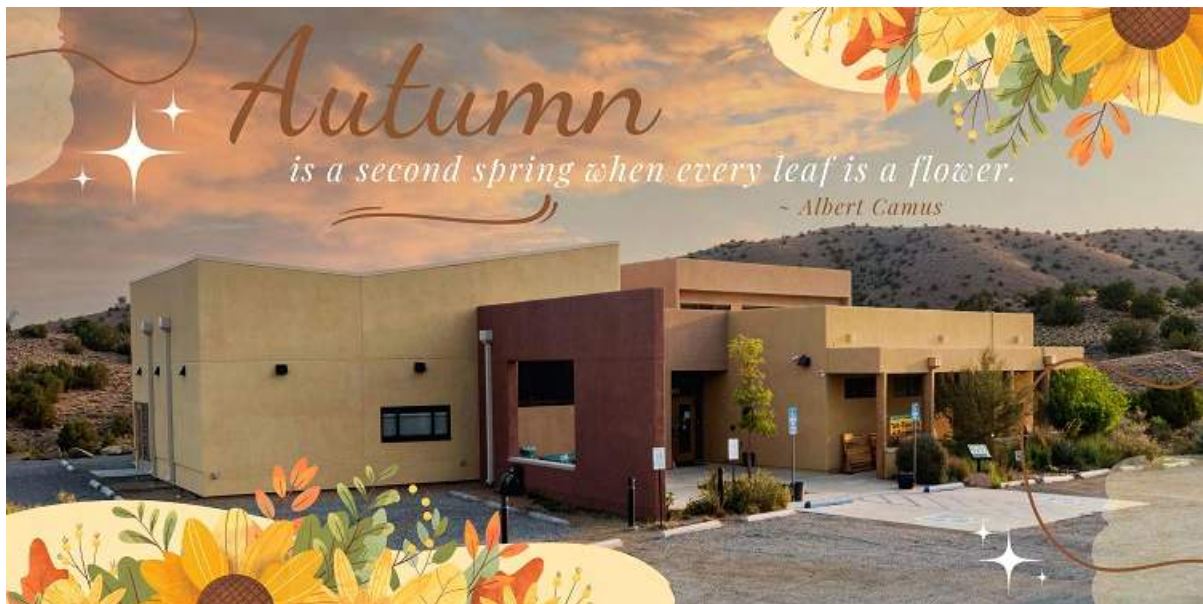


# PLACITAS *Community* LIBRARY



## NEWSLETTER NOV/DEC 2023



### **PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY HOURS**

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

## ADULT PROGRAMS

- **NOV 9 (6 PM):** Learn How to Make Charitable Contributions Using Your IRA Distributions While Reducing Your Taxes
- **NOV 11 (10 AM):** Building Belonging Through Local Giving
- **NOV 11 (2 PM):** Holes in our Hearts: Honoring Our Veterans
- **NOV 18-19 (10 AM-5 PM):** Placitas Holiday Market
- **NOV 29 (10 AM):** How to Navigate Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Options and Costs
- **DEC 2 (2 PM):** Las Acequias de Placitas: A Unique Water System

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## ART RECEPTIONS & EXHIBITS

- **Through NOV 13:** Exhibit: About Women
- **DEC 15 (5-6:30 PM):** Artists Reception: Gourdeous Gourd Art featuring works from the New Mexico Gourd Society (exhibit will be displayed Dec 2-Jan 3)

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## CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

- **NOV:** Seasonal activities (coloring sheets, puzzles, etc.) will be available on the activity tables in the Vulcan Cafe and in the Pearl Room
- **SUN, DEC 10 (1:30 PM):** Holiday Open House featuring a special musical presentation by The Young Voices of the Santa Fe Opera and three special guests to celebrate the winter holidays

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## 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 Dec 9*)
- **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](mailto:annegrey3@gmail.com)) for more information



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



## Kendra Lucero-Mateucci

Growing up in the community of Placitas is a gift I carry with me always. The beautiful people I was and am surrounded by and blessed to know are the foundation and heart of this special place. My love of words and the magic they create when put together began at the Placitas Elementary Library and summer programs at the Bernalillo Library. That love of reading and learning lead me to eventually study literature and fine arts in undergrad. There are certain individuals that worked and volunteered in both libraries that I will forever be grateful to for supporting the interests of all who stepped through those doors. I see this amazing support system continued at PCL and all through all those involved.

My Lucero family has been part of the Placitas community and the San Antonio de las Huertas Land Grant – Merced for many generations and I am honored to continue that tradition as an active member of the Land Grant. I share my father's belief that preservation of people and enrichment of community is something we should collectively strive together to be an active part of.

Now in my 50's, I find my joy in a great hike or run, making things (my creative outlet), a good story shared or read, my crazy pups, and time with family. I am a real estate broker and have enjoyed working to help people in that field since the mid 1990's. I also volunteered as an art teacher throughout my kids' elementary years, and worked in portrait and wedding photography.

PCL is a living legacy made possible by many caring hands and I thank you for the opportunity to serve and work with the people of Placitas by being part of the PCL Board.

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This was a very busy summer for renovations to the building. The parapets and skylights were repaired and the HVAC in the original part of the building was replaced. The well was also tested by the County and resulted in our water being turned off for several days. Thank you so much to everyone in the community for being so patient during all this. We really appreciate your understanding.

In May of this year, an ad hoc Furniture Committee was appointed to recommend new furniture for Ross's Reading Room and the Vulcan Café. We wanted furniture that was serviceable, easy to move, and more in line with a reading room. The four-person committee met several times and in August presented a proposal to the board. The furniture has been purchased from Goodman's, an Arizona company with an office in Albuquerque specializing in office furniture for schools, government buildings, healthcare centers, and similar enterprises. The furniture should be delivered and installed in early January. For Ross's Reading Room we purchased 8 chairs, 6 side tables, and 2 stools. We also purchased a round table with 4 chairs for the Vulcan Café. We're very excited about this new look for Ross's Reading Room and the Vulcan Café.

*Library*  
**BOARD  
OF  
DIRECTORS**

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, NOV 16, 6:00 PM  
THURS, DEC 21, 6:00 PM**

PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY

 *Volunteer Coffee & Connect* 

DECEMBER 9 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.



Artwork by studiostock at www.freepik.com



**Lynne's  
Letters**

MESSAGE FROM  
THE DIRECTOR



Do you get excited about the holidays? Do you want to find gifts for your friends and family that are unique? I know I do.

This year I plan to attend the **Placitas Holiday Market** that is being held on Saturday, November 18, and Sunday, November 19, from 10 AM to 5 PM.

There are 7 wonderful stops where **over 100 artists and artisans** have created very special items! Plus, a **portion of all sales will benefit local non-profits, community groups, and charities**. Here is the list of stops:

1. Wild Hearts Gallery
2. Placitas Community Library
3. Placitas Winery
4. Las Placitas Presbyterian Church (Note: Sunday hours 12-5 PM)
5. San Antonio Catholic Mission
6. Placitas Elementary School
7. Placitas Community Senior Center

Please follow the **RED CANDY CANE** signs to the **7 wonderful locations!**



Hope to see you there.  
Happy Holidays!

**Lynne**

A promotional banner with a dark grey background and a red bottom border. On the left, there is a piggy bank, a calendar with a dollar sign, and two gold coins. In the center, the text reads "Learn How to Make Charitable Contributions From Your IRA Distributions While Reducing Your Tax Burden!". Below this text is a white rounded rectangle containing "NOV 9 | 6 PM". On the right, there is a calculator and a blue rocket ship.

**Learn How to Make Charitable Contributions From Your IRA Distributions While Reducing Your Tax Burden!**

**NOV 9 | 6 PM**

As we reach that magic age of Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) from our retirement accounts, the options and questions that arise can be very confusing. To help with that endeavor and discuss a couple of options, please join us on **November 9 at 6 PM** to learn how to make charitable contributions using your IRA distributions that may also help reduce your tax burden at the same time!

An RMD is the distribution that we are all are required to take from our Traditional IRA every year after we turn 73. There are some complicated caveats that are worth considering which will be covered at this program.



You've called Placitas home for many years or maybe just a few weeks. You love the natural beauty and the spaciousness of life here. But now you want more, perhaps a deeper sense of community, connection, or meaning. How can you build this?

Consider creating a giving circle: a gathering of friends with community-minded goals and vision.

Over the last ten years, members of Sophia's Giving Circle (SGC) have built awareness, connection, and community through small sums local giving. We've funded projects as wide-ranging as scholarships for graduating Bernalillo High students, accessibility improvements for disabled seniors, and animal education programs that teach elementary school students humane stewardship of animals and its connection to developing compassion for their fellow humans. Working together, project by project, we've also developed lasting friendships and deep respect for differing points of view within our circle.

On **Saturday, November 11 at 10 AM**, members of SGC are hosting an informal gathering for any of you who are interested in creating your own giving circle, one that both inspires you and meets important community needs. Join us to find out more.

# SOCIAL JUSTICE

Artwork created by pilsupstar 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](mailto:annegrey3@gmail.com) for more information

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

HAPPY HANUKKAH!  
DECEMBER 7-15, 2023

“Still ours the dance, the feast, the glorious psalm;  
the mystic lights of emblem, and the word.”

EMMA LAZARUS, THE FEAST OF LIGHTS



NOVEMBER 11 | 2 PM

## Holes in Our Hearts

\*\*\* Honoring Our Veterans \*\*\*

In honor of Veterans Day, PCL will host five authors from the Southwest Writers anthology, *Holes in Our Hearts* on Saturday November 11 at 2 PM.

*Holes in Our Hearts* provides snapshots of military life and how the military has affected lives. This anthology is more than a collection of works written by individuals with some connection to the United States military services. It is written from the perspective of New Mexico active-duty military members, veterans of the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard, as well as their family members and caregivers. These short stories, memoirs, poems, essays, etc., are the expressions of deeply ingrained memories and experiences.

Some of the writing represents the first time many authors have revealed their innermost thoughts to

anyone. Some of the stories are written by established authors with numerous publishing credentials. All are worth your time to learn why we continue to honor the military on behalf of a grateful nation.

It is often difficult for those who have served and their family members to verbally relate memories and experiences to others. Whether too personal, too poignant, or traumatic, these memories and experiences, more often than not, rest in the back rooms of their minds, never to be shared. This lack of sharing is tragic on two levels. First, those who never had the privilege of hearing these stories will never fully understand what it means to serve their country through the military. And the people who had the privilege of serving never have the opportunity to realize the catharsis of sharing their experiences.

This anthology includes offerings from members of all the armed services, as well as family members of men and women who served. It is a beautiful collection of works that are, at times emotional, humorous, frightening, enlightening, or thought-provoking. The reader should be aware that the recollections in *Holes in Our Hearts* are, in many instances, the only way that the authors could share with you their memories and experiences. Each is a tale worth reading, internalizing, and contemplating the experiences we as a nation expect our young men and women, their families, and their caregivers to deal with—sometimes long after their military service has ended and nothing is left but holes in our hearts.

This will be a very special Veterans Day at PCL. Join us at **2 PM on November 11.**



HOW TO NAVIGATE MEDICARE  
PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE  
OPTIONS AND COSTS

NOVEMBER 29 | 10 AM - 12 PM

Placiteño Dr. Neal Solomon, PharmD, MPH, R.Ph., has more than 40 years of experience as a pharmacist. He was the Pharmacy Administrator for the State Medicaid Program, overseeing the transition of Medicare-Medicaid dual eligibles to Medicare Part D drug coverage. On Wednesday,



November 29 at 10 AM, PCL is honored to present Dr Solomon. He will explore the cardinal rules of health care:

- How insurance and health care are entirely different industries
- If you ask the right question to the wrong person, you will always get the wrong answer
- How drug “coverage” and benefit design work
- How some drugs are so inexpensive, insurance (“coverage”) saves you little
- “Trust is good, evidence is better”
- There are two ways to save money on medication costs:
  - Switch to a different plan
  - Switch to a different drug
- Every problem in health comes down to two things:
  - Continuity of care
  - Education

Please bring your own list of medications and health conditions (anonymous please!) to get a breakdown of out-of-pocket costs under:

- Medicare Part D stand-alone prescription drug plans
- Medicare Advantage (Part C) plans
- Supplemental Medicare (Medigap) plans
- Approximate “cash” price

Join Dr. Solomon and get your drug coverage questions answered on **Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at 10 AM** at PCL in the Gracie Lee Community Room. Light refreshments will be served.



**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*

The graphic features a central illustration of a red and yellow striped drum with two drumsticks. Surrounding the drum are various musical notes and symbols in red, blue, and yellow. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with a mix of bold and italicized fonts.



DECEMBER 2 | 2 PM

## LAS ACEQUIAS DE PLACITAS

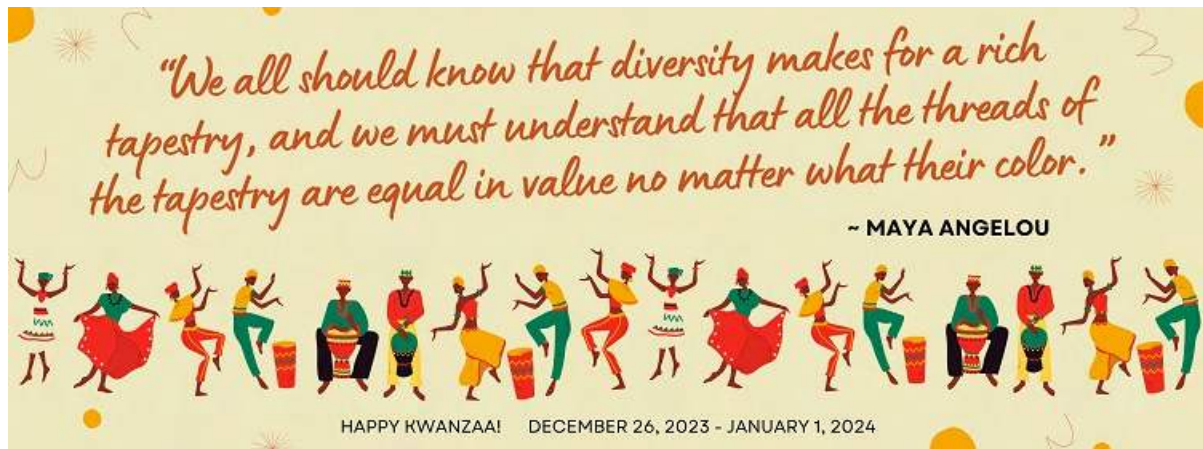
### A Unique Water System



The Village of Placitas is provided water by Las Acequias de Placitas. It is known to be one of only two or three hybrid domestic water/acequia systems in the state. Pursuant to a 1942 Declaration, Las Acequias claims water rights to 212 acres dating back to 1863 from nine springs located on the north side of the Sandia Mountains. It has always been a hybrid system, used both for irrigation and domestic purposes, but starting in 1943, water from one of the springs has been piped to homes throughout the Village. Currently the system serves approximately 180 households in the Village and about 100 irrigators. Pursuant to state law, Las Acequias de Placitas is governed by a three-member Board of Commissioners and a Mayordomo. It is designated as a political subdivision of the State, and reports to the Local Government Division of the Department of Finance & Administration.

The springs from which the water originates are fed by winter snowpack and monsoon rains. The springs and infrastructure for both the domestic system and acequia are located on San Antonio de las Huertas Land Grant property. The acequia reservoirs and domestic water storage tanks store and deliver the water into the domestic lines and irrigation ditches for the Village.

On **Saturday, December 2 at 2 PM**, members of the Board, Mayordomo, and Systems Operator will present on this unique and dynamic system. Please come learn about a water system unlike any other in our immediate area, and discover how this system has operated for over 200 years and still provides this most precious source of water to the Village of Placitas. For all of our members *la agua es la vida*.





## ABOUT WOMEN...



*GRACIE LEE COMMUNITY ROOM*

*September 30 - November 13\**

*Artists Reception October 13*

*\*Exhibit closed to general public*

*Due to voting October 19 - November 8*

Lisa Avila | Dan Badgley | Nova DeNise | Marilyn Drake | Connie Falk | Doris Fields  
Jill Gatwood | Colleen Gregoire | Ann Hogan | Karen Jacobs | Karen Jones Meadows  
Mike Kimball | Tatiana Klimov | Caroline LeBlanc | MarkLavon Maestas | Bobbye Middendorf  
Pam Neas | Jules Nyquist | Judith Roderick | Jonn Salovaara | Karen Melody Shatar  
Talos | KatieThomas | Corrine Vialpando | Natasa Vretenar



This year, the third annual Placitas Holiday Market will again return to the traditional weekend before Thanksgiving with events at seven sites located on or near Highway 165. Pick up a map and follow the Candy Cane signage to the market sites. You will find art, crafts, food, and drink to



benefit the good works of local community groups and charities as well. Maps will be available at all venue sites and online. Admission is free. For more information and preview of artists, go to [www.placitasholidaymarket.com](http://www.placitasholidaymarket.com).

**Site #1 – Wild Hearts Gallery, Homestead Village Shopping Center, 220-B NM-165:** An art collective displaying the artwork of 16 local artists. A portion of the sales will benefit Placitas Volunteer Fire Brigade in honor of the 50th anniversary of Placitas' volunteer fire department, providing fire protection services to our community.

**Site #2 – Placitas Community Library, 453 NM-165:** A nonprofit providing children and adult programs, an art gallery and meeting space for community use. With a Holiday Fiesta theme, the library will feature 14 artists, a raffle benefiting library programs, Talavera pottery sale, and a bake and book sale.

**Site #3 – Placitas Winery, 26 Camino de los Pueblitos:** A micro-winery producing fruit wines and a community event center. It will feature 26 artists, a raffle, wine, and beer and food to warm the spirits. Raffle sales benefit the Placitas Elementary School art program.

**Site #4 – Historic Las Placitas Presbyterian Church, 7 Paseo de San Antonio:** This 19th century Spanish village church will feature the artwork of 12 artists and crafters. Sales will benefit Placitas Artists Series, a nonprofit that produces annual music performances and art exhibitions in the church.

**Site #5 – Historic San Antonio Mission, 43 Paseo San Antonio:** Established in 1840, it serves the Catholic community in Placitas. It will feature 18 local artisans, a raffle, and an array of New Mexican foods. Sales will benefit their ongoing philanthropic projects.

**Site #6 – Placitas Elementary School, 5 Camino del Carbon:** Located in the historic village of Placitas and home of the Placitas Panthers. It ranks among the top 25% of public and charter schools in the state. It will feature 16 booths with many artisans, a raffle benefiting the fine arts education at the school, and some home-baked goods benefiting the school's educational program.

**Site #7 – Placitas Community Senior Center, 41 Camino de Las Huertas:** This heartbeat of our community provides classes, exercise, field trips, and more, plus services to seniors including congregate meals, meal delivery, and transportation. The center will display a variety of arts and crafts.



The [New Mexico Gourd Society](#) (NMGS) is thrilled to display our decorated gourds and showcase the remarkable talents of our members. Many techniques have been used such as wood burning, carving, painting, and adding embellishments to enhance the natural characteristics of this unique Cucurbitaceae family of fruits.

Art forms include decorative bowls, ornaments, spirit dolls, teapots, lamps, and vases, just to name a few.

The NMGS is a not-for-profit organization which promotes the horticulture and appreciation of gourds. We share information from growing gourds to decorating these natural beauties. We offer fun, sharing of ideas and information as well as techniques in an educational environment.

Join us for our artists reception on **December 15 from 5-6:30 PM**. The *Gourdeous Gourd Art* exhibit will run from December 2 through January 3, 2024.



by Nora Timmons, Children's Program Coordinator



**THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER: SEASONAL CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES**

In November, we will have seasonal activities on the activity tables in the Vulcan Cafe and in the Pearl Room. Coloring sheets, puzzles, etc. will be available. Please come enjoy them with your children. Be sure to check out books as well to read with your children at home.



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 (1:30 PM): HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**

In December, we have a special program planned for families on Sunday, December 10 starting at 1:30 PM. Our Holiday Open House will feature a special musical presentation by The Young Voices of the Santa Fe Opera. The Young Voices will introduce opera music to your children through fun and exciting activities.

Additionally, we will have three special guests to celebrate the winter holidays including Norma Libman reading a Hanukkah story, Karen Jones Meadow reading a Kwanzaa story, and of course, Santa Claus will visit. Refreshments will be served.

Many thanks to the Placitas Artists Series (PAS) for providing this program. We hope you will join us.



# CHILDREN'S BOOK NEWS

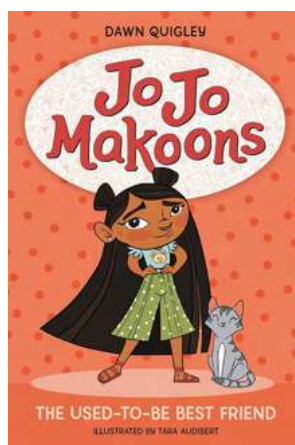
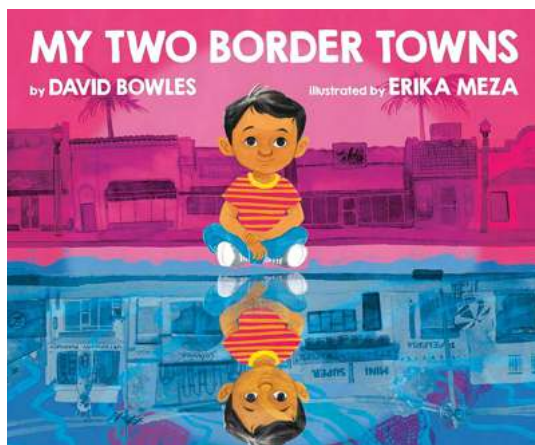
By Nancy Guist  
Children's Collection Coordinator



## New Mexico Land of Enchantment Book Award

In 1981, the New Mexico Library Association and the New Mexico Literary Association created the Land of Enchantment Book Award. Its purpose is to encourage New Mexican young people to read books of exceptional quality. Books are selected for four lists: Roadrunner (grades K–3), Coyote (Grades 3–5), Lizard (Grades 6–8), and Black Bear (Grades 9–12). Youth who have read at least the required number of nominated books from their age category can then vote in the spring on their favorite. We are currently in the process of ensuring that all the Land of Enchantment nominees will soon be part of our book collection. The books in red on the list below are currently in our collection; all others have been ordered.

The nominated books are a wonderfully–diverse collection. Among them is *My Two Border Towns* by David Bowles, one of the Roadrunner books. It tells the satisfying story of a father's and son's weekend tradition visiting family who live on the other side of the Rio Grande, in Mexico. Their day includes breakfast at a favorite restaurant, visiting an aunt and uncle's jewelry shop and a treat of cold paletas. *Jo Jo Makoons: The Used-to-Be Best Friend* by Dawn Quigley is one of the books from the Coyote list. Jo Jo is an energetic seven-year-old of Ojibwe heritage. She lives on the reservation where her life is busy with family, friends, school, and, of course, her cat, Mimi. She is a plucky problem–solver, leading to humorous experiences in her busy life. *The Last Cuentista* by Donna Barba Higuera is one of the Lizard list books. It received the 2022 Newbery Award. It intertwines science fiction with Mexican folklore in telling the story of Petra, who finds herself immersed in a utopian vision, while discovering what is real and honorable.



Look for copies of the Land of Enchantment nominated book lists in the children's room similar to the lists below.

## Roadrunner (K-3)

- Areli is a Dreamer by Areli Morale
- Courage Hats by Kate Hoefler
- Ear Worm! by Jo Knowles
- ***My Two Border Towns by David Bowles***
- ***Paletero Man by Lucky Diaz***
- ***Shaped by Her Hands: Potter Maria Martinez by Anna Harber Freeman & Barbara Gonzalez***
- Strollercoaster by Matt Ringler
- ***The Water Lady: How Darlene Arviso Helps a Thirsty Navajo Nation by Alice B. McGinty***
- ***Where Butterflies Fill the Sky by Zahra Marwan***

## Coyote (3-5)

- Another Kind by Trevor Bream & Cait May
- The Aquanaut by Dan Santat
- Bessie the Motorcycle Queen by Charles R. Smith Jr.
- Child of the Flower-Song People by Gloria Amescua
- ***Jo Jo Makoons: The Used-to-Be Best Friend by Dawn Quigley***
- ***The Ogress and the Orphans by Kelly Barnhill***
- Sugar in Milk by Thrity Umrigar
- Whales to the Rescue: How Whales Help Engineer the Planet by Adrienne Mason
- Witchlings by Claribel A. Ortega

## Lizard (6-8)

- ***Falling Short by Ernesto Cisneros***
- Invisible by Christina Diaz Gonzalez
- ***The Last Cuentista by Donna Barba Higuera***
- ***Miss Quinces by Kat Fajardo***
- The Rent Collector: Adapted for Young Readers from the Best-Selling Novel by Camron Wright
- Stowaway by John David Anderson
- ***Swim Team by Johnnie Christmas***
- ***Tumble by Celia C. Perez***
- ***Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre by Carole Boston Weatherford***

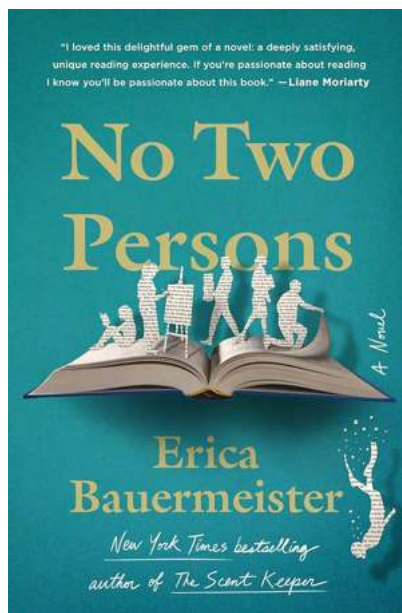
# Susanne's Selections

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).



## *No Two Persons*

by Erica Bauermeister

“No two persons ever read the same book, or saw the same picture.”  
~ The Writings of Madame Swetchine, 1860

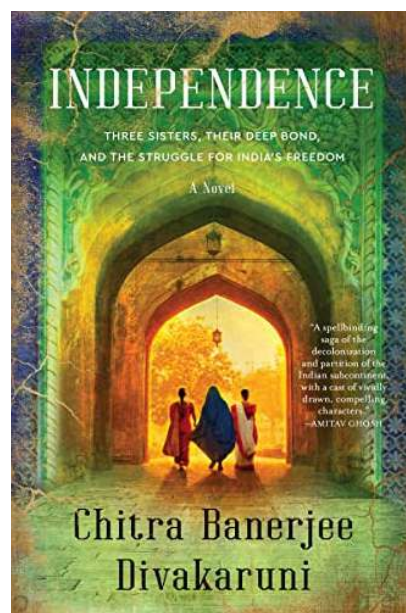
I don't want to provide spoilers for this fascinating novel, so will be brief. This is the story of how Alice's debut novel, *Theo*, affects nine readers, all of whom are from various walks of life: an artist, a caretaker, a deep sea diver, etc. Just as each reader discovers *Theo* completely through happenstance, each reader's life is transformed in a myriad of ways. And curiously, their lives are associated in various ways. Enriching and imaginative, this is a novel you cannot miss!

## *Independence*

by Chitra Divakaruni

“Can you cut up a country as though it were a cake?”

The novel's title, *Independence*, refers to both the Indian struggle for independence from Great Britain, and women's struggle against being considered second-class citizens in India's male-dominated society. In 1947, the Indian Partition created a new country, Pakistan, expressly for Muslims, while India was reserved for Hindus. Amidst turmoil and political unrest, this compelling story chronicles three devoted sisters searching for their own independence. Jamini hopes to be married and raise a family. Priya plans to become a doctor, despite it being almost incomprehensible for a woman to become a doctor at the time. Deepa and a Muslim man, Raza, fall in love, horrifying their families since it was considered anathema for a Muslim and a Hindu to marry. Their father, Nabakumar Gangulya, is an esteemed physician in Bengal, the small village where they live. He and his wife, Bina, provide an enlightened and loving home for the family.

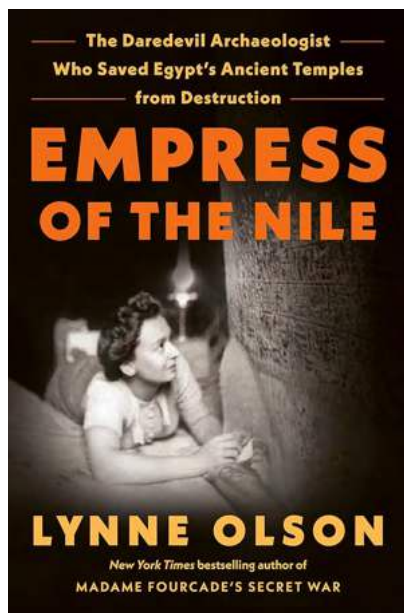


An immersing historical portrayal, *Independence* is filled with the drama of the South Asian diaspora and related cultural and political strife. The author masterfully showcases women's empowerment and characterizes how each woman develops her own individual strength, while experiencing the challenges and upheaval of the time. After the Partition, the family circumstances are forever changed, but the sisters retain a unique and devoted bond. This poignant novel would provide a worthy discussion for book clubs.

A professor of creative writing, Divakaruni's detailed biography and list of awards is extensive. If interested, you may view it on her [website](#). I reviewed her magical novel, *Mistress of Spices*, for the PCL newsletter in the past.

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Dear readers, this month I've reviewed two outstanding historical biographies, both written by the extraordinarily-talented Lynn Olson. She's a meticulous researcher, unlike some authors of historical fiction. I couldn't decide which to review, so opted to review both. I am especially fond of the World War II genre, and I think Madame Fourcade is one of the best books I've read in the past 50+ years about a woman spy during that era. I hope you enjoy them.



## **Empress of the Nile: The Daredevil Archaeologist Who Saved Egypt's Ancient Temples from Destruction**

by Lynn Olson

*The oldest nation-state in history, Egypt had been welded into a single country more than 3,200 years before the birth of Christ ... The Egyptians' invention of the concept of a unified nation, whose population shared a common identity, was remarkable not only for its impact on the world but also for its longevity."*

Determined and astute, Parisian-born Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt became the world's leading expert on ancient Egypt. In her forties, she already was a highly regarded archaeologist when she became the leader of the legendary project to rescue the magnificent temple of Abu Simbel from being submerged by the construction of the

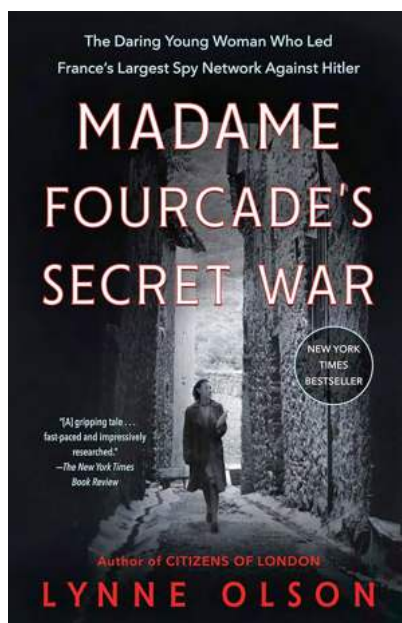
Aswan Dam, in the 1960's. This was her crowning achievement and a momentous feat. It involved coordinating an unprecedented effort by numerous nations, an extraordinary amount of funding, and massive efforts to promote the project by influential people such as Jackie Kennedy Onassis.

The narrative reads like a novel and recounts her extraordinary achievements and contributions to the world regarding Egyptian archaeology, and rescuing its historical monuments from destruction. I felt I was reading about a female Indiana Jones!

*According to LiveScience.com, it was built in 1244 B.C. Abu Simbel contains two temples, carved into a mountainside. The larger of the two temples contains four colossal statues of a seated pharaoh Ramesses II (1303-1213 B.C.) at its entrance, each about 69 feet (21 meters) tall. The entranceway to the temple was built in such a way that on two days of the year, October 22 and February 22, sunlight shines into the inner sanctuary and lights up three statues seated on a bench, including one of the pharaoh. The temples were dismantled and relocated in 1968 on the desert plateau 64 meters (about 200 feet) above and 180 meters (600 feet) west of their original site. Moving the temples was a massive job, one that involved cutting it into pieces between 3 to 20 tons in weight and re-assembling them precisely as they were. It took almost five years, involved about 3,000 workers and cost (in the 1960s) about \$42 million.*

Ever the intrepid and intellectually curious adventurer, Desroches-Noblecourt also was a spy for the Allies during World War II. What is remarkable is the fact she accomplished so much despite the field of archaeology at the time being completely dominated by men. She could definitely handle herself in a man's world. One anecdote in the book relates how during an interrogation by the Nazis while imprisoned, she berated them for their insufferable insolence. Another one describes how she asked Charles de Gaulle, then President of France, for funding for the Abu Simbel project. She was 5 feet tall, feisty, and desperate to save Abu Simbel. De Gaulle was an imposing 6 feet 5 inches. He gave her the money after she pointed out his desperate, but heroic behavior of defying the French Vichy government installed by the Nazis in 1940. Recipient of France's *Grand Cross of the Légion d'Honneur*, France's highest honor, Desroches-Noblecourt died at age 97 years in 2011.

An interesting portion of the book describes the significant role Jackie Kennedy played in securing funds from major donors and the U.S. towards the Abu Simbel project.



## *Madame Fourcade's Secret War: The Daring Young Woman Who Led France's Largest Spy Network Against Hitler*

by Lynne Olson

Sophisticated, heroic and fearless, Fourcade was raised in Shanghai and Paris by her wealthy parents and planned to become a concert pianist. During World War II, she became the leader of the Alliance, the largest secret intelligence network in the French Resistance in occupied France. 3,000 agents were under her jurisdiction. Audacious and inventive, she was twice arrested, and escaped the police. Amazingly, she survived imprisonment at Ravensbrück, the women's infamous, ghastly concentration camp in Germany, where over 50,000 women died. The Nazis tortured and executed hundreds of the Alliance's agents. Sadly, one of the agents murdered was Fourcade's lover and second-in-command.

Fourcade was determined to fight the Nazi regime despite being a mother of young children and was not only separated from her children but also was pregnant with a third child during the war.

In 1989, Fourcade died at age of 79. Notably, she was the first woman to be buried at Les Invalides, the illustrious site dedicated to military history and to honor France's war heroes. Napoleon is also buried there.

Olson, as usual, with her painstaking research regarding the World War II era and Fourcade, deftly chronicles Fourcade's life and exploits. The spellbinding narrative reads like an absolutely thrilling page-turner! Devotees of World War II history and espionage novels will especially appreciate this book. Interestingly, despite the multitude of claims from French citizens being Resistance fighters during that era, in actuality, only two percent of the population participated in in the Resistance.

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