

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 (through June 14th)

Children's Services | (781) 438-1325

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

Wed., Fri.: 9 am - 5 pm

Sat. 10 am - 2 pm (through June 14th)

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

Follow us on social media:



The Month at a Glance



The Trustees of the Library

Will meet at 7 PM on Monday, June 9th, in the Stoneham Room. A hybrid option is also available. All members of the public are welcome to attend to comment or listen to the proceedings.

If you are interested in view the 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.](#)

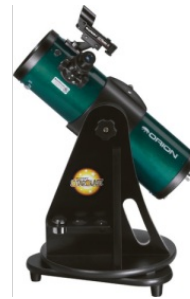
Holidays & Special Closures

- Thursday, June 19th (Juneteenth)
- Note: Last Saturday before summer begins is June 14th. Also, due to cuts to our budget, the library will be closed on all Saturdays from that point onward, until further notice.



Orion StarBlast Telescope

Check out the [Orion StarBlast Reflector Telescope](#) from our Library of Things! Astronomers, casual star-gazers, and lovers of the night sky will enjoy using this device to visually explore the heavens. Optimal for camping trips and summertime getaways in the countryside.



Adult Services

Summer Reading Guide

The images in this section are hyperlinked. Click on each image to be directed to a curated list of those titles in our catalogue!





STONEHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY'S

Summer Reading Guide 2025



Scan this code to
access these books in
our catalog!



Fiction



- ♦ **The Names,**
Florence Knapp
- ♦ **The Original Daughter,**
Jeremiah Wei
- ♦ **The View From Lake Como,**
Adriana Trigiani
- ♦ **Three Days in June,**
Anne Tyler
- ♦ **Food Person,**
Adam Roberts
- ♦ **Story She Left Behind,**
Patti Callahan Henry
- ♦ **Harlem Rhapsody,**
Victoria Christopher Murray
- ♦ **The Emperor of Gladness,**
Ocean Vuong
- ♦ **The Stolen Queen,**
Fiona Davis
- ♦ **Happy Land,**
Dolen Perkins-Valdez
- ♦ **Let's Call Her Barbie,**
Renee Rosen
- ♦ **Homeseeking,**
Karissa Chen



★ Non-Fiction



★ **Original Sin,**
Jake Tapper & Alex Thompson

★ **Empire of AI,**
Karen Hao

★ **Murderland,**
Caroline Fraser

★ **The Raider,**
Stephen R. Platt

★ **Everything is Tuberculosis,**
John Green

★ **The Book of Alchemy,**
Suleika Jaouad

★ **Sucker Punch,**
Scaachi Koul

★ **John & Paul,**
Ian Leslie

★ **The Wager**
David Grann

★ **The Divorce Colony,**
April White

★ **The Art Spy,**
Michelle Young

★ **We Can Do Hard Things,**
Abby Wambach, Amanda Doyle,
Glennon Doyle



Mystery



✦ **This is Not a Game,**
Kelly Mullen

✦ **Famous Last Words,**
Gillian McAllister

✦ **The Missing Half,**
Ashley Flowers

✦ **This Book Will Bury Me,**
Ashley Winstead

✦ **With a Vengeance,**
Riley Sager

✦ **The Tenant,**
Freida McFadden

✦ **The Note,**
Alafair Burke

✦ **The Woman in Suite 11,**
Ruth Ware

✦ **Don't Let Him In,**
Lisa Jewell

✦ **It Happened on the Lake,**
Lisa Jackson

✦ **The Perfect Divorce,**
Jeneva Rose

✦ **Coram House,**
Bailey Seybolt



Romance



✦ **Dream On, Ramona Riley,**
Ashley Herring Blake

✦ **Great Big Beautiful Life,**
Emily Henry

✦ **Say You'll Remember Me,**
Abby Jimenez

✦ **One Golden Summer,**
Carley Fortune

✦ **Swept Away,**
Beth O'Leary

✦ **Cover Story,**
Celia Laskey

✦ **Summer in the City,**
Alex Aster

✦ **Sounds Like Love,**
Ashley Poston

✦ **Atmosphere,**
Taylor Jenkins Reid

✦ **Earl Crush,**
Alexandra Vasti

✦ **Problematic Summer
Romance,** Ali Hazelwood

✦ **The Love Haters,**
Katherine Center

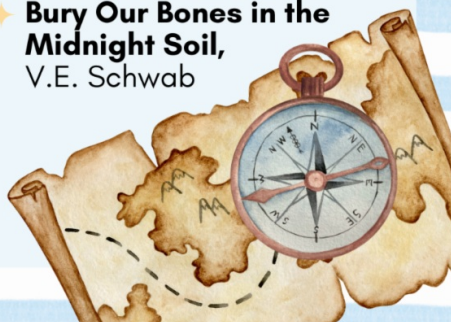


Fantasy & Sci-Fi



- ♦ **The Sirens,**
Emilia Hart
- ♦ **The Bewitching**
Silvia Moreno-Garcia
- ♦ **The Sun Blessed Prince,**
Lindsey Byrd
- ♦ **Gifted & Talented,**
Olivie Blake
- ♦ **The Raven Scholar,**
Antonia Hodgson
- ♦ **City of All Seasons,**
Oliver K. Langmead & Aliya Whiteley
- ♦ **When We Were Real,**
Daryl Gregory

- ♦ **Where the Axe Is Buried,**
Ray Nayler
- ♦ **The Ephemera Collector,**
Stacy Nathaniel Jackson
- ♦ **The Amalfi Curse,**
Sarah Penner
- ♦ **Terrestrial History,**
Joe Mungo Reed
- ♦ **Bury Our Bones in the
Midnight Soil,**
V.E. Schwab



Mondays

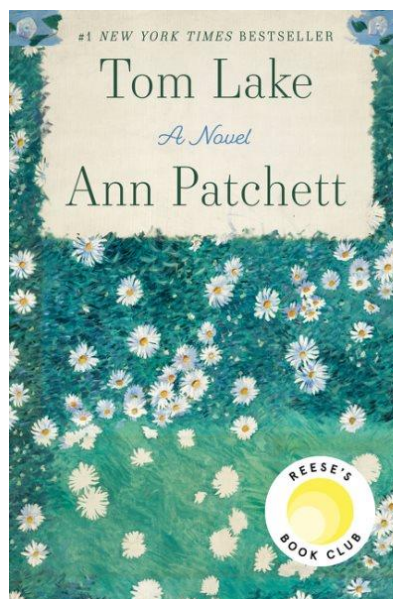
Monday Night Book Group

June 2nd @ 7 pm
The Stoneham Room

This month's selection is [*Tom Lake*](#)
by Ann Patchett.

The group always looks forward to
welcoming new members to the
conversation. Registration not
required.

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



Art with Erica

June 2nd @ 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 seashells! We meet on the first Monday of every month. All supplies are provided. [Registration required.](#)



Monday Movie Night

Jaws (1975)

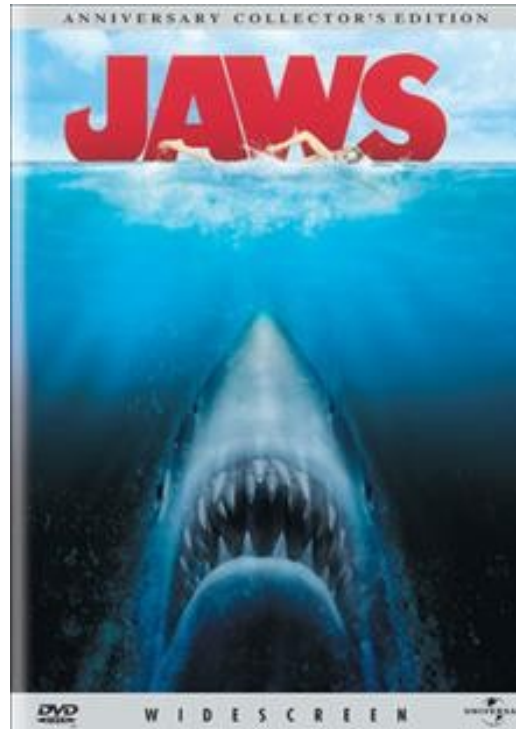
June 16th @ 6:30 pm

The Marcy Room

We will hold a viewing of this month's Film Club choice, *Jaws* (1975).

"When a massive killer shark unleashes chaos on a beach community off Long Island, it's up to a local sheriff, a marine biologist, and an old seafarer to hunt the beast down."

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



Rated: PG | Run Time: 2h 4m | Genres: Adventure, Drama, Thriller | Directed by: Steven Spielberg | Written by: Peter Benchley, Carl Gottlieb | Starring: Roy Scheider, Robert Shaw, Richard Dreyfuss

Tuesdays

Creative Writing for Adults

June 3rd @ 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 in attending this program, or have questions related to writing, contact Matthew: msowyrda@noblenet.org or call 781-438-1324.

Wednesdays

Documentary Wow! Discussion

Apollo 11 (2019)

June 11th @ 6:30 pm

Zoom

Join us as we discuss this month's Documentary Wow! selection, *Apollo 11* (2019). [Registration required.](#)



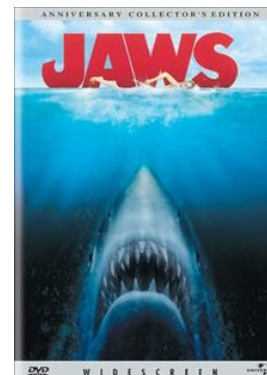
Film Club Discussion

Jaws (1975)

June 25th @ 6:30 pm

Zoom

Join the Film Club to discuss this month's selection, *Jaws* (1975). Dave will send out the GoToMeeting link on the day of the discussion. [Registration required.](#)



Thursdays

Mysteries Around the World Book Group

June 5th @ 7 pm

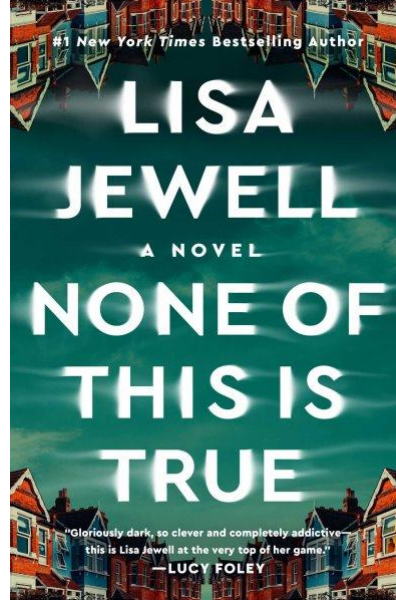
The Stoneham Room

This month's selection is [None of](#)

[This is True by Lisa Jewell](#). The book follows the story of Alix Summer, a popular podcaster, and Josie Fair, a woman with a painful and shadowed history who wants her story told.

The Mystery group always looks forward to welcoming new members to the conversation. Registration not required.

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



Chess Club for Adults

June 12th @ 7 pm
The Stoneham Room

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



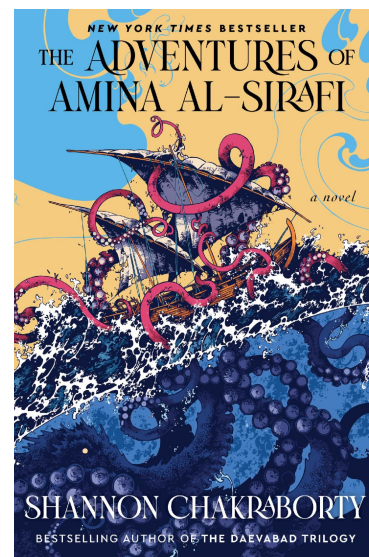
Do you like to play chess, but don't have anyone to play with? Chess players of all kinds -- beginners and experts, casual and serious -- are welcome to attend the Stoneham Public Library's Chess Club for Adults! While some chess boards will be provided, players are encouraged to bring their own. Chess clocks will also be available uponNo registration required.

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

The Enchanted Pages Society

Reads: *The Adventures of Amina al-Sirafi* by Shannon Chakraborty
June 26th @ 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, [*The Adventures of Amina al-Sirafi* by Shannon Chakraborty](#), 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 *Apollo 11* (2019)

June 6th @ 1 pm
The Stoneham Room

This month's Documentary Wow! selection is *Apollo 11* (2019).



"A look at the Apollo 11 mission to land on the moon led by commander Neil Armstrong and pilots Buzz Aldrin and Mike Collins."

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

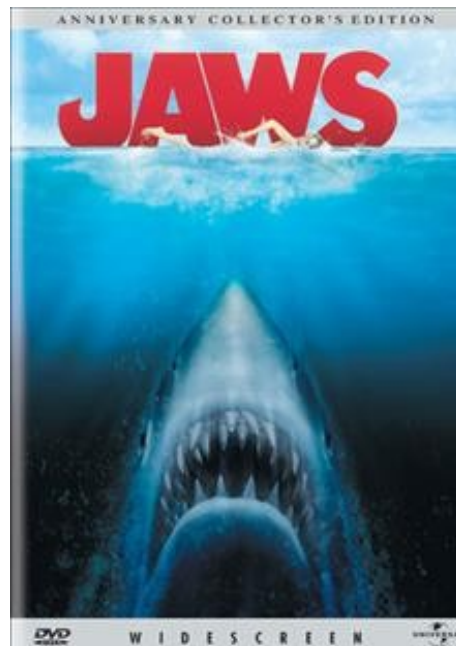
Rated: G | Run Time: 1h 33m | Genres: Documentary, History
Directed by: Todd Douglas Miller | Starring: Neil Armstrong, Mike Collins, Buzz Aldrin

Friday Movie Matinee

Jaws (1975)
June 20th @ 1 pm
The Stoneham Room

We will hold a viewing of this month's Film Club choice, *Jaws* (1975).

"When a massive killer shark unleashes chaos on a beach community off Long Island, it's up to a local sheriff, a marine biologist, and an old seafarer to hunt the beast down."



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

Rated: PG | Run Time: 2h 4m | Genres: Adventure, Drama,

Thriller | Directed by: Steven Spielberg | Written by: Peter Benchley, Carl Gottlieb | Starring: Roy Scheider, Robert Shaw, Richard Dreyfuss

Saturdays

Creative Writing for Adults

June 7th @ 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. Registration not required.



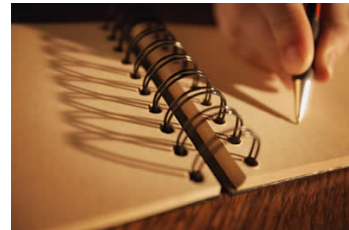
If you are interested in attending this program, or have questions about writing, contact Matthew: msowyrda@noblenet.org or call 781-438-1324.

Bullet Journal Club

June 14th 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

June 14th at 11 am

The Marcy Room

"Embroidery with YuChin" is a monthly workshop sponsored by Stoneham Library. The 1.5 hours event takes place from 11:00 am - 12:30 pm on the third Saturday of each month, though the date may change due to holiday or weather conditions. Since its inception in October 2024,



many members have found it a source of fun and joy. Beginner and new members are encouraged to join, with hours for new members from 11:45 am - 12:30 pm. Registration is required. Please stop by to learn more about embroidery.

Age limit: 15 and older.

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

You must provide your own materials for this program.

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

Special Programs

Job Networking Group (Ages 50+)

Wednesday, June 4th @ 9 am (Zoom)

Wednesday, June 18th @ 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.](#)

Extinctopedia: A Discovery of What We Have Lost, What is at Risk, and What To Do About it with Smithsonian Scientists

Wednesday, June 4th @ 2 pm (Virtual)



Extinctopedia tells a complex story, not just of those who are extinct but also of those in greatest peril, with explanations of what threatens their survival. It is also a story of hope—hopes for animals that have been rediscovered, hope in the form of newly-discovered animals, and hope that we might hear the warning call and act to preserve the amazing biodiversity of our fragile planet for

future generations to come.

You're invited to grab your family and friends and join us as Smithsonian scientists highlight information found in the Smithsonian's book, *Extinctopedia: Discover what we have lost, what is at risk, and how we can preserve the diversity of our fragile planet*. In this talk, you will discover:

- Animals that are no longer with us
- Endangered animals at risk of extinction
- Organizations that aim to protect animal life
- Strategies for preserving biodiversity

Extinctopedia provides a fascinating catalog of life on earth and encourages the reader to find ways of preserving the incredible diversity of species, so we may all thrive and life itself can endure on this amazing and beautiful planet.

[Join the conversation with authors Brian Gratwicke and Dr. Gina Della Togna by registering today!](#)

***PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A VIRTUAL PROGRAM.** See our calendar for more details. This program is funded by [the Friends of the Stoneham Library](#). You will receive the link in the confirmation and reminder emails - make sure to check your spam folder for them if they do not appear in your inbox. The email will be coming from Zoom.

Explore Unexpected Twists and Turns with Bestselling Author Lisa Jewell

Tuesday, June 10th @ 2 pm (Virtual)

You're invited to an exclusive preview
event with New York



Times bestselling author Lisa Jewell as she introduces readers to her forthcoming title *Don't Let Him In* (Out June 24, 2025!). Along with an introduction to her newest bone-chilling, psychological thriller, Jewell will chat about her life as a writer and her critically-acclaimed body of work.

In *Don't Let Him In*, three women are connected by one man in this

kaleidoscopic thriller.

Nick Radcliffe is a man of substance and good taste. He has a smile that could melt the coldest heart and a knack for putting others at ease. He's just what Nina Swann needed in her life after her husband's unexpected death. But to Nina's adult daughter, Ash, Nick seems too slick, too polished, too good to be true. Without telling her mother, Ash begins digging into Nick's past. What she finds is more than unsettling...

Things don't make sense and patience is wearing thin...

Martha is a florist living in a neighboring town with her infant daughter and her devoted husband Alistair. But lately, Alistair has been traveling more and more frequently for work, disappearing for days at a time. When Martha questions him about his frequent absences, he always has a legitimate explanation. But Martha can't shake the feeling that something isn't right, despite her husband calling her mad and insisting they know everything there is to know about one another.

Nina, Martha, and Ash are on a collision course with a shocking truth that is far darker than anyone could have imagined. And all three are about to wish they had heeded the same warning: Don't let him in. But the past won't stay buried forever.

[Register now for the thrill of a lifetime!](#)

***PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A VIRTUAL PROGRAM.** See our calendar for more details. This program is funded by [the Friends of the Stoneham Library](#). You will receive the link in the confirmation and reminder emails - make sure to check your spam folder for them if they do not appear in your inbox. The email will be coming from Zoom.

[Youth Services](#)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 Baby Bumble 10am	3 Duplo Club 11am Imagination Station 4pm	4 Toddler Tales 10:30am	5 Toddler Time 9:30 Farmers' Market Storytime 4:30pm	6 Chalk the Walk 9:30am Babytime 9:30 am	7 Lego Club 11-1
9 Baby Bumble 10am	10 Duplo Club 11am Imagination Station 4pm	11 Toddler Tales 10:30am	12 Toddler Time 9:30 Farmers' Market Storytime 4:30pm Tween Graphic Novel Club 6pm	13 Chalk the Walk 9:30am Babytime 9:30 am	14 Lego Club 11-1
16 Baby Bumble 10am	17 Lego Club 11am Quick Stitch Club 3:30pm Imagination Station 4pm	18 Toddler Tales 10:30am	19 CLOSED	20 Chalk the Walk 9:30am Babytime 9:30 am Take and Make Craft	21 CLOSED
23 Baby Bumble 10am Summer Programs Begin!	24 Lego Club 11am Imagination Station 4pm	25 Toddler Tales 10:30am	26 Toddler Time 9:30 Farmers' Market Storytime 4:30pm	27 Chalk the Walk 9:30am Babytime 9:30 am	28 CLOSED
30 Baby Bumble 10am			REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS ON THE LIBRARY WEBSITE UNDER EVENTS&MORE > CALENDAR > FIND AN EVENT AND CLICK REGISTER stonehamlibrary.org kbardascino@noblenet.org		

Due to cuts to the Library's budget , June 14th will be the last Saturday that we are open.

Kids' Summer Program

It is that time again! Stoneham Public Library's Kids' Summer Program will begin June 23rd, and will run until August 13th. This year's theme is "Level Up at Your Library", and the prize is free admission to the [Topsfield Fair](#)* in the fall, which includes a food and drink voucher, and two ride tickets. Children under 8 years old already have free admission.



Kiddos up until grade 6 can sign up in the Junior Room, where you will also receive an activity log. If you lose your printout at any point during the summer, [you can view and print out a copy by clicking here](#). Teens and tweens should see below for information about their respective summer reading program.

*Due to cuts to the library budget, our schedule and Summer Program will be a bit different this year. We appreciate the generous support of Topsfield Fair for providing our prizes this year at no cost to Stoneham. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding. Also, please keep in mind that August 13th is a firm deadline for kiddos to have their log checked by staff, as we need to submit our prize winners to the Topsfield Fair in order to receive our prizes on time.

T(w)een Summer Program

The theme ("Level Up at Your Library") and timeline for the T(w)een Summer Program is the same as the Kids' Program (June 23rd-August 13th). However, upon completing the activity log, winners will be entered into a raffle in which they have the chance of taking home a Kindle Fire 7, courtesy of [ABDO Publishing!](#)



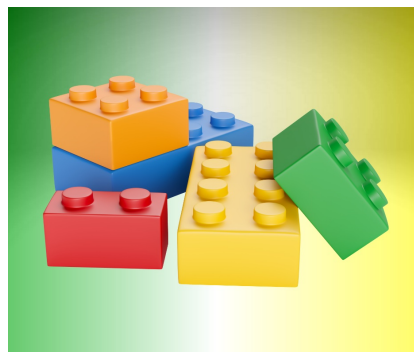
T(w)eens in grades 7-12 can participate by signing up in the Junior Room, where you will also receive an activity log. If you lose your printout at any point during the summer, [you can view and print out a copy by clicking here](#).

Tuesday

Duplo Club

Every Tuesday @ 11 am
Junior Room

Have a kiddo who is too little for Lego club? Join us for a dop-in Duplo club! Build some fun stuff with bigger blocks!



All ages welcome, but the program is intended for younger kiddos.
No registration required.

Imagination Station

Every Tuesday

@ 4 pm

Junior Room

Join us after a long day to create a simple craft. Chat with friends and make something new! Sign-up is required. Click on the hyperlinks below to register for each session.



- [June 3rd](#)
- [June 10th](#)
- [June 17th](#)
- [June 24th](#)

Intended demographic: Ages 3+

Living the Otter Life with Katherine Applegate (3rd-6th grade)

June 24th @ 4 pm

Junior Room

This event will be 30 minutes in
length.



Join us as award-winning author and summer reading champion Katherine Applegate talks to viewers about her enthusiastically heartwarming novel in verse, *Odder*.

Everyone wants to meet Odder, the Queen of Play. Odder spends her days off the coast of central California, practicing her underwater acrobatics and spinning the quirky stories for which she's known. She's a fearless daredevil, curious to a fault. But when Odder comes face-to-face with a hungry great white shark, her life takes a dramatic turn, one that will challenge everything she believes about herself—and about the humans who hope to

save her.

Katherine Applegate's *Odder*, is inspired by the true story of a Monterey Bay Aquarium program that pairs orphaned otter pups with surrogate mothers. This poignant and humorous tale told in free verse examines bravery and healing through the eyes of one of nature's most beloved and charming animals.

[Register here to join the conversation with Katherine Applegate!](#)

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Quick Stitch Club

June 17th @ 3:30 pm

Teen Zone

Teens and tweens: Join Deb to learn how to embroider your own hoop! No experience required; she'll help you build your skills.



[Registration opens on Monday, June 9th.](#)

Wednesday

Toddler Time

June 4th @ 9:30 am

Junior Room

Need a spot to bring your energetic toddler? Swing by the junior library for a drop-in program! We have special toys specifically picked for toddlers that will be available during this program! Guardians must remain with their child during the duration of the program.



This is a drop-in style program, geared towards toddler socialization and developmentally appropriate play with toys used to foster motor development.

Questions? Email Katie at kbardascino@noblenet.org!

Toddler Tales

[June 4th @ 10:30 am](#)

[June 11th @ 10:30 am](#)

[June 18th @ 10:30 am](#)

[June 25th @ 10:30 am](#)

Marcy Room



Miss Melissa is so excited to welcome our toddler friends for a fun storytime! She'll be sharing some of her favorite stories with you! Registration is required. Click the hyperlinks above to register for each session.

Questions? Email mjackson@noblenet.org

Thursday

Farmer's Market Storytime

June 5th @ 4 pm

June 12th @ 4 pm

June 26th @ 4 pm

Town Common



Join Miss Melissa at the Stoneham Farmer's market on the Town Common! She'll be doing a quick storytime near, or in, the gazebo.

Sign up is not required, but if it rains, we'll cancel.

Tween Graphic Novel Club

June 12th @ 6 pm

Teen Zone

Join us in the teen zone for graphic novel club! Do we talk about the

book we pick? Sometimes. Do we chat, color, and have fun? Always! Pick up your copy of the book at the Junior Circulation desk.

For tweens (Grade 4+). Questions?
Email kbardascino@noblenet.org

[Sign up is required.](#)



Friday

Chalk the Walk

Every Friday

@ 9:30 am

Front Walkway

Join us in front of the library to decorate our walkway! We love to see the creations you can make! Most of the walk way only has partial shade, so wear your sunscreen! Kiddos of all ages welcome. No registration required.



Babytime

[June 6th @ 9:30 am](#)

[June 13th @ 9:30 am](#)

[June 20th @ 9:30 am](#)

Junior Room



Join Miss Katie for a quick, fun babytime program! We'll have bounces, rhymes, and loads of fun! For babies 0-12mos.

Questions? Email kbardascino@noblenet.org !

We're excited to see you!

Sign up is requested so that we can email you if we have to cancel!

Click the hyperlinks above to register for each session.

Book Lists



[A Summer Affair](#)

Romance fiction and films

[Running Wild](#)

- Outdoor activities
- Natural Science



Staff Reviews

[Jaws \(1975\)](#)

David Huygens



“Amity Island had everything. Clear skies. Gentle surf. Warm water. People flocked there every summer. It was the perfect feeding ground.” So began the trailer for *Jaws* (1975), the movie that’s often cited as the first summer blockbuster. I’m not sure if there’s anyone reading this right now who doesn’t know the plot of the film, directed by [Steven Spielberg](#) from [the novel by Peter Benchley](#). Basically, it’s about this big shark, and the shark kills people, and needs to be hunted down. The mayor of the beachside community where these attacks take place ([Murray Hamilton](#)) doesn’t want to close the beaches and lose the tourist trade. The new police chief ([Roy Scheider](#)) backs down, to his regret. Eventually, the chief, together with a scientist ([Richard Dreyfuss](#)) and an eccentric shark hunter ([Robert Shaw](#)) join forces on the latter’s boat to try to stop the shark. After seeing the size of this killing machine, the chief utters one of the movie’s most famous lines: “I think you’re going to need a bigger boat.”

Reviews for *Jaws* were mixed, originally, with critics commenting that, rather than building suspense, Spielberg went for jump scares. Molly Haskell, in the *Village Voice*, described the film as “a thriller of surprise, rather than suspense,” making viewers feel like “a rat being given shock treatment.” But the public loved it, making it the biggest hit of the year. One of Spielberg’s gifts as a filmmaker is to make you feel immersed in the mood and atmosphere of a particular time and place, and in some ways, the

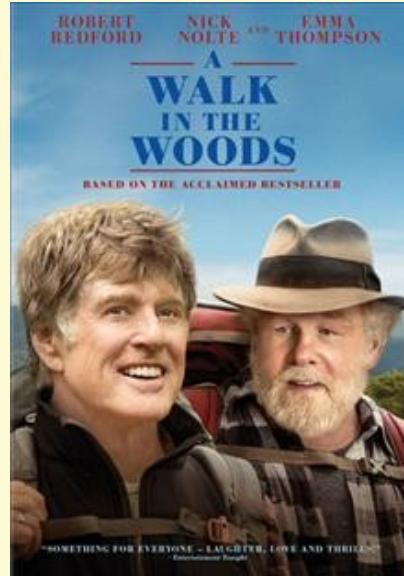
quiet moments in *Jaws* (the three men on the boat in a calm sea, at night, for example) are just as masterful as the action and thrills.

Jaws is one of those movies that has transcended its original impact to become an iconic reference point of a particular time and place in American culture. Seeing it is almost like being back there, when we all lined up around the block to see it, then lined up again another night, to be shocked again, even though we knew when the shocks would happen. For the perfect filmmaking, the drama, the humor, and the acting, *Jaws* is still a very enjoyable experience.

A Walk in the Woods (2015)

Matthew Sowyrda

Based on [Bill Bryson's book of the same name](#), *A Walk in the Woods* (2015) follows Bill Bryson (Robert Redford) and his friend, Stephen Katz (Nick Nolte), as they attempt to hike the entire [Appalachian Trail](#), the most famous of America's wilderness trails. Their endeavor is not without trials and tribulations, however, for along the way, they come into contact with adverse weather conditions, predatory animals, and a cast of curious, comical, and cutthroat characters that sometimes help - other times derail - its fulfillment.



Acclaimed author Bill Bryson (Redford) has recently returned to the United States from living in England for 20 years. Awkward but jocular, he teeters through an interview with an arrogant talk show host, who delights in nothing else but asking pointed questions and giving snide remarks about Bryson's career. Bryson's social clumsiness shows during the wake of a friend, where he makes a breach of verbal etiquette when he greets the man's grieving wife ("It's a pleasure to be here--sorry, I mean..."), an indiscretion that is supplemented by Bryson's remark -- with a wry smile -- to his wife, Catherine (Emma Thompson), that he doesn't "like people". To clear his head, Bryson strolls around in some woods near his New Hampshire neighborhood, where he sees a sign pointing to the famed Appalachian Trail. Bryson is thus inspired to hike that trail of trails from one end to the other, and to bask in nature's simplicity and quietude. After fielding for a companion, Bryson -- to his horror -- winds up with his impetuous, but well-intentioned, overweight, and medically-challenged childhood friend, Stephen Katz, whom he has not seen in decades. From there, the pair embark on -- in all probability -- the biggest adventure of their lives.

Because I read the book first, my criticism levels were high. For one

thing, I think some scenes, conflicts, and characters could have been developed a little more, because the film's pacing seemed rather rushed. For another thing, I was not convinced that Robert Redford was Bill Bryson. I have seen a few of Redford's performances -- *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), *Brubaker* (1980), and *Three Days of the Condor* (1975) -- and although in the last one he starred as a CIA "reader-researcher", he strikes me as too down-to-earth to act the part of an aloof, intellectual, and witty man, as I imagine Bill Bryson himself to be. Although I am unfamiliar with Nolte's acting, he, on the contrary, seems to have been a suitable choice for the role of Stephen Katz.

Nonetheless, the film has humorous, odd-ball moments, and it even raises some significant points. One is to illustrate how friendship helps us to endure life's obstacles when we are tempted to quit. Another is that we should take a step back from the commotion of modern life whenever the chance arises, so that we can re-acquaint ourselves with the calm, the beauty, and (yes) the humbling inconveniences of nature. Very few films approach these ideas, to say nothing of the rest of modern media, which closes minds, keeping them "plugged in", never concerned with the external world and with the things outside of one's own experience. With that said, instead of watching a movie, or even reading a book about "getting outside", it would be best to set all these gadgets aside -- at least for a while -- and take a real walk in the woods.

Apollo 11 (2019)

David Huygens

The first time a human being set foot on the surface of the moon, it was a unifying event. It wasn't like a

celebrity death, or the end of a war, but a uniquely positive experience for all people--some of whom had been alive when [Charles Lindbergh](#) made the first solo flight in an airplane over the Atlantic Ocean only 42 years earlier.



[Apollo 11](#) (2019) is an amazing documentary about NASA's first moon landing by astronauts [Neil Armstrong](#), [Buzz Aldrin](#) and [Michael Collins](#). Without using interviews or narration, [Todd Douglas Miller](#)'s film tells the thrilling story of this historical event using only actual footage of the landing and the ground operation.

What makes the film so impressive is that it's made up largely of newly discovered film and audio that had lain forgotten in the [National Archives](#) for decades. The unearthed footage includes 16mm, 35mm and even high definition 70mm film stock. Whether

you remember seeing the event on your TV back in 1969, or have only heard or read about it, this documentary contains much that is completely new, offering an entirely fresh perspective. Maybe it's due to the quality of the footage, the editing, or the direction, but *Apollo 11* almost makes you forget you're watching something that happened over fifty years ago. I highly recommend this immersive and incredibly impressive film experience.

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