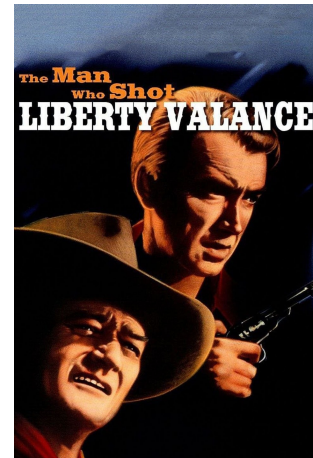
Movie Matinee

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962)

February 21st @ 1 pm

The Marcy Room

We will hold a viewing of this month's Film Club choice, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), in which a senator returns to a Western town for the funeral of an old friend and tells the story of his origins.



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

Rated: Approved | Run Time: 2h 3m | Genres: Drama, Western | Directed by: John Ford | Written by: James Warner Bellah, Willis Goldbeck, Dorothy M. Johnson | Starring: James Stewart, John Wayne, Vera Miles

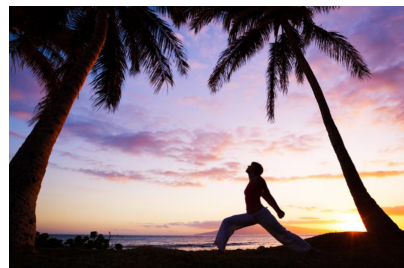
Saturdays

Yoga Flow with Sheila Kelley

February 1st @ 6 pm

The Stoneham Room

This 60 minute Yoga Flow class is ideal for beginners. It opens with some breath work and a gentle warm up followed by flowing poses for



strengthening, stability and flexibility. Breathing and functional movement are focused on throughout the class. Because yoga is an individualized practice, participants are encouraged to focus on their own bodies and needs - to always do what feels good for them! Sheila Kelley successfully completed LPY Yoga's 200-hour yoga teacher training program, which is registered with the Yoga Alliance. She is honored to have the opportunity to share your yoga practice and journey. Please bring your own yoga mat. [Registration required.](#)

Bullet Journal Club

February 8th 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

February 22nd @ 11 am
The Marcy Room



Join us for embroidery with YuChin! 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.

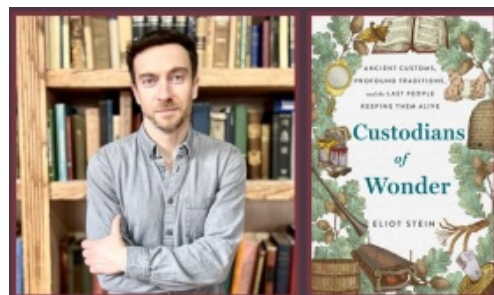
Special Programs

Author Talk: Eliot Stein

Monday, February 3rd

7 P. M. | Zoom (Virtual)

[*Custodians of Wonder: Ancient Customs, Profound Traditions, and the Last People Keeping Them Alive*](#) is



a vivid look at 10 astonishing people who are maintaining some of the world's oldest and rarest cultural traditions! We hope you can

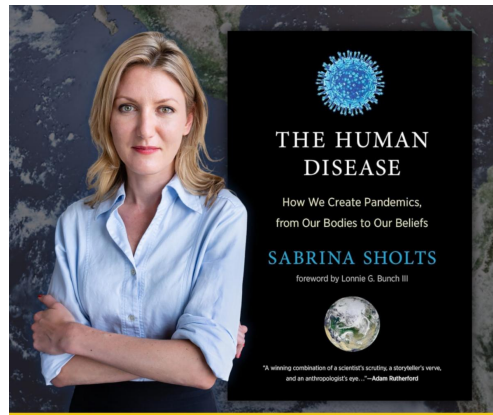
join us for what will be a fascinating conversation. [Click here for more information, and to register for this program.](#)

Author Talk: Sabrina Sholts

Tuesday, February 4th

2 P. M. | Virtual Live-Stream*

Join us for this enlightening presentation with Smithsonian curator Sabrina Sholts as she talks about how the very fact of being human increases our pandemic risks—and gives us the power to save ourselves.



Smithsonian

The COVID-19 pandemic won't be our last—because what makes us vulnerable to pandemics also makes us human. That is the uncomfortable but all-too-timely message of *The Human Disease: How We Create Pandemics, From Our Bodies to Our Beliefs*, which travels through history and around the globe to examine how and why pandemics are an inescapable threat of our own making. Drawing on dozens of disciplines—from medicine, epidemiology, and microbiology to anthropology, sociology, ecology, and neuroscience—as well as a unique expertise in public education about emerging infectious diseases, biological anthropologist Sabrina Sholts identifies the human traits and tendencies that double as pandemic liabilities, from the anatomy that defines us to the misperceptions that divide us.

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

Job Networking Group (Ages 50+)

Calling All Job Seekers 50+!

Wednesday, February 5th @ 9:30 am (Zoom)

Wednesday, February 19th @ 9:30 (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.](#)

Valentine's Day Book Recommendations

Monday, February 10th

7 P. M. | Zoom (Virtual)

If you know romance, you probably know Lorelei! Affectionately referred to as a passionate Romance Ambassador, [Lorelei has been offering book recommendations, author spotlights, giveaways and connecting authors with readers through social media](#) since 2010, providing a safe and friendly environment for book lovers around the globe.

If you love a good romantic story, one that has a good group of friends, and/or a tight knit circle of women, this program is for you! Join us for this chat. [Click here for more information, or to register for this program!](#)



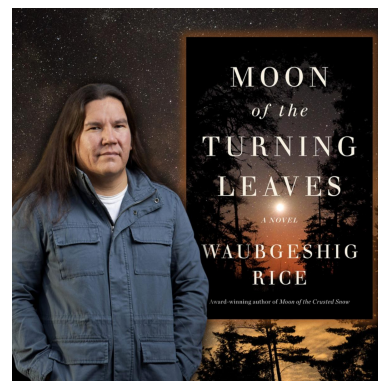
Author Talk: Waubgeshig Rice

Tuesday, February 11th

7 P. M. | Virtual Live-Stream*

You're invited to a riveting conversation with bestselling author Waubgeshig Rice to chat about his newest book *Moon of the Turning Leaves*, the hotly anticipated sequel to the bestselling novel *Moon of the Crusted Snow*.

It's been over a decade since a mysterious cataclysm caused a permanent blackout that toppled infrastructure into anarchy. Evan Whitesky led his community in remote northern Ontario off the rez and into the bush, where they've been living off the land, rekindling their Anishinaabe traditions in total isolation from the outside world.



As new generations are born, and others come of age in the world after everything, Evan's people are in some ways stronger than ever. But resources in and around their new settlement are beginning to dry up, and the elders warn that they cannot afford to stay indefinitely.

Evan and his fifteen-year-old daughter, Nangohns, are elected to lead a small scouting party on a months-long trip to their traditional home on the north shore of Lake Huron—to seek new beginnings and discover what kind of life—and what dangers—still exist in the lands to the south.

Moon of the Turning Leaves is Rice's exhilarating return to the world first explored in the phenomenal breakout bestseller *Moon of the Crusted Snow*: a brooding story of survival, resilience, Indigenous identity, and rebirth. Register now for a thrilling 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.**

Tech Help Sessions



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF METRO NORTH**

TECH HELP SESSIONS

**Get your tech and device questions answered by teens at
this free drop-in program - no registration required!**

ALL SESSIONS WILL GO FROM 11:00 AM -1:00PM

February 15

Location: Stoneham Library

February 22

Location: Stoneham Library

March 1

Location: Stoneham Library

March 8

Location: Wakefield Beebe Library

March 15

Location: Wakefield Beebe Library

March 22

Location: Wakefield Beebe Library

For any questions please contact:

esheeran@bgcmetrnorth.org

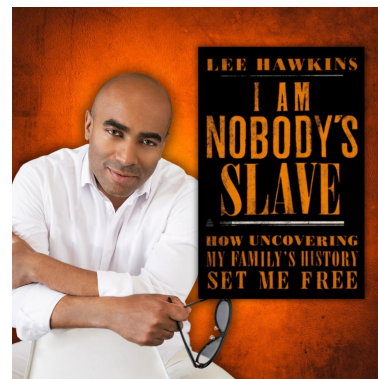
This agency and its programs are funded by a grant from Mystic Valley Elder Services, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and the federal Administration for Community Living.

Author Talk: Lee Hawkins

Tuesday, February 18th

2 P. M. | Virtual Live-Stream*

We welcome you to our conversation with journalist and author Lee Hawkins as he talks to us about the examination of his family's legacy of post-enslavement trauma and resilience in this riveting memoir, *I Am Nobody's Slave: How Uncovering My Family's History Set Me Free*.



I Am Nobody's Slave tells the story of one Black family's pursuit of the American Dream through the impacts of systemic racism and

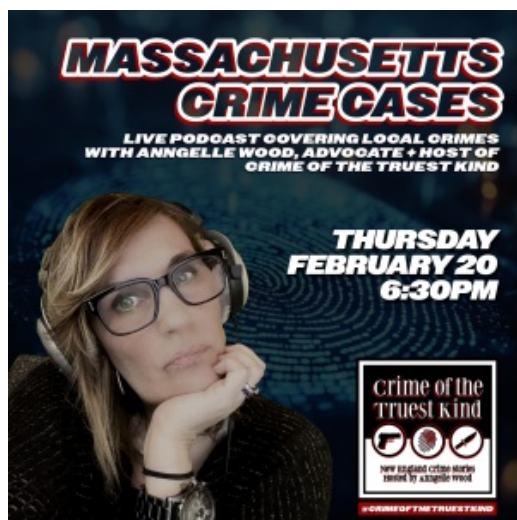
racial violence. This book examines how trauma from enslavement and Jim Crow shaped their outlook on thriving in America, influenced each generation, and how they succeeded despite these challenges.

To their suburban Minnesotan neighbors, the Hawkinses were an ideal American family, embodying strength and success. However, behind closed doors, they faced the legacy of enslavement and apartheid. Lee Hawkins, Sr. often exhibited rage, leaving his children anxious and curious about his protective view of the world. Thirty years later, his son uncovered the reasons for his father's anxiety and occasional violence. Through research, he discovered violent deaths in his family for every generation since slavery, mostly due to white-on-Black murders, and how white enslavers impacted the family's customs.

Hawkins explores the role of racism-triggered childhood trauma and chronic stress in shortening his ancestors' lives, using genetic testing, reporting, and historical data to craft a moving family portrait. This book shows how genealogical research can educate and heal Americans of all races, revealing through their story the story of America—a journey of struggle, resilience, and the heavy cost of ultimate success. Register today to 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.

Crime of the Truest Kind



Location:
The Marcy Room
(Stoneham Public Library)

Hosted by Boston Radio Veteran, Anngelle Wood (WFNX, WBCN, WZLX). [Crime of the Truest Kind](#) is a true crime podcast that delves into the dark history of Massachusetts and New England. Through gripping narratives of local crimes, the show explores their impact

on communities and the landmarks where they unfolded. *Crime of the Truest Kind* goes beyond sensationalism, advocating for victims' rights and social justice while shedding light on the lasting impact of these events.

[Click here for more information about this program!](#)

Inclusive & Diverse Recommendations

Thursday, February 20th

7:30 P. M. | Zoom (Virtual)

Join bookstagrammer, Leelynn Brady (@sometimesleelynnreads), monthly for 30 minutes of pure book recommendations - any genre as well as YA and Middle Grade books, as long as they are by diverse authors or have inclusive storylines! We're sure you'll find something to like from Leelynn's many enthusiastic reviews. [Click here for more information, and to register for this program!](#)



Debut Author Panel

With Karissa Chen, Tara Dorabji,
Laurie L. Dove, and Jakob Kerr

Monday, February 24th

7 P. M. | Zoom (Virtual)

We welcome authors [Karissa Chen](#), [Tara Dorabji](#), [Laurie L. Dove](#), and [Jakob Kerr](#) to our virtual stage. We'll be talking all about getting into publishing, the pitfalls, challenges, and roadblocks as well as the excitement, fulfillment, and reader enthusiasm that makes it all worthwhile. Bring your questions as this will be in a Q&A format. All four of our authors have books coming out in January 2025 - how awesome is that!? [Click here to register for this program.](#)



Author Talk: Nancy Reddy

"The Good Mother Myth"

Tuesday, February 25th

7 P. M. | Zoom (Virtual)

Poet and essayist, Nancy Reddy, joins us to discuss her book, [The Good Mother Myth: Unlearning Our Bad Ideas About How to Be a Good Mom](#), a timely and thought-provoking debunking of the bad ideas that have for too long defined what it means to be a "good" mom. This program is for all of the caregivers who struggle to be the best they can be with societal pressures constantly trying to influence our good instincts.



We hope you can join us for this important discussion. [For more information, and to register for this virtual program, click here!](#)

Author Talk: Ben Kane

"Stormcrow: A Gripping and Epic Viking Adventure"

Thursday, February 27th
2 P. M. | Zoom (Virtual)



Are you fascinated by the Viking era (or Vikings on Netflix)? If so, please join the conversation with author Ben Kane as he discusses his novel, *StormCrow*. "On the east coast of Ireland thirteen-year old Finn finds the sword of a slain Norseman, and with Odin's raven watching, is given the name Stormcrow. When Finn's family is torn apart by a random act of violence, and the sword lost, he embarks on a quest for revenge with his oldest friend, the shaman Vekel... Only the gods know if he will survive." [For more information, and to register for this virtual program, click here!](#)

Youth Programs Returning

BREAKING NEWS! BREAKING NEWS! BREAKING

YOUTH PROGRAMS ARE BACK IN FEBRUARY!

**CHECK OUT OUR
CALENDAR ONLINE TO
REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS!**

BREAKING NEWS! BREAKING NEWS! BREAKING

Book Lists

[FeBREWary](#)

See what titles are brewin'
(and "bruin") this month!



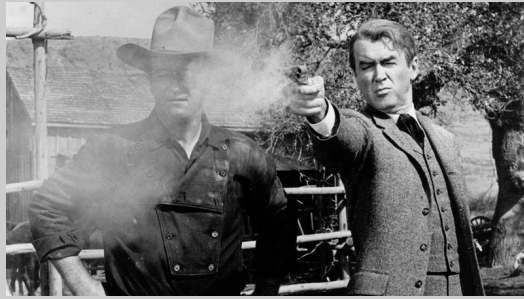
[Hearts & Thoughts](#)

- Cardiovascular health
- Fiction (romance)

Staff Reviews

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962)

Dave Huygens



A departure from some of [John Ford's](#) previous westerns, [The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance \(1962\)](#) was filmed in stark black and white, mostly on studio sets. In this intimate setting, Ford tells the story of the passing of an era, as the lawless Old West gradually becomes a region of railroads, schools, and farms.

Around 1900, Senator Ransom Stoddard ([James Stewart](#)) and his wife ([Vera Miles](#)) return to the small town of Shinbone, to attend the funeral of rancher Tom Doniphon ([John Wayne](#)). In a flashback, we see Stoddard beaten and left for dead by a vicious outlaw, Liberty Valance ([Lee Marvin](#)). What follows is a complex tale of lost love, revenge, a legendary gunfight, and surprising revelations.

The film has been called Ford's last great western. It has superb performances, a compelling story, and a fine supporting cast of familiar faces. I enjoyed revisiting this childhood favorite. *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* is an entertaining and thought-provoking experience.

Love Tokens: The Paper Purse Valentine

Melissa Jackson

Love letters are so very sweet, especially if they are written with a poet's hand and designed with flair. I have discovered a lovely post about "Puzzle Purse Valentines". The picture above is an example of one.



Puzzle Purse Valentine

I have found two websites with information about them. One is the Jane Austen-themed [Puzzle Purses Blog](#), where you can view more puzzle purses like the one you see in this recommendation.

The other is the Louisa May Alcott-themed [Virtual Valentine blog](#), where you can read up on the history of these clever items. Maybe (and I hope!) you will even be inspired to make one for yourself!

Judy Garland: By Myself (2004)

Dave Huygens

Judy Garland: By Myself (2004) is a wonderfully detailed portrait of the legendary performer, born [Frances Gumm](#) on June 10th, 1922, in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Originally presented as an episode of *American Masters*, this Emmy-winning documentary tells Judy's story using her own words, based on recordings she made for a proposed autobiography. [Isabel Keating](#) recreates Judy's speaking voice; narrator [Harris Yulin](#) gives an overview of the star's remarkable life and career.



Several of Judy's friends and associates--[June Allyson](#), [Ray Bolger](#), arranger [Nelson Riddle](#), bandleader [Artie Shaw](#) and others--are heard offscreen, while actors recreate the voices of people like second husband Vincente Minnelli and director [George Cukor](#). Clips from almost all of Judy's films and TV shows, along with still photos and home movies, form an amazing mosaic that's both absorbing and entertaining.

Judy Garland didn't live a long life, but she left a rich legacy of amazing performances. This documentary, directed by [Susan Lacy](#), presents many career highlights, as well as taking us into the fascinating personal life of a star many have called one of the greatest performers of the 20th Century. I highly recommend it.

***Coherence* (2013)**

Matthew Sowyrd

For someone who isn't much of a movie-watcher, this is the most original, fascinating, and exciting film that I've seen in a long time. In *Coherence* (2013), eight friends ([Emily Baldoni](#), [Nicholas Brendon](#), [Maury Sterling](#), et al.) gather for a



dinner party on the night that a comet is passing over the earth, during which time electronics are suddenly and inexplicably put out of commission. A power outage occurs, and the entire neighborhood has gone dark--except for one house down the street that, in a spirit of desperation, the friends decide to investigate. What follows is a sequence of increasingly bizarre events, with terrifying implications, that turns this pleasant evening into one black hole

of a nightmare.

Despite having a foot each in the realms of horror and science fiction, the film transcends conventions from both genres - there are no ghosts, no aliens, no mutant monsters. Instead, the intricately crafted plot deals with the hypothesis that separate realities can exist simultaneously - which is basically the [Schrodinger's cat theory](#) put into practice. It is also something of a mystery puzzle, in which clues are given visually, as well as through the characters' unconsciously prophetic wording of certain lines. For example, after sharing crazy stories from their pasts, someone says "Let's make a toast to the lives that we do lead", which carries another meaning that becomes apparent later on in the film.

In addition to the plot, probably the movie's most impressive component is the improvised dialogue. Skillfully executed by the cast, this makes the characters appear more realistic and potentially more relatable for the viewer. It also works well with the simple - yet immersive - cinematography in the camera work, which conveys a sense of intimacy and immediacy, so that viewers will feel the same sense of urgency that the characters are experiencing.

If you are looking for a movie that makes you think, you will find *Coherence* to be intriguing just as it is entertaining. Having seen it a few times since writing, I can and will say that it is well-made and very rewatchable. It is available electronically on [Hoopla](#) and [Kanopy](#), as well as through the [Commonwealth Catalogue](#) in DVD format.

[Easter Parade \(1948\)](#)

Dave Huygens

A nostalgic musical set in New York in 1911-1912, *Easter Parade* (1948) begins when a ballroom dancer, Nadine Hale



([Ann Miller](#)), tells her smitten partner, Don Hewes ([Fred Astaire](#)), that she wants to break up the act. Later, while drinking at a restaurant, Don boasts to a friend ([Peter Lawford](#)) that he can turn a chorus dancer ([Judy Garland](#)) into a bigger star than Nadine. But the girl--Hannah--has some trouble telling her left foot from her right, and it takes Don a little time to discover that Hannah is much more than just a pale imitation of his former partner.

Originally, [Gene Kelly](#) and [Cyd Charisse](#) were cast as Don and Nadine, but they both suffered injuries and had to be replaced. Also replaced was director [Vincente Minnelli](#), when a therapist decided that the [MGM](#) hit-maker and his wife (Garland) were working together too much. So, relative newcomer [Charles Walters](#) (*Good News*, 1947) was given the plum assignment. Despite these setbacks, *Easter Parade* became Hollywood's top grossing musical of the year, and an enduring classic.

The film's eight new songs, as well as several older standards, are the work of legendary songwriter [Irving Berlin](#). The Oscar-winning background score is by [Johnny Green](#) and [Roger Edens](#). Garland and Astaire—in their only film together—make a marvelous team, while Miller (in a show-stopping dance number) and the reliable Lawford give solid support. *Easter Parade* is a great film to lift your spirits and set your feet tapping.

A Simple List of Books

Alexandra Hyland



[Destination Moon: The Remarkable and Improbable Voyage of Apollo 11](#) by Richard Maurer

“Presents a clear narrative on how the United States won the space race against Russia by landing a man on the Moon in 1969.”

[When Stars Are Scattered](#) by Victoria Jamieson &



Omar Mohamed

"When an opportunity for Omar to get an education comes along, he must decide between going to school every day or caring for his nonverbal brother in this intimate and touching portrayal of life in a refugee camp."



The Legend Series by Marie Lu

"In a dark future, when North America has split into two warring nations, fifteen-year-old Day, a famous criminal, and prodigy June, the brilliant soldier hired to capture him, discover that they have a common enemy."

Freedom Riders (2010)

Dave Huygens

Freedom Riders (2010) is a historical documentary about the more than four hundred activists who challenged racial inequality in interstate transportation during the Civil Rights Movement. In 1961, these men and women traveled South in small interracial groups, sitting where they chose--in buses, on trains, and in waiting rooms--to alert the nation to the injustices of segregation.



Through interviews with many of the participants, as well as archival footage, the film allows us to relive historical events in vivid detail. The result is a feeling of awe for the dedication and courage of these activists, who often put their lives on the line for the cause of racial equality.

I had never seen a documentary that was specifically about the Freedom Riders, so this film was a revelation. Told in a straightforward style by writer-director Stanley Nelson, Jr., it's a worthy tribute to a committed group of Americans who helped bring about social change.

David Lynch Recommends Dave Huygens

I confess that I was never a huge fan of the works of the late David Lynch (Twin Peaks), but I respected him as a filmmaker and artist. It was somehow appropriate that Steven Spielberg cast Lynch as



legendary director [John Ford](#) in his autobiographical film, [The Fabelmans \(2022\)](#). No two directors could have been more unlike on the surface--but in fact they were both iconoclasts who created acclaimed works with decidedly mythic qualities.

After Lynch died, I happened to come across a YouTube video that listed several films he admired. I was surprised to discover that a few of them were favorites of mine, as well. One filmmaker Lynch really loved was [Billy Wilder](#), and he especially revered [Sunset Boulevard \(1950\)](#), a dark Hollywood tale with satirical overtones that was doubtless an influence on his own [Mulholland Drive \(2001\)](#).

Lynch also admired [Jacques Tati's](#) classic comedy, [Mr. Hulot's Holiday \(1953\)](#), about a Frenchman on a hilarious seaside vacation. And he liked [It's a Gift \(1934\)](#), a side-splittingly funny [W. C. Fields](#) movie about a put-upon small town grocer with an annoying family and clueless customers. Both films contain absurd yet surprisingly gentle portrayals of human foibles that hint at a more chaotic undercurrent.

Lynch loved [Stanley Kubrick's](#) poignant, darkly comic version of Vladimir Nabokov's [Lolita \(1962\)](#), with brilliant performances by [James Mason](#), [Peter Sellers](#), [Shelley Winters](#), and [Sue Lyon](#). He was also a big fan of [Alfred Hitchcock's](#) [Rear Window \(1954\)](#), [Fellini's 8 1/2 \(1963\)](#), and Kubrick's [Eyes Wide Shut \(1999\)](#).

None of these films are dull. Most contain visions of a world where nothing is really as it seems. How appropriate that a filmmaker such as David Lynch would love them. If you like his movies or are just discovering them, you might want to check out these other films by master filmmakers he admired.

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