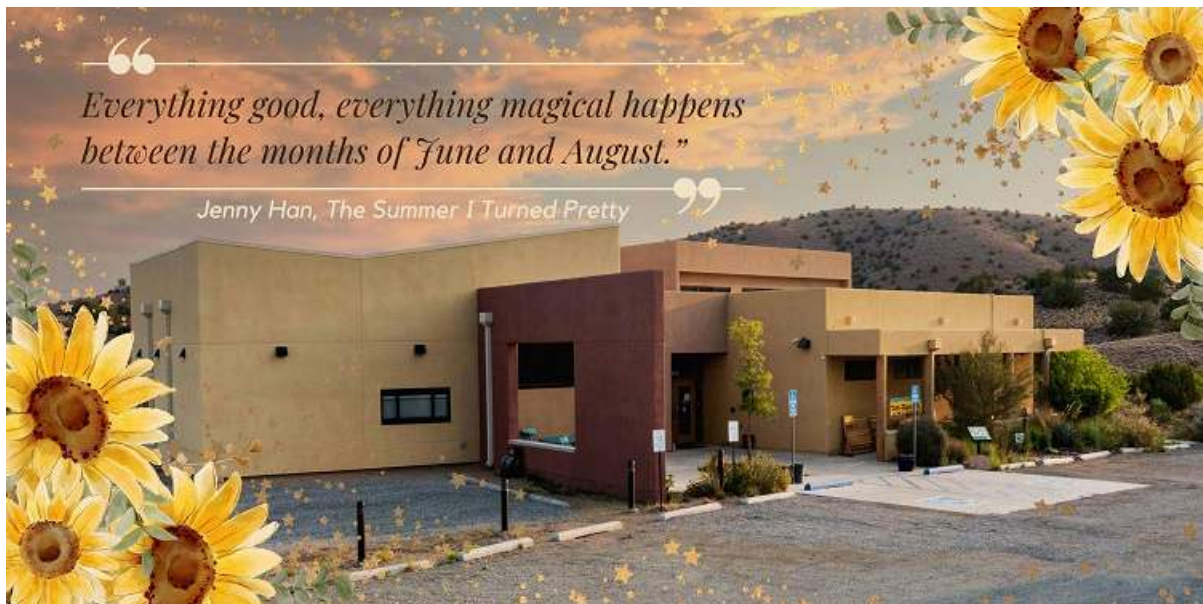


PLACITAS *Community* LIBRARY



NEWSLETTER JULY/AUG 2023



PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY HOURS

SUN: 1 - 4
TUES: 10 - 7
WED/THURS/SAT: 10 - 5

ADULT PROGRAMS

- **AUG 12 (2 PM):** "Breathing Stone: Living Small in a Southwest Village" with Betsy James (*From July 8, "Breathing Stone" [\$17] will be available for purchase with proceeds benefiting the library*)
 - **AUG 23 (10:30 AM):** "Alzheimer's and Dementia" with Craig Coleman, Program Manager of the Alzheimer's Association, New Mexico Chapter (*Note: this event is on a Wednesday*)
 - **SEPT 8-30:** HOMEscape Solutions Design Workshop (*pre-registration required*)
-

ART SUBMISSIONS, RECEPTIONS & EXHIBITS

- **Through JULY 6:** Exhibit: "Born to be Wild!"
 - **JULY 1-AUG 6:** Submission window for "About Women" exhibit
 - **JULY 14 (5-6:30 PM):** Artist Reception: "Art Inspired by Art" (exhibit will be displayed July 8-Aug 31)
-

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Summer Reading Program "All Together Now" continues in July:

- **JULY 6 (12 PM):** The Wonders on Wheels Mobile Museum will visit with two exhibits: the landscapes of New Mexico artist, Gustav Baumann, and marionettes
 - **JULY 15 (1 PM):** Sing All Together Now with Aspen Black, cowgirl, teaching artist and performer
 - **JULY 22 (1 PM):** Let's Polka with Mike Schneider of Pint Size Polkas
 - **JULY 29 (1 PM):** Final Event - Playing Together! Let's celebrate the last day of the Summer Reading Program with puzzles, games, coloring, Legos, and La Loteria (Mexican Bingo)
-

RECURRING EVENTS

- **Volunteer Coffee & Connect** (2nd Sat of every other month at 9 AM): Meet our volunteers, enjoy coffee and snacks, and learn about all the different ways you could be part of the library (*NOTE: next event is on Aug 12*)
- **Chess Club** (Every Sat at 10 AM and every Tues at 7 PM): Adults and children are welcomed
- **Drumming Circle** (1st Sun of each month at 4 PM): Bring your own drum or use one of the many we have
- **Social Justice Discussion Group** (3rd Tues of each month at 1 PM): Meet to discuss issues of social justice and how we can make a difference in the world today!
- **Dungeons & Dragons Group:** Email Anne Frost (annegrey3@gmail.com) for more information





*Meetings are held the 3rd Thursday
of each month at 6:00 PM in the
Gracie Lee Community Room. The
public is invited and welcome to
attend. Agendas are posted [here](#)
and at the library.*

**UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS:
THURS, JULY 20, 6:00 PM
THURS, AUG 17, 6:00 PM**

PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY

 *Volunteer Coffee & Connect* 

AUGUST 12 at 9:00 AM

Gather to learn more about volunteering at the library every 2nd Saturday of every other month at 9:00 AM. Meet our volunteers, enjoy coffee and snacks, and learn about all the different ways you could be part of the library.



Network by studiostock at www.freepik.com

“

Books and summertime go together.

~ LISA SCHROEDER, I HEART YOU, YOU HAUNT ME

”



One of our Agaves (Century Plants) is About to Bloom!

We invite you to come enjoy the flowering through early July and guess the day of its first blossom! Winner of the contest will be announced in the next newsletter. Note that the plant is pollinated by bats, so do not be alarmed if you visit in the early evening and see a few flying in and out.



NEWS FROM YOUR LIBRARY BOARD

By Lynnette Fields, PCL Board Chair



Please join me in welcoming Placitas Community Library's (PCL) newest Board member, Margaret (Maggie) Huber. She joins our current board, Susan Brown, Doris Fields, Jillian Gonzales (Secretary), Jill Kennedy, Linda Lucero Hughes, Kate Miller, Harriet Neal (Treasurer), and Nancy Southern (Vice-Chair).

Margaret (Maggie) Huber



I was born and raised in rural Western Pennsylvania near Pittsburgh. I have lived in New Mexico for nearly 9 years, 3 ½ of those in Placitas. I am now retired from a lifelong career in higher education administration and teaching since I graduated from college with a degree in chemistry in the early 1970s. My work and love for education have been the impetus to serve on the library Board.

I have lived in many areas of the country. Professionally, I served as president of three higher education institutions in Pennsylvania, California, and South Dakota, and as vice president for advancement in New Jersey. I also worked for the University of New Mexico and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe in

Albuquerque. My degrees are from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. My late husband of 20 years was a practicing attorney in Pennsylvania, California, and New Mexico.

My hobbies include gardening and nine canine companions over 30 years – Border Collies, Poodles, and a Jack Russell Terrier (terrorist). I now live with Blessing, my last Border Collie from Scotland.

Due to other commitments, Philip Clark has decided to resign from the Board. He is now working with the Menaul Historical Library in its move to new facilities and the general promotion of its materials and services to the academic and general communities interested in the Presbyterian and Catholic history of the Southwest. Many thanks to Philip for his three plus years on the Board, and best wishes in all his future endeavors.

If you have been to the library or driven by in the past few weeks, you may have noticed lots of activity up on the roof. Sandoval County has contracted a roofing company to repair the parapets and replace the skylights. During the process, it was discovered that the existing skylights were installed

incorrectly. This has turned into a much bigger job than originally anticipated and may require modifying the library's open hours while the new skylights are being installed. Unfortunately, we don't know when this will happen or how long it will take, but we will try very hard to make this as undistruptive as possible.

The County will also be replacing the HVAC in the original part of the library soon. Again, we don't know when this will happen, or how long it will take. We may need to close parts of the library during the installation, but we should be able to continue most services. We have requested that the County give us as much lead time as possible for planning purposes.



(L-R): Nancy Holley, Lynnette Fields, Kay Naranjo

In 2022, the Placitas Studio Tour (PST) and PCL Boards entered into a pilot agreement that PCL would host the first PST Preview Exhibit beginning in 2023. The agreement benefited the PCL with a guaranteed donation of \$1,000, and in return the PST artists would receive 100% of the sale price of any art sold during the preview exhibit.

The exhibit was on display in the Gracie Lee Community Room from April 29 through May 21, including during the PST, which is traditionally held over Mother's Day weekend. During the two-day studio tour, the preview exhibit welcomed approximately seventy-five people both days to view the art and review the map showing the location of each studio, and had an opportunity to visit the beautiful new addition to PCL.

The PST Preview Exhibit was coordinated by Colleen Z. Gregoire, the PCL Art Committee, Jack Chiasson (PST Exhibit Coordinator), Nancy Holley (PST Board Chair), as well as many others whose talents helped make the PST Preview Exhibit a resounding success.

At our June Board meeting, Nancy Holley and Kay Naranjo (Treasurer) presented the PCL Board a check for \$1,000 as a donation from the Studio Tour. In addition, the PCL Board voted to make this PST

Preview Exhibit an annual event, hosted by the PCL in the Gracie Lee Community Room. Going forward, a donation of \$1,000 from the PST to PCL will be given after the close of each of the PST Preview Exhibits. On behalf of all the artists participating in the PST, Nancy Holley thanked the PCL Board and the PCL Art Committee for their continued support. "The PST looks forward to working together with PCL and the PCL Art Committee as we all celebrate the amazing artistic community of Placitas."

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Artwork created by piksupenstar at www.freepik.com



DISCUSSION GROUP

Meet to discuss issues of social justice and how we can make a difference in the world today!

Please contact Anne at annegrey3@gmail.com for more information

Meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 1 PM in the Collin Meeting Room



"Surely, in the light of history, it is more intelligent to hope rather than to fear, to try rather than not to try. For one thing we know beyond all doubt: Nothing has ever been achieved by the person who says, 'It can't be done.'"

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

Breathing Stone

Living Small in a Southwest Village



Betsy James

Breathing Stone

LIVING SMALL IN A SOUTHWEST VILLAGE

with Betsy James

AUGUST 12 | 2 PM





“Time is passing, better pay attention to the curve of the red road beside the field of yellow grass. The western horizon is white, Cabezón is cloaked in snow and hung above the yellow-brown-russet valley.”

For four years in the 1990s, writer, artist, and backcountry hiker Betsy James shared an old adobe in the village of Placitas at the northern foot of the Sandias. Of that sojourn she says:

*“I had worked for years with cultures very like those that had shaped Placitas—in Mexico, Albuquerque, Zuni Pueblo. I decided I would regard each day as I would a hike off-trail in new country: I would *notice*. I would give this place my best mortal attention, and record what I could. This book is the result.”*

Breathing Stone is a cache of warm, minute observations of nature and neighbors—the dogs and birds, cats and children, weather and weeds of rural New Mexico. It is both a small haven and a

quiet suggestion that we observe our own lives, nudging us to catch the details so easy to forget. It is illustrated with field sketches from James’ own journal.

“Breathing Stone: Living Small in a Southwest Village immerses you in the magic of the New Mexico desert. Mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, and plants spring to life through the sharp, observant eye of Betsy James. This book is an unexpected gem sparkling in sunlight.”

~ Judith Schiess Avila, author of *Code Talker: The First and Only Memoir by One of the Original Navajo Code Talkers of WWII*

“Transcendentalist poet and iconoclast Henry David Thoreau wrote in the 1850s that ‘*The question is not what you look at, but what you see.*’ [James has] bested Thoreau, in my opinion, with a keener eye and a broader sensitivity to her environment. This book is a genuine addition to New Mexico literature.”

~ Don Bullis, historian, New Mexico Centennial Author

Betsy James is the author-illustrator of seventeen books. Her latest novel, *Roadsouls*, was a finalist for the World Fantasy Award. A watercolorist, she is represented by Nedra Matteucci Galleries, Santa Fe. She leads writers’ workshops in the University of New Mexico Honors College and lives in Albuquerque’s North Valley. Learn more at www.betsyjames.com.

PCL is delighted to welcome Betsy James back to our community on August 12 at 2 PM. Betsy will share stories of her time in Placitas and be happy to sign copies of *Breathing Stone: Living Small in a Southwest Village*. The book will be available for purchase (\$17) at the library starting July 8, with proceeds benefiting PCL.



**BECOME
PART OF
PLACITAS
HISTORY!**

PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY
BRICK FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

There's still time to participate in PCL's Brick Fundraising Campaign! We invite you to become a part of history with us. A brick can be engraved with your name, business, family, friend, or in memory of a loved one. Brick purchases will help pay for operational expenses of the library, which include utilities, maintenance/office supplies, and other expenses that keep the library building open.

Visit our [website](#) to learn more about our Brick Campaign and request the engraving for your brick. If you have any questions, please call (505) 867-3355. If you'd prefer to submit a paper form, please see the library help desk for assistance.



DRUMMING
CIRCLE

JOIN US!

FIRST SUNDAY OF
EACH MONTH AT 4 PM

Bring your own drum or use
one of the many we have!

*Children are welcomed but parents should be
aware this is an adult, meditation-like experience

ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA

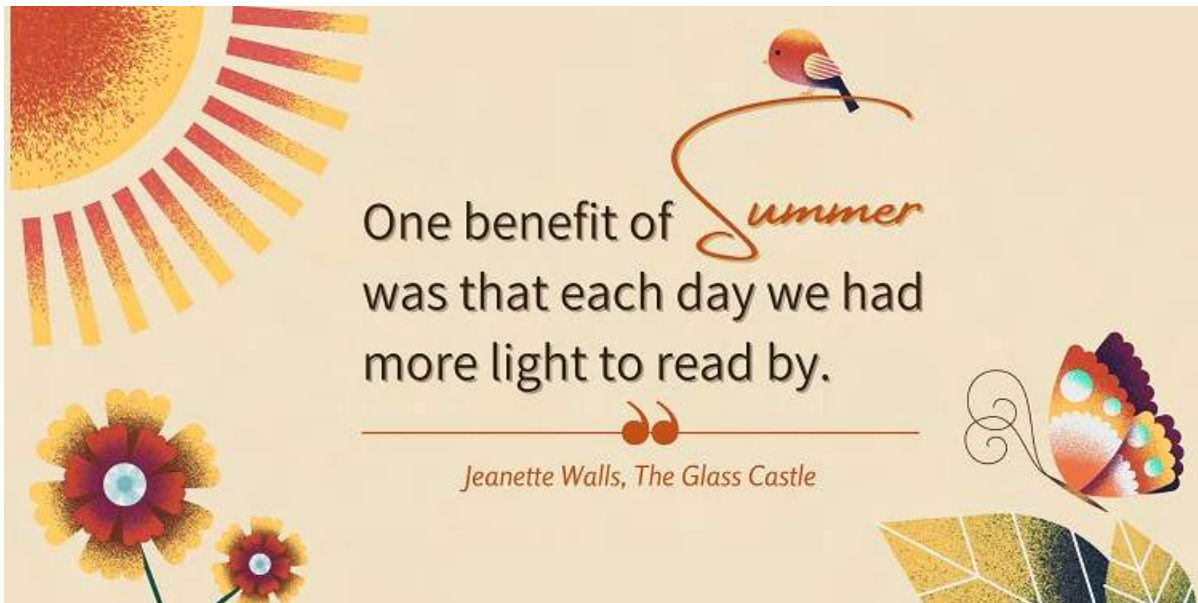
with Craig Coleman, Program Manager,
Alzheimer's Association, New Mexico Chapter

AUGUST 23 | 10:30 AM

Worldwide, 55 million people are living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Alzheimer's is a degenerative brain disease and the most common form of dementia. Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an overall term that describes a group of symptoms. **Join Craig Coleman, Program Manager of the Alzheimer's Association, New Mexico Chapter, on August 23 from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM in PCL's Gracie Lee Room. (Please note that this program occurs on a Wednesday.)**

He will describe typical age-related memory, thinking or behavior changes; outline common warning signs of Alzheimer's and dementia; discuss the tips for approaching someone about memory concerns; explain the importance of early detection and benefits of diagnosis; identify possible tests and assessments for the diagnostic process; name resources available through the Alzheimer's Association.

Lastly, there will be a discussion about healthy living for brain and body. Whether you attend for yourself or on behalf of others, be sure to make the time to attend this very special program.



One benefit of *Summer*
was that each day we had
more light to read by.

Jeanette Walls, The Glass Castle



Why is HOMEscape Design Solutions perfect for you right now? Attend this 8-session, hands-on workshop to learn how to create your personal dream "HOMEscape." Master Gardeners will inspire you to complete your landscape project as you learn the tools of site planning.

This unique workshop – an enhancement to the Master Gardener program and also open to the public – promises to *inspire, empower, and encourage* participants to successfully plan and execute their dream landscape. Your team of Master Gardeners and participants will visit your garden to provide suggestions and ideas for YOUR dream landscape! Also available is a one-on-one consultation from the expert instructors and lifetime Master Gardeners.

Course work is presented by Veteran Master Gardeners and focuses on artistic design and includes aspects of permaculture (an innovative framework for creating sustainable ways of living), xeriscaping (a style of landscaping and gardening that reduces or eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation), Southwest native plants that thrive in our harsh environment, plus hardscape essentials, raised bed gardening, and much more. More details available in the

schedule below.

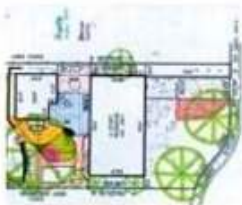
Sessions will be held in the Grace Lee Conference Room. Class is limited to 20 participants and fills up fast. There is a \$30 fee for workshop materials, payable at the first class. For information or to register, please [contact us](#).



2023 HOMescape Solutions Design Workshop

Materials kit fee: \$30

Space is limited and pre-registration is required



SITE PLAN



BEFORE



AFTER

CLASS 1	<i>September 8, 2023 6:30-9:30 PM</i>	HOMescape Solutions: The Vision and the reality
CLASS 2	<i>September 9, 2023 9:30 AM-12:30 PM</i>	Get Perspective: Training the Eye, Native Plants, and Introduction to Water Harvesting
CLASS 3	<i>September 15, 2023 6:30-9:30 PM</i>	Moving From a Yard to a Garden - the Next Step in Planning Your Garden Space: Site Planning and Creating a Sacred Space
CLASS 4	<i>September 16, 2023 9:30 AM-3:00 PM</i>	Go Local (Site Visits): Visit each other's gardens, then meet to discuss what we learned
CLASS 5	<i>September 22, 2023 6:30-9:30 PM</i>	Name It and Claim It: More native plants, and all about composting
CLASS 6	<i>September 23, 2023 9:30 AM-12:30 PM</i>	Expert Access: A valuable one-on-one with the Master Gardeners
CLASS 7	<i>September 29, 2023 6:30-9:30 PM</i>	Other Great Garden Ideas: Gardening for pollinators, raised beds, straw bale gardening, plus more water harvesting. Open to the public.
CLASS 8	<i>September 30, 2023 9:30 AM-12:30 PM</i>	Completion: Come together to present your dreamscape vision and have a potluck lunch

For more information and to pre-register, contact homescapeinfo2021@yahoo.com



PCL Landscaping: Then and Now

I recently received some 2010–2012 photos from a former Landscaping Committee Chair/member (thank you Lolly Jones!), as the landscaping around the then “newly-constructed” library building was planted. So, I thought some comparison photos were in order.

High Country Garden (front): Originally designed, planted, and donated by the late David Salman of High Country Gardens. The original plantings are documented by the permanent sign located near the library entrance walkway. The shrubs have grown enormously (even after much pruning), and some of the plants were either short-lived, out-competed by others, or destroyed during the recent renovation/building expansion (during connections to the underground septic tank located underneath this garden). We’re slowly replacing what’s appropriate, and adding some new plants.



Newly-completed PCL building, 2010



PCL today after 2022 expansion

Entryway "round": The soil/base in this "round" is quite difficult, and we're hopeful that we're finally making progress. So far, the only plants that have managed to survive (though not necessarily thrive) are the Chinese pistache tree, a few Mexican evening primrose, and some Yerba mansa.



Entry "round," 2012



Entry "round" today

East side: Notice how all the tree/shrub plantings have grown (Netleaf hackberry, piñons, New Mexico privet (or olive), Apache plumes, etc.)...nice!



Netleaf hackberry, 2010



Netleaf hackberry today



East side bench area, 2011



East side bench area today

Bill Dunmire Memorial Garden/Labyrinth: From a somewhat disturbed area (after construction of the leach field) to a beautiful, community-constructed labyrinth with naturalized, native landscape.



Southeast landscape, 2012



Labyrinth area today

Many thanks to the PCL Landscape Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs for their dedication and vision, and to Committee members, donors, and volunteers who helped make it all happen:

- Bill Dunmire, Chair

- Lolly Jones, Chair
- Suzanne Maxwell, Chair
- Suzanne Maxwell/Rebecca Pulford, Chairs
- Rebecca Pulford/Dawn Foster, Chairs



“
 And so with the sunshine
 and the great bursts of
 leaves growing on the
 trees, just as things grow
 in fast movies, I had that
 familiar conviction that
 life was beginning over
 again with the summer.

”
F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby



“We must reject not only the stereotypes that others hold of us, but also the stereotypes that we hold of

ourselves.” ~ Shirley Chisholm

Now accepting submissions through August 6.

Mother, daughter, wife, partner, friend, dreamer, dancer, scientist, sportswoman, artist, performer, leader, legislator, litigator, adventurer, goddess, warrior, mystic, and muse. Over time women have embodied all of these roles and more, either with the support of male counterparts or despite the efforts of some to limit their achievements. No challenge has been too great.

As Governor Ann Richards once opined: “Ginger Rogers did everything that Fred Astaire did. She just did it backward and in high heels.”

For PCL's October 2023 exhibition at the Lee Community Room, artists are asked to visually comment on the role of women (or of a specific woman or imaginary composite), whether portraying their extraordinary achievements or thwarted ambition, historical role or current challenges in the face of misogyny and racial animus.



(Clockwise from top left): Lee Small pillow ala Miro, the Miro inspiration, Katrina Lasko (blue), the Monet inspiration, David Croxton Vermillion Croxton Floret wood bowl (Back), and the Native basket inspiration

As you might suspect, artists often garner inspiration from other artists, either their contemporaries or historical figures, artists from similar cultural backgrounds or perhaps “exotic” others. They may make a direct effort to paint staccato landscapes like Van Gogh or energetic abstract canvases like Jackson Pollock or decorative patterning like Gustav Klimt. Or, perhaps, after a trip to an art museum or gallery, there is a more subtle impact that makes itself known over time. They look at their own work and acknowledge the unintended impact of another’s style.

Visual memory is a funny thing.

Beginning July 8, PCL presents an exhibition in the Gracie Lee Community Room that links over two dozen artists to the artist or style that inspired their efforts. As always, works will be available for purchase with a percentage of the price benefiting the library. **An artists' reception will be held Friday, July 14 from 5-6:30. The exhibition continues through August 31.**

For additional information contact [Geri Verble](#) or [Rebecca Cohen](#).



JULY 2023: Children's Summer Reading Program, "All Together Now," Continues
Open to the public and free of charge!

Our theme is "All Together Now" emphasizing working, playing, and living together with friendship and kindness. We have four exciting programs for your children in July emphasizing art, music, and games.



- **Thursday, July 6 at 12 PM:** The Wonders on Wheels Mobile Museum will visit with two exhibits: a showcase of the landscape paintings of New Mexican artist, Gustav Baumann, and a display of marionettes. The museum will be available from 1–4 PM on the west side of the library's parking lot. Children who are participating in our reading challenge may stop in at 12 PM to have their reading logs checked and receive their raffle tickets. A tent will be set up near the mobile museum with tables for children to make their marionettes after viewing the exhibit. All materials will be provided. Kids, don't forget to select a book and participate in the raffle drawing in the Gracie Lee Meeting Room before going home. Please make sure your attendance is recorded too! Adult patrons are welcomed to view the exhibits as well.
- **Saturday, July 15 at 1 PM:** Sing All Together Now with Aspen Black, cowgirl, teaching artist and performer. Sing, dance, and read aloud in this fun program about friendship, kindness, and unity.
- **Saturday, June 22 at 1 PM:** Let's Polka with Mike Schneider of Pint Size Polkas. Learn about and enjoy the fun that is polka and the accordion!
- **Saturday, July 29 at 1 PM (Final Event):** Playing Together! Let's celebrate the last day of the Summer Reading Program with puzzles, games, coloring, Legos, and La Loteria (Mexican Bingo). Enjoy refreshments and receive your prize bag for participating. Special prizes awarded to our top readers!



Each week your child will receive a new book for attending these programs. There will also be additional opportunities to receive prizes including participating in our reading and kind deed challenges. Questions? Call the library at (505) 867-3355 or visit our [website](#).

August 2023: Children's Programming will take a break in August and will resume on September 16 at 1 PM with an art program provided by artist, Karen Shatar and the Placitas Artist Series. Children will decorate a polished glass balloon to celebrate the upcoming Balloon Fiesta. More information coming soon!



Our 2023 Summer Reading Program (SRP)

This summer's theme is "All Together Now" and emphasizes working, playing, and living together with friendship and kindness. In addition to the many fun events, the SRP encourages you to:

READ books (or be read to!),
RECORD the titles in your log,
REMEMBER to bring the logs to each event, so that you can receive a...
RAFFLE ticket!



There is also a **KIND DEED LOG** where you can record all the many nice things you do for those around you. There will be **PRIZES** for your participation, including a new book at each event you attend!

Online registration begins in **MAY** at www.placitaslibrary.com
 You can also email us to sign-up for all the latest at childrens@placitaslibrary.com



JUNE

SAT 6/10 - 1 PM
Harnessing the Wind
Stephanie and Walt Witowski

Listen to "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind" by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer. Then use the scientific method. to build your own windmill!

TH 6/15 - 1 PM
Protecting Animal Habitats
ABQ Biopark Educators

Interactive activities and maybe... some live animals!

SAT 6/24 - 1 PM
Family STEM
iExplora!

Hands-on STEM activities for the entire fam!



JULY

TH 7/6 - 12-4 PM
Wonders on Wheels
Mobile Museum

Enjoy two visiting exhibits: the landscapes of NM artist Gustav Baumann and marionettes! Afterwards, kids can make their own marionettes in the library!



SAT 7/15 - 1 PM
Sing All Together Now!
Aspen Black, teaching artist/performer

Sing, dance, read aloud in this fun program about friendship, kindness, unity.

SAT 7/22 - 1 PM
Let's Polka!
Mike Schneider, Pint Size Polkas

Learn about and enjoy the fun that is polka and the accordion!

FINAL EVENT:
SAT 7/29 - 1 PM
Playing Together

Let's celebrate the last day of the SRP with puzzles, games, coloring, Legos, and la loteria (Mexican bingo)!

Enjoy refreshments and receive your **PRIZE** bag for participating. Special Prizes awarded to our top readers!

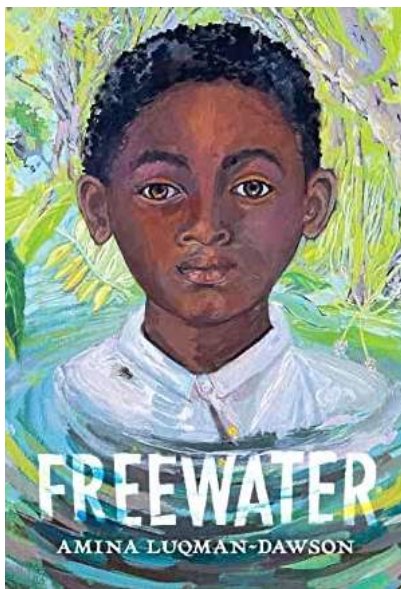
453 hwy 165
 505.867.3355
placitaslibrary.com

CHILDREN'S BOOK NEWS

By Nancy Guist
Children's Collection Coordinator



“All Together Now” is the theme of this year’s summer reading program. Whether it be within the confines of a family, a group of friends, or a wider community, the bonds that are formed and the roles each member plays can contribute to positive outcomes. Each of the books below center around community and the vital importance of individuals collaborating to achieve success.



Freewater

by Amina Luqman-Dawson

2023 Newbery Medal winner

Suggested ages: 10 years and up

Inspired by the Great Dismal Swamp of Virginia and North Carolina where runaway slaves often found refuge, *Freewater* is a tribute to those whose bravery, ingenuity, and sense of community found escape there.

Twelve-year old Homer along with his younger sister, Ada, have run from Southerland Plantation, involuntarily leaving their mother behind. Soon they find themselves immersed in a mysterious swamp winding their way through vines, secret doorways, and across a “skybridge” before discovering Freewater, a community of runaway slaves.

Here they are taken in by strangers who become like family. Each individual of Freewater has a unique set of attributes, both positive and negative, but together they make up a working society. When a threat is discovered that could decimate their community, Homer is determined to rescue his mother, who remains at Southerland, and contribute to the security of Freewater.

Skillfully narrated, *Freewater*'s story is told in the many voices of its inhabitants from spunky Sanzi who acts before thinking and is determined to be an admired hero, to Billy, whose stutter and shyness, holds him back until he finds his vital role. Not only is *Freewater* a window to a segment of our country's history, but a fitting example of the phrase, “All Together Now.”

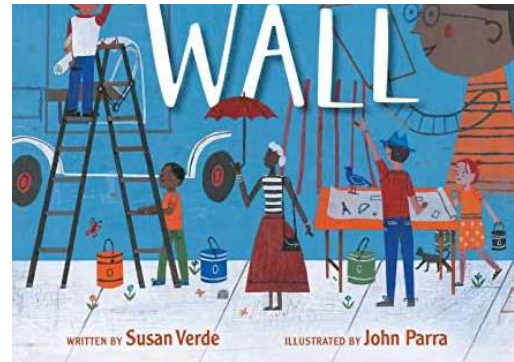
Hey Wall: A Story of Art and Community

by Susan Verde, illustrated by John Parra



Suggested ages: 4–8 years

Hey Wall illustrates that creating art can be a vehicle to bring community members together. The young boy, who is the book's narrator, addresses his neighborhood wall, commenting on its coldness and emptiness. He regrets that no one has taken care of it over the years. The wall has become sad and lonely in the midst of a vibrant neighborhood.



But the boy recognizes he has the power to change that – “I am a writer, a creator, a game changer, a wall changer.” With sketches and memories, family and friends are committed to be those “wall changers.” The wall is transformed into a colorful canvas reflecting the joys and imaginations of its community artists.

Verde and Parra's book is a paean to the power of individuals to bring about change when working together. And it is a motivator to look around and be aware of the wall art gracing various buildings the next time one is in a city, such as Albuquerque!



Harlem Grown: How One Big Idea Transformed a Neighborhood

by Tony Hillery, illustrated by Jessie Hartland

Suggested ages: 4–8 years

As in *Hey Wall*, the book, *Harlem Grown*, illustrates a community coming together to transform an unsightly spot in their neighborhood. In this case, it's an empty lot, the “haunted garden,” as a young neighborhood girl calls it, that had become a magnet for trash from old TVs to broken bottles.

Across the street was a public elementary school. When Mr. Tony became part of the school community, his imagination took off, seeing a different future for the “haunted garden.”

The school's students joined Mr. Tony in making his dream become a reality. They worked together as they emptied the lot of trash, added rich soil, and finally, planted seeds. It was a learning process, but at last they created a healthy garden on this once sad piece of land. And as they did, they learned about plants, soil, life cycles, nutrition, and most importantly, the joy of working together to create change.

In an end note to the reader, Hillery, the book's author and founder of “Harlem Grown,” writes that this first garden plot has now expanded to 12 sites in Harlem. What an inspiration for any community! **“All Together Now!”**

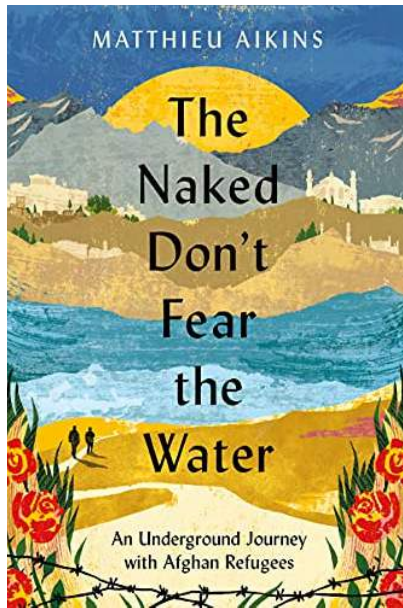
Susanne's Selections

*Reading Recommendations
By Susanne Domínguez*



Available for e-Checkout!

The titles in *Susanne's Selections* have been added to our [Online Catalog](#)
(which you can access with your library card).



The Naked Don't Fear the Water

by Matthieu Aikins

In Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist Matthieu Aikins' riveting and transporting non–fiction book, he narrates how he and Omar, his Afghan driver and translator, flee Afghanistan and escape to the West in 2016. Aikins was exhausted after seven years of wartime reporting in Kabul and planned to return to the U.S. Omar also wanted to leave Afghanistan, but since he didn't have the required documentation proving he worked for Aikins as a combat interpreter for U.S. troops, his application for a Special Immigrant Visa for entering the U.S. was denied. He was in imminent danger of being murdered, especially since he worked for the Americans.

Aikins was determined to help Omar leave Afghanistan, and he also thought the experience of masquerading as an immigrant would be informative and provide a firsthand, unique story about the harrowing

risks and resolve refugees face in order to immigrate to a country where they can achieve a stable life without the volatility of violence.

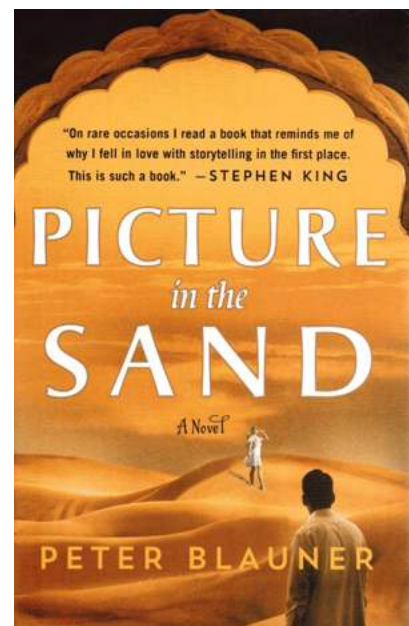
In planning their escape, danger existed everywhere and no one could be trusted. Practically everything depended on chance. The ever–intrepid Aikins, who possesses both a Canadian and a U.S. passport, was in danger of being kidnapped for ransom. He decides to pass himself off as an Afghan migrant. Fortunately, he states, since he is fluent in Dari, one of the more common languages, and has a dark complexion with dark hair, he was successful. At the beginning of their journey, Aikins is jailed, while Omar is beaten by border guards. Eventually, smugglers transport them to a migrant camp in Lesbos, a Greek island. Aikins' chronicle continues, describing their challenging passage to the West. I couldn't put down this extraordinary book and I hope all of you readers will feel the same! After reading it, I appreciated even more how fortunate I am to live in a country where I am not in constant fear of violence.

Picture in the Sand

by Peter Blauner

"On rare occasions I read a book that reminds me of why I fell in love with storytelling in the first place. This is such a book." ~ Stephen King

A phenomenal epic, *Picture in the Sand* is narrated by Ali Hassan, Alex's grandfather, via his impassioned letters to his grandson. In 2014, Egyptian– American Alex was accepted at an Ivy League college. His parents were absolutely thrilled. However, Alex became disillusioned with his life in the U.S. and changed his mind about attending college. He became involved with a Syrian terrorist group and joined their training camp, leaving a note for his family to never contact him again. The traumatic aftermath of 9/11, being called "Osama" and accused of being a terrorist by other people, caused him immense pain and anger, and he felt as if he didn't belong in the U.S. In addition, his father, a respected person, was erroneously arrested by the FBI for being a possible terrorist.



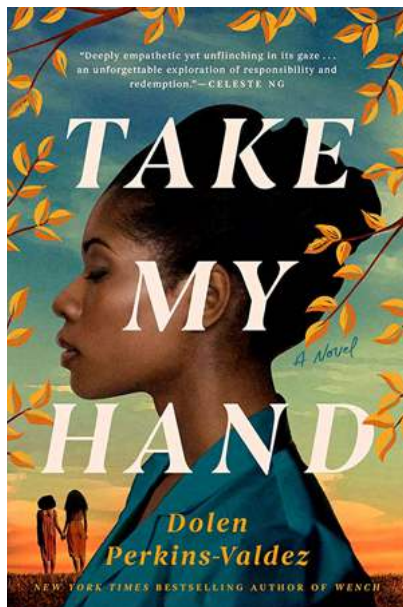
Ali implores Alex to continue to communicate with him. In return, he will relate a secret part of his life he has never discussed with anyone, including the details of how he was blinded in one eye. Not only does Ali hope his letters will resonate with his grandson and change his perspective, he also hopes Alex will recognize himself in his grandfather's past involvement in an insurgency and realize violence only begets more violence, and that he will return home.

Alex agrees and Ali proceeds to describe his early life and imprisonment during the 1950's in Egypt when he was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood attempted to assassinate Prime Minister Gamal Abdel Nasser because he would not institute "Sharia" law. Consequently, "a major crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood resulted, with hundreds of members imprisoned, tortured, and in several cases put to death."

Ali's account begins when he was a young man and an avid film buff. The renowned American film director, Cecil B. DeMille, arrives in Egypt to film the acclaimed *The Ten Commandments*, starring Charlton Heston. Amazingly, Ali secures a job as the director's assistant. I don't want to divulge too much or provide "spoilers," so you'll just have to read this extraordinary novel yourself! If not for an article I read mentioning Stephen King's comments regarding this book, I may never have considered reading this superb historical novel. Since many outstanding books are not included in the "bestseller" lists of major media, I infrequently review "bestsellers." They have already received a great deal of attention and publicity.

"People with good intentions but limited understanding are more dangerous than people with total ill will." ~ Martin Luther King

Since the following two notable books are complementary and such important reads, I chose to review both: *Take My Hand* by Dolan Perkins-Valdez and *Carte Blanche: The Erosion of Medical Consent* by Harriet Washington.



Take My Hand by Dolan Perkins-Valdez

This incredible, beautifully-written and well-researched historical novel examines gross issues of medical, racial, and class inequities. It is based on a 1973 lawsuit, *Relf v. Weinberger*, involving Minnie Lee and Mary Alice Relf, 12 and 14-year-old sisters who were sterilized without consent in Montgomery, Alabama. The story occurs just after the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 and a year after the U.S. government's report regarding the nightmarish "Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male" was publicized.

Twenty-three-year-old Civil Townsend is the daughter of the town physician, and as such lives an upper-class lifestyle. After she graduates from nursing school, she obtains a nursing position at the local family planning clinic. She looks forward to helping the patients and has good intentions to improve their lives. She discovers two young Black girls, aged eleven and thirteen, are being given birth control pills, although they are not even sexually active. Concerned, Civil investigates.

The illuminating narrative alternates between the 1970's and later in 2016, when Civil, now a physician, reflects on her past experiences while working as a nurse at the clinic in her youth.

A profound novel, it sheds light on this devastating time period. Hopefully, history will not repeat itself if more people become aware of these past injustices and tragedies. It's a momentous book, and I urge readers

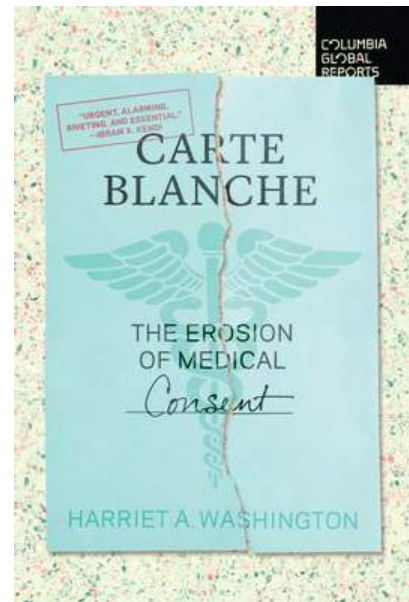
to read it. I plan to read more by this immensely talented author.

Carte Blanche: The Erosion of Medical Consent

by Harriet A. Washington

“In 1927 the US Supreme Court ruled that compulsory sterilization of people deemed unfit was constitutional. People in asylums all over this country were sterilized.”

The esteemed Harriet Washington’s riveting and enlightening book, *Carte Blanche: The Erosion of Medical Consent*, delves into the unconscionable and exploitive scientific research upon uninformed, primarily impoverished people in the U.S. She states *“consent has been whittled away not by successful ethical argument or by persuasion but because the U.S. medical research system maintains subjects in a voiceless and uninformed state.”* *Carte Blanche* analyzes how people are vulnerable and are subjected to medical research without their knowledge of what is happening to them. Informed consent is disregarded in the name of profit, emergencies, and medical “research” utilizing potentially lethal drugs, protocols, and medical devices, among other things. She provides proof of deceptive, illegal practices in medical research, which especially impact Black Americans.



As a result of the horrific human experimentation used on both prisoners and concentration camp victims during World War II, the Nuremberg Code was created to ban research without voluntary, informed consent. Informed consent was incorporated into U.S. law in 1947, in order that research would never be imposed on Americans, especially Blacks and other people of color, without their knowledge or consent. However, researchers developed ways to circumvent the law, to continue with non-consensual experimental abuse. *“Whether subjected to laissez-faire experimentation on the plantation, early clinics, or other institutions, Black Americans were sold to doctors expressly for nineteenth-century research and physician-training purposes.”*

The shocking and inconceivable Tuskegee syphilis study, which occurred from 1932 to 1972, withheld treatment for six hundred Black men diagnosed with syphilis, and instead maintained them in an infected state so they could be *“tracked, studied, and ultimately autopsied.”* In 2010, in another unethical and horrific study, researchers *“intentionally induced hypothermia in unwitting black men who suffered gunshot wounds.”*

Even today, the military, prisoners, and trauma patients are still exploited and forced to participate in scientific experiments.

I was only vaguely aware of some of the evil events and disturbing actions conducted by the medical/scientific community the author sheds light on. Sadly, it makes one distrust and question their present actions and ethics. *Carte Blanche* is an important eye-opening exposé everyone needs to read.

In another of her monumental books which I didn’t review here, *Medical Apartheid*, the distinguished author exposes an immense violation of civil and human rights. It won the National Book Critics Circle Award, the PEN Oakland Award, and the American Library Association Black Caucus Nonfiction Award. She has also been a research fellow in medical ethics at Harvard Medical School, a senior research scholar at the National Center for Bioethics at Tuskegee University, and the recipient of a John S. Knight Fellowship at Stanford University.

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