

**Key:**

**LP** (Large Print)      **B** (Biography)  
**cd** (Audiobook on CD)      **GN** (Graphic Novel)  
**J** (Children's)      **JP** (Picture Book)

☺ (Debut-new author's first book)

\*Book suggested for book groups

( ) Letters/Numbers shown in parenthesis are the call numbers used by the library to tell you exactly where to find a book on a shelf.

Numbers means the book is Nonfiction.

# Staff Picks



# 2026

A list of library staff's favorite books - old and new - read during the previous year that we want to share with you!

"You are what you consume. When you choose what to read, you are choosing your future thoughts and perspectives and opinions". - Mark Manson



**3 Shades of Blue: Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Bill Evans, and the Lost Empire of Cool** by James Kaplan (781.65 KAP) - The story of the greatness and varied fortunes of three very different geniuses behind the rise of jazz, America's greatest indigenous art form, in 1959.

**All Our Beautiful Goodbyes: A Novel** by Julianne Maclean (FIC MAC) - A heartfelt exploration of love, loss, and self-discovery set in the shimmering backdrop of Nova Scotia between 1946 and 1995. \*

**Anima Rising: A Novel** by Christopher Moore (FIC MOO) - A hilariously deranged tale of a mad scientist, a famous painter, and an undead woman's electrifying journey of self-discovery.

**As Cool as It Gets** by Jory John (JP JOHN) - When the Cool Bean picks the name of the coolest of the cool beans, Beanadette, out of a hat for the annual gift exchange, he's not feeling very merry or festive, he's feeling pressure! Will the Cool Bean find the perfect gift in time for the party? Read it and find out!

**Blood Over Bright Haven: A Novel** by M. L. Wang (FIC WAN) - A woman strives to be the first female mage admitted to a prestigious order but faces challenges from her colleagues and a mysterious janitor with a hidden past. Together, they uncover a secret that could change the course of magic forever.

**Buckeye: A Novel** by Patrick Ryan (FIC RYA, LP FIC RYA) - A small-town novel full of unforgettable characters and thorny human dilemmas. Conjuring a vanished America with deep insight about war, family life, and the strange paths we must travel to forgive the people who've hurt us the most. \*

**Buddhism 101: From Karma to the Four Noble Truths** by Arnie Kozak (294.3 KOZ) - Highlights and explains the central concepts of Buddhism to the modern reader, with information on mindfulness, karma, The Four Noble Truths, the Middle Way, and more.

**The Correspondent: A Novel** by Virginia Evans (FIC EVA, LP FIC EVA) - A story about the power of finding solace in literature and connection with people we might never meet in person. It is about the hubris of youth and the wisdom of old age, and the mistakes and acts of kindness that occur during a lifetime. ☺ \*

**A Dark History of Tea** by Seren Charrington Hollins (394.15 CHA) - Go beyond interesting facts about tea etiquette and tradition to discover the link between tea and seduction and the illicit liaisons that occurred because of teatime meetings.

**Death of the Author** by Nnedi Okorafor (FIC OKO, LP FIC OKO) - A disabled Nigerian American woman pens a wildly successful Sci-Fi novel, but as her fame rises, she loses control of the narrative. A heartfelt drama about art and love, identity and connection, and, ultimately, what makes us human.

**Devil is Fine** by John Vercher (FIC VER) - A haunting tale of grief, family secrets, and unacknowledged crimes of racism that inevitably resurface. With dark humor, psychological suspense, and ghost-story elements, it is a multilayered portrayal of one man's struggle with his personal demons and a white society's steadfast refusal to confront its own.

**Don't Sweat the Small Stuff and It's All Small Stuff** by Richard Carlson (158.1 CAR) - 100 meditations designed to make you appreciate being alive, keep your emotions (especially anger and dissatisfaction) in proper perspective, and cherish other people as the unique miracles they are. It's an owner's manual for the heart.

**Eleanore of Avignon** by Elizabeth DeLozier (FIC DEL, LP FIC DEL) - A young midwife and herbalist with remarkable skills risks her life, her freedom, and everything she holds dear to protect her beloved city from the encroaching Black Death. ☺ \*

**The Endurance Artist: Lazarus Lake, the Barkley & a Race with No End** by Jared Beasley (796.42 BEA) - An all-access pass to the world's most extreme races and the mastermind behind them, revealing the world of a recluse hell-bent on rewriting the rules to draw out incredible endurance performances.

**Everything is F\*cked: A Book About Hope** by Mark Manson (158.1 MAN) - Breaks down questions about human happiness and well-being in creative and unexpected ways. A wonderfully accessible book that tackles some of the deeper questions about where our world is headed, as well as how to take better care of ourselves and each other until we get there.

**Fever Beach** by Carl Hiassen (FIC HIA, LP FIC HIA) - In Florida, a former Proud Boy member and two unlikely allies, a clever woman and an angry millionaire, get entangled in a mystery involving dark money, corruption, and right-wing extremism.

**The French Winemaker's Daughter: A Novel** by Loretta Ellsworth (FIC ELL, LP FIC ELL) - Set during World War II, an unforgettable work of historical fiction about love, war, family, and loyalty told in the voices of two women, generations apart, who find themselves connected by a mysterious and valuable bottle of wine stolen by the Nazis. \*

**The Friend of the Family** by Dean Koontz (FIC KOO, LP FIC KOO) - A poignant exploration of family, sacrifice and the transformative power of love set against the backdrop of Depression-era America. It centers around a young girl named Alida who is liberated from a life of exploitation and finds herself on a journey of self-discovery and purpose. \*

**The Gales of November: The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald** by John U. Bacon (917.749 BAC) - With a masterful knowledge of Great Lakes history, Bacon explores the uncommon lives the sailors led, what likely caused the sinking, and the heartbreaking aftermath for those left behind. \*

**The Girl Who Saved the King of Sweden: A Novel** by Jonas Jonasson (FIC JON) - The funny and improbable story of a teenager who escapes South Africa with a fortune in diamonds and somehow ends up in league with a pair of Swedish twins intent on kidnapping the king.

**The Griffin Sisters' Greatest Hits** by Jennifer Weiner (FIC WEI, LP FIC WEI, cd FIC WEI) - A story of survival, the kind that doesn't come in dramatic bursts but slow, everyday resilience. It's a dazzling and heart-bruising story about fame, family, forgiveness, and the fierce, messy love between sisters. \*

**The Happiest Man on Earth: The Beautiful Life of an Auschwitz Survivor** by Eddie Jaku (940.5318 JAK) - A first-hand account from a Holocaust survivor who shares his journey through Nazi concentration camps and his remarkable choice to embrace gratitude and kindness despite unimaginable horrors, offering wisdom on living a beautiful life. \*

### **A History of the World in 6 Glasses**

by Tom Standage (394.12 STA) - Beer, wine, spirits, coffee, tea, and Coca-Cola: these six beverages turn out to be much more than just ways to quench thirst. Learn the story of humanity from the Stone Age to the twenty-first century through each era's signature refreshment.

**Home Before Dark: A Novel** by Riley Sager (FIC SAG) - A masterful blend of supernatural horror and psychological thriller, following Maggie Holt as she returns to the infamous Victorian house that inspired her father's bestselling haunted house memoir.

**How Civil Wars Start: And How to Stop Them** by Barbara F. Walter (303.64 WAL) - A leading political scientist sounds the alarm on the rising threat of civil war in the United States and other democracies, providing a framework to understand and prevent it.

**Inner Space: A Novel** by Jakub Szamalek (FIC SZA) - American and Russian astronauts are trapped together in the International Space Station as war breaks out in Ukraine and life support functions begin to fail in this action-packed technothriller that ripples with tension and danger. ☺

**In the Garden of Beasts** by Erik Larson (943.086 LAR, LP 946.083 LAR, cd 943.086 LAR) - The gripping story of how the first American ambassador to Hitler's Germany, and his family, navigate a world during the Nazi regime's rise to power. A work that speaks volumes about why the world did not recognize the grave threat posed by Hitler until Berlin, and Europe, were awash in blood and terror.

**It Came from the Closet** by Joe Vallese (791.43 VAL) - A fantastic collection of diverse queer perspectives and analysis of classic horror films, new and old. A must-read for horror fans.

**A Killing in Amish Country** by Gregg Olsen (364.1 OLS) - From one of this country's favorite true crime writers comes this unsettling story of a man who committed murder and then used his charm and his power as a man of God to exploit his congregants and satisfy his sexual obsession.

**Lazarus: The Second Coming of David Bowie** by Alexander Larman (B BOW) - With new and exclusive interviews with the musicians, filmmakers, and cultural figures who worked with and befriended Bowie throughout the period from his commercial failure to his final masterpiece, Lazarus is the definitive account of the previously overlooked and fascinating latter half of a great and distinguished career.

**Life, and Death, and Giants: A Novel** by Ron Rindo (FIC RIN, LP FIC RIN) - A moving novel set in Wisconsin about a boy born weighing 18 pounds who grows to be nearly eight feet tall. Raised within an Amish community, he is discovered by a football coach, leading to a story of faith, family, and extraordinary life events. \*

**The Lilac People: A Novel** by Milo Todd (FIC TOD) - A transgender man fights for the survival of his community and loved ones during World War II. It unearths an essential chapter in transgender history, one long obscured by stigma and oppression.

**A Lot to Unpack** by Portia Macintosh (FIC MAC, LP FIC MAC) - Set against the backdrop of the bustling world of a dating app company, this romcom offers a fresh take on the formula blending humor, heart, and a touch of intrigue.

**The Mad Wife: A Novel** by Meagan Church (FIC CHU, LP FIC CHU) - A piercing portrait of a young mother unraveling in the grip of 1950s suburbia, where Jell-O molds collapse, dishwashers invade, and card games with neighbors turn into emotional battlefields. An unflinching and evocative portrait of a wife and mother, with a carefully crafted life, gradually losing herself and seeking a way back. \*

**The Martha's Vineyard Beach and Book Club** by Martha Hall Kelly (FIC KEL, LP FIC KEL) - Inspired by true events, two sisters living on Martha's Vineyard during World War II find hope in the power of storytelling when they start a wartime book club for women. \*

**Miss Rumphius** by Barbara Cooney (JP COONEY) - Miss Rumphius was a real person who genuinely spread her love in the most tangible way; by spreading beautiful lupine seeds far and wide in the state of Maine.

**A Mountain to the North, a Lake to the South, Paths to the West, a River to the East** by Laszlo Krasznahorakai (FIC KRA) - The grandson of a prince seeks a mythical garden that haunts his every waking moment.

**My Brigadista Year** by Katherine Paterson (J PAT) - This story follows a young Cuban teenager as she volunteers for Fidel Castro's national literacy campaign and travels into the impoverished countryside to teach others how to read.

**The Orchard** by Peter Heller (FIC HEL, LP FIC HEL) - A mother and daughter navigate love, loss, and growth, guided by memory and the land they tend. Explores how ordinary life can harbor extraordinary resilience, and how companionship can sustain us through hard times. \*

**The Poppy Fields** by Nikki Erlick (FIC ERL, LP FIC ERL) - A high-concept speculative novel that explores the path of grief and healing, unique to every person, posing the questions: How do we heal in the wake of great loss? How far are we willing to go to be healed? \*

**Promise Me Sunshine** by Cara Bastone (FIC BAS, LP FIC BAS) - The turbulent journey of a twenty-eight-year-old nanny living in New York City as she struggles to survive after the death of her best friend. Begins as a chaotic and sardonic portrait of grief and transforms into a tender story of healing, unexpected friendship, and gradual self-discovery.

**A Resistance History of the United States** by Tad Stoermer (303.484 STO) - An insightful understanding of how organized resistance movements confronted violence and authority, and attempted to reform structural changes for a better future in America.

**Resistance, Rebellion, and Death** by Albert Camus (844.914 CAM) - A collection of letters and speeches revealing the author's innermost thoughts on war, justice, religion, and the human condition.

**Say You'll Remember Me** by Abby Jimenez (FIC JIM, LP FIC JIM) - A veterinarian with Greek god looks and a woman share an incredible date, but timing proves impossible. Despite agreeing to forget each other, their connection proves unforgettable.

**Sister, Sinner: The Miraculous Life and Mysterious Disappearance of Aimee Semple McPherson** by Claire Hoffman (269.2 HOF) - Shines a bright light on the life and times of the colorful 1920s evangelist whose spellbinding preaching and healing services drew thousands to her Los Angeles temple. \*

**Society of Lies: A Novel** by Lauren Ling Brown (FIC BRO, LP FIC BRO) - This gripping thriller follows Maya as she returns to Princeton for her sister's graduation, only to be thrust into a chilling mystery surrounding her sister's death and a secret society she knows all too well. ☺ \*

**The Stolen Marriage: A Novel** by Diane Chamberlain (FIC CHA, LP FIC CHA) - Follows a nurse in 1944 North Carolina as she leaves her fiancé to marry a mysterious stranger, and hide an out-of-wedlock pregnancy \*

**Stopping by Jungle on a Snowy Evening** by Richard T. Morris (JP MORRIS) - Take Robert Frost's words off the shelf, give them a dusting, add a kid and a hippopotamus, and you get this delightful, charming and clever picture book.

**The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row** by Anthony Ray Hinton (B HIN) - An urgent, emotional memoir from one of the longest-serving condemned death row inmates to be found innocent in America. Hinton lived under the threat of death for 30 years while an unjust system that refused to acknowledge mistakes failed him repeatedly.

**Syme's Letter Writer** by Rachel Syme (808.6 SYM) - A literary jaunt in praise of the lost art of letter writing that explores a cultural history and the undeniable thrill of old-school correspondence from journalist and cultural critic Rachel Syme.

**That Last Carolina Summer** by Karen White (FIC WHI, LP FIC WHI) - A Southern family drama about sisterhood and confronting the past. A story that makes you want to stop and savor the truths weaved into every twist and turn, even as you race to discover all the secrets. \*

**Theo of Golden: A Novel** by Allen Levi (FIC LEV, LP FIC LEV) - A mysterious stranger arrives in a small Southern city, buying portraits of residents from a local coffeehouse and returning them to their subjects, sparking stories, friendships, and connection. A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, and the power of creative generosity. ☺ \*

**Three Days in June** by Anne Tyler (FIC TYL, LP FIC TYL) - A delightfully assured exploration of the way sorrow and joy meld together in the crucible of family life. The truths of human nature, yearning, envy, sadness, and the complexities of love in these vulnerable characters show us just how fragile life can be. \*

**The Threepenny Opera** by Bertolt Brecht (832.9 BRE) - Set in London's Soho district, the opera explores themes of love, betrayal, and class struggle, with characters navigating a world marked by ethical ambiguity and self-interest. A seminal work that blends elements of drama and operatic music to critique society and its moral values.

**When the Angels Left the Old Country** by Sacha Lamb (Y LAM) - A poignant, funny, adventurous story filled with Jewish folklore, dark realities of the immigrant experience, and the blossoming of unexpected love. ☺

**Wings: The Story of a Band on the Run** by Paul McCartney (782.42 MCC) - Recounts now with a half-century's wisdom, the musical odyssey taken by a man searching for his identity in the aftermath of The Beatles' breakup.

**The Year of Less** by Cait Flanders (153.8 FLA) - Chronicles the author's year-long shopping ban, decluttering journey, and personal transformation, discovering that reducing consumption led to greater fulfillment and meaningful life changes.



### Books in a Series

Listed below are books that were also selected but are part of a series. The title of the book recommended appears in **green** and the other books in the series appear in black print.

**The Academy Series** by Elin Hilderbrand (FIC HIL, LP FIC HIL)

1. **The Academy** - At prestigious Tiffin Academy, a dramatic year unfolds when scandalous secrets spread through a new app called ZipZap, affecting students and staff alike. \*
2. **The Thoroughbreds** (releases 9/15/26)

**Dr. Wren Muller Series** by Alaina Urquhart (FIC URQ)

1. **The Butcher and the Wren** - A forensic pathologist is pitted against a ruthless serial killer in a thrilling race against time, where the autopsy table holds the key to unraveling a chilling investigation.
2. **The Butcher Game**
3. **The Butcher Legacy**

**Mouse's Adventure Series** by Alice Melvin (JP MELVIN)

1. **Mouse's Wood** - Mouse's journey from friend to friend maps out the changes in seasons from January through to December.
2. **Mouse on the River**
3. **Mouse by the Sea**
4. **Mouse Goes to the Mountains**

**Riley Thorn Series** by Lucy Score (FIC SCO, LP FIC SCO)

1. **The Dead Guy Next Door** - A divorced woman with psychic visions becomes a murder suspect, while a flirtatious private investigator helps her solve the case.
2. **The Corpse in the Closet**
3. **The Blast from the Past**
4. **The Body in the Backyard**

