

PLACITAS *Community* LIBRARY



NEWSLETTER SEPT/OCT 2023



PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY HOURS

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

ADULT PROGRAMS

- **SEPT 8-30:** HOMEscape Solutions Design Workshop (*pre-registration required*)
 - **SEPT 17 (1-3 PM):** Placitas Community Library (PCL) 20th Anniversary Celebration and Meet and Greet with our new Library Director, Lynne Hynes
 - **SEPT 21 (10 AM-12 PM):** Home Composting Basics by Master Gardener and Master Composter John Zarola
 - **SEPT 29 (6:30-8:30 PM):** Medicinal Herb Gardening by Master Gardener Sandy Farley
 - **OCT 14 (9 AM-1 PM):** Ring of Fire Annular Eclipse Star Party with The Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS)
 - **OCT 16-19 (10 AM-12 PM):** Let's Speak Spanish! An Introductory Class for Adults with Diane Herrera Shepard
 - **NOV 9 (6 PM):** Learn How to Make Charitable Contributions Using Your IRA Distributions While Reducing Your Taxes
 - **TBD:** Pollinator Gardens by Master Gardener Sharon Walsh and Water Harvesting Ideas by Tom Richards (contact PCL for details)
-

ART RECEPTIONS & EXHIBITS

- **SEPT 2-28:** Exhibit: In and Beyond the Gardens by Placitas Garden Tour Artists
 - **OCT 13 (5-6:30 PM):** Artist Reception: About Women (exhibit will be displayed Sept 30-Nov 13)
-

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

- **SEPT 16 (1-3 PM):** Kids' Polished Glass Art Program with Karen Shatar
 - **OCT 28 (1-3 PM):** Annual Halloween Party with scary stories, activities, and trick or treating!
-

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 Oct 14*)
- **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

PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY

invites you to celebrate our

20th ANNIVERSARY!

Please join us for our open house party

SUN | SEPT 17 | 1 - 3



TASTY TREATS!

Provided by
PCL's
Board of
Directors and
Management
Committee.

EXTRA TREAT!

Come
welcome
our new
Library
Director:

LYNNE HYNES



NEWS FROM YOUR LIBRARY BOARD

By Lynnette Fields, PCL Board Chair



Please join me in welcoming our new Library Director, Lynne Hynes. Her first day was August 7, and she hit the ground running.



Lynne Hynes

I am so honored to be the new Library Director for PCL. I have over nine years of library experience in academic and public libraries.

I hold an Associate's Degree in Paralegal, Bachelor of Science Degree in Information and Library Services, and Master's in Library and Information Science.

I grew up in Upstate New York, spent five years in Utah before coming to New Mexico a year ago. We just completed construction on our new home and we are so happy to be a part of the Placitas community.

In my spare time I enjoy gardening, crafts, writing, hiking, and traveling.

I would like to extend a huge thank you to the community for your patience during the HVAC installation. It took a little longer than expected, but we now have a brand-new system in the original portion of the library. I would also like to thank everyone involved in this operation: the contractors, the County, library volunteers, and especially Furman Kelley who coordinated the operation.

Banned Books Week is an annual event sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA), celebrating the freedom to read. It was launched in 1982 as a response to a sudden surge in the number of book challenges in schools, libraries, and bookstores. *Banned Books Week* highlights the value of free and open access to information.

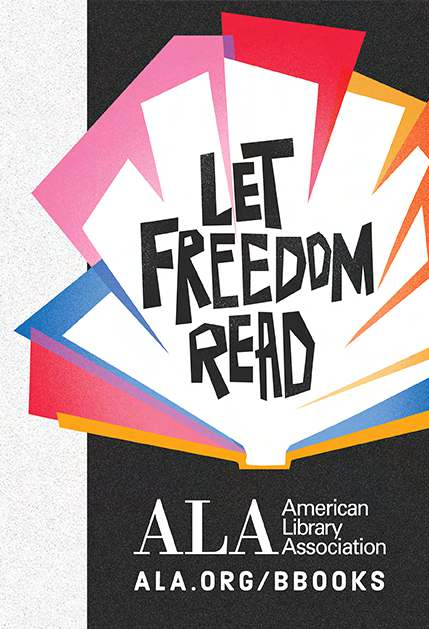
Now, as always in our history, reading is among one of our greatest freedoms. ALA documented 1,269 demands to censor library books and resources in 2022. This is the highest number of attempted book bans since ALA began compiling the data more than 20 years ago. This unparalleled number of reported books challenges nearly doubles the 729 book challenges reported in 2021.

Banned Books Week is October 1-7, and this year's theme is "Let Freedom Read." Stop by the library then to see a display of some of the banned books we have in our collection and READ A BANNED BOOK.

**THIS LIBRARY
CELEBRATES**

**BANNED
BOOKS WEEK**

OCTOBER 1-7, 2023



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, SEPT 21, 6:00 PM
THURS, OCT 19, 6:00 PM**

PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY

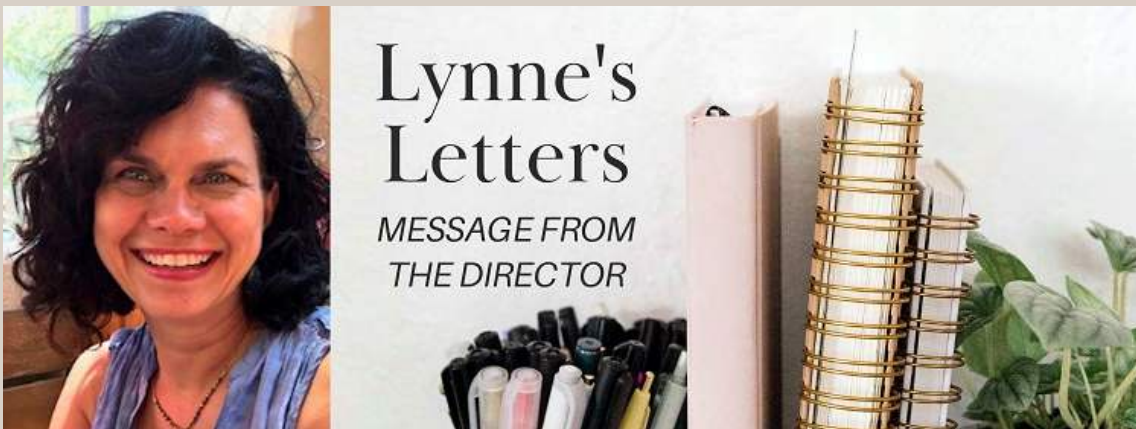
 *Volunteer Coffee & Connect* 

OCTOBER 14 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.



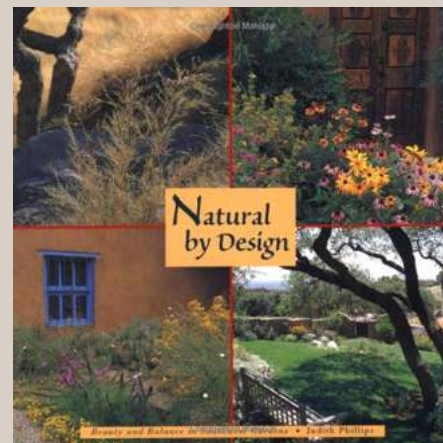
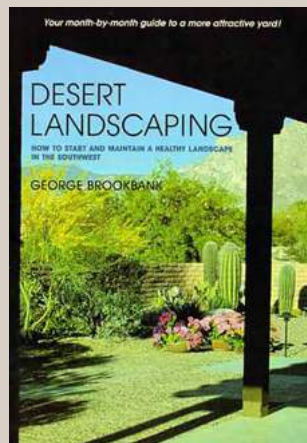
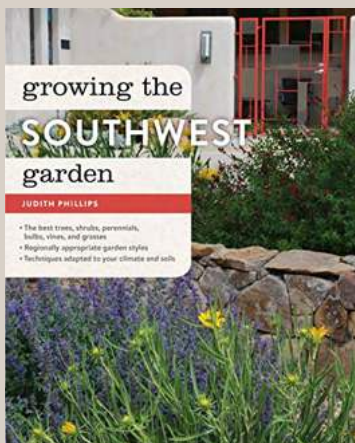
Network by studio506 at www.freepik.com



Understanding how to garden in New Mexico can be challenging if you are like me and from a different state and geographical region. In New York State, I grew up learning how to grow flowers and vegetables. I understood how long the growing season was, how much water my plants needed, and which plants worked best for my soil.

Since recently moving to the Southwest, all of that has changed for me. I am asking myself the question: How do I garden in New Mexico? I think the key to answering this question is finding the right resources. Here are just a few I found helpful:

Books:



- [Growing the Southwest Garden](#) by Judith Phillips (635.0979 PHILLIPS)
- [Desert Landscaping: How to start and maintain a healthy landscape in the Southwest](#) by George Brookbank (SW 635.952 BROOKBANK)
- [Natural by Design: Beauty and balance in Southwest gardens](#) by Judith Phillips (635.9 PHILLIPS)

Groups:

- [Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners](#): Offers hands-on workshops, soil testing, gardening FAQs, and more.

Upcoming Events at PCL:

- [Placitas 7th Annual Garden Tour](#) (Sunday, Sept 10, from 9 AM-4 PM): Tour Placitas gardens and ask garden specialists questions

- HOMEscape Solutions Design Workshop (Fridays and Saturdays from 9/8-9/30): Attend eight hands-on workshop sessions and learn how to create your own landscape project

Please come to PCL and check out one of our helpful gardening books, or sign up for one or more of our incredible gardening programs and events.

Happy gardening!

Lynne



SOCIAL JUSTICE

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

Artwork created by pikisuperstar at toway.freepik.com

The poster features an illustration of five raised fists in various skin tones (light, medium, dark, and two shades of brown) against a light background. The text is in bold, sans-serif fonts, with the title 'SOCIAL JUSTICE' in orange and 'DISCUSSION GROUP' in white on a dark orange background. A small black star is positioned below the group title. The contact information and meeting details are in a smaller, lighter font.

CHECK OUT 2022'S TOP BANNED BOOKS!



#1

MOST CHALLENGED BOOK OF 2022

FOR LGBTQIA+ CONTENT,
CLAIMED TO BE SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

ALA.ORG/BBOOKS
ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation

CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS BOOK FROM PCL



GENDER QUEER
A MEMOIR
MAIA KOBABE

The poster has a dark background with white and yellow text. The book cover for 'Gender Queer' is shown on the right, featuring a person in a blue shirt and shorts standing in water, with their reflection visible below. The text on the poster is in a clean, sans-serif font. The ALA logo and the PCL link are in white text on a dark background.



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.

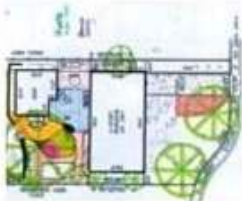
Sessions will be held in the Grace Lee Conference Room. Class is limited to 20 participants and fills up fast. There is a \$30 fee for workshop materials, payable at the first class. For information or to register, please [contact us](#).



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

invites you to attend

**Two FREE programs presented by
HOMEscape Solutions Design Workshop:**

Thursday, September 21, 2023 10:00 AM – Noon
Master Gardener and Master Composter, John Zarola
presents “Home Composting Basics”



Friday, September 29, 2023 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Master Gardener Sandy Farley presents
“Medicinal Herb Gardening”

Master Gardener Sharon Walsh presents
“Pollinator Gardens”

Tom Richards presents
“Water Harvesting Ideas”



CHECK OUT 2022'S TOP BANNED BOOKS!

#2

MOST CHALLENGED BOOK OF 2022

FOR LGBTQIA+ CONTENT,
CLAIMED TO BE SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

[ALA.ORG/BBOOKS](https://www.ala.org/bbooks)
ALA American Library Association

[CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS BOOK FROM PCL](#)





10.14.2023 | 9 AM-1 PM

RING OF FIRE ANNULAR ECLIPSE STAR PARTY

with The Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS)

By Jim Neal

Placitas residents will soon witness a very rare event on October 14—an annular, or “ring of fire” solar eclipse will cross New Mexico with PCL being very close to the center of the path! The entire eclipse sequence will last nearly three hours. At maximum, the Sun will be over the Sandias and provide excellent opportunities for photographers with specialized equipment.

Annular solar eclipses occur when the Moon covers the center of the Sun, leaving its visible outer edges to form a “ring of fire,” or *annulus* around the Moon. These solar eclipses occur when the New Moon casts a shadow on Planet Earth. Because both the Moon and Earth are in separate orbits, the eclipse lasts only for a short time.

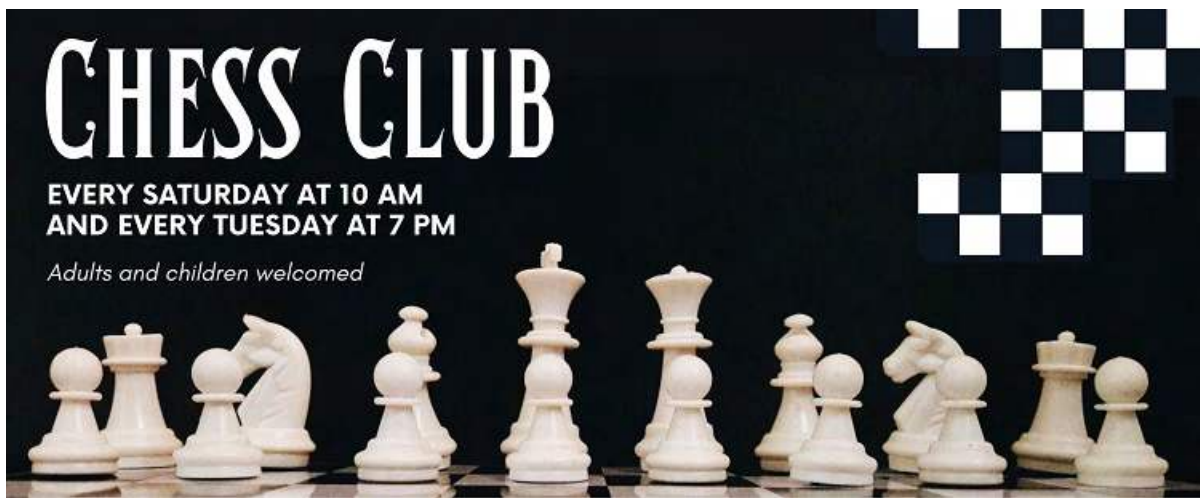
Solar eclipses at any given location are quite rare, because for one to occur the sun has to be present at the time of New Moon, when the Sun and Earth are aligned on opposite sides of the Moon. Normally, the New Moon is not visible from Earth and the only time we can see it is during solar eclipses, silhouetted against the Sun. And for all these alignments to occur simultaneously over Placitas is truly rare—perhaps once in a lifetime!

PCL and TAAS will have telescopes available for safe solar viewing during the eclipse, starting at 9 AM on October 14. Dark glasses made especially for the event will also be available. PCL will have these glasses for you to take home during the weeks leading up to the eclipse. The event will be live-streamed on Zoom, and the stream will be available for viewing on the big screen inside the library.

An indoor exhibit showing details of how these rare eclipse events occur will be featured in the library's Collin Meeting Room. The *total* eclipse that will occur over Texas on April 8, 2024, will be previewed, along with maps showing optimum viewing locations where *day will turn to night* for nearly five minutes!

Additional eclipse viewing opportunities will take place on October 14 throughout the Albuquerque area, being coordinated by the New Mexico Natural History Museum. Look for announcements in coming weeks at all Municipal, State, and Federal agencies.

We look forward to seeing you on October 14 beginning at 9 AM. Be extremely careful **NOT** to look directly at the sun that morning without those protective glasses. It can seriously damage your eyes in an instant. Many thanks to TAAS for their support of this program.

A promotional graphic for a Chess Club. The background is dark blue. On the left, the words "CHESS CLUB" are written in a large, white, serif font. Below this, in a smaller white font, it says "EVERY SATURDAY AT 10 AM AND EVERY TUESDAY AT 7 PM". Underneath that, in an even smaller white font, it says "Adults and children welcomed". On the right side, there is a white and black checkered pattern. At the bottom, a row of white chess pieces is displayed on a dark surface.

CHESS CLUB

EVERY SATURDAY AT 10 AM
AND EVERY TUESDAY AT 7 PM

Adults and children welcomed



LET'S SPEAK SPANISH!

A BEGINNER OR ALMOST BEGINNER
INTRODUCTORY CLASS FOR ADULTS
WITH DIANE HERRERA SHEPARD

OCT 16-19 | 10 AM-12 PM

Join Diane Herrera Shepard for a fun and interactive one-week Spanish class (8 hours) at PCL on October 16-19, 2023, from 10 AM-12 PM. This will be a short, intensive, and fun class. Class size is limited.

Enjoy the opportunity to learn the basics as we pronounce, speak, listen, read, write, and communicate basic information. You already know a lot of Spanish words so let's use your skills and build on them to

better communicate.

Please know that in addition to the class hours, you will be expected to practice and use what you've learned in each of the classes. Lessons will be customized based on skill and usage levels so please contact Diane immediately as class size is strictly limited.

[Email](#) or call (505) 401-1265 for a brief conversation to register and establish goals for yourself.

Our major goal is to have fun, use learned skills, learn new techniques for communicating, and increase your confidence as you use your skills in the greater Placitas/Bernalillo communities.

CHECK OUT 2022'S TOP BANNED BOOKS!

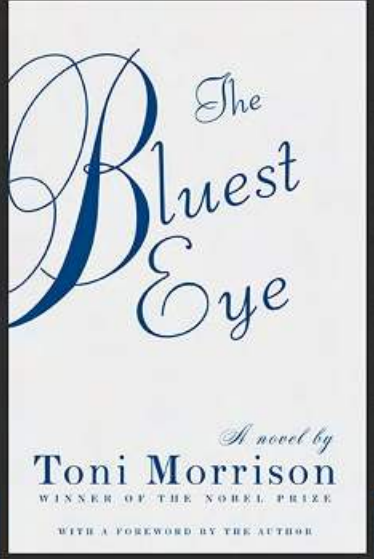
#3

MOST CHALLENGED BOOK OF 2022

FOR DEPICTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE, EDI CONTENT, CLAIMED TO BE SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

[ALA.ORG/BBOOKS](https://www.ala.org/bbooks)
ALA American Library Association

[CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS BOOK FROM PCL](#)



The Bluest Eye
A novel by
Toni Morrison
WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE
WITH A FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR

Save the Date

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 to learn about 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.

FROM THE
**LANDSCAPE &
BUILDING
MAINTENANCE
COMMITTEES**

by Dawn Foster, SEMG 2017,
Landscape Committee Co-Chair



On May 17, we noticed something different about the Harvard Century Plant (agave) in the High Country Garden in front of the library – it had started its huge blossom stalk! Even though it's called a "Century Plant," agaves more typically bloom between 10 and 30 years. The agave uses every ounce of energy and reserves to bloom, and as such the agave dies after blooming and setting seed, a characteristic referred to as "monocarpic."

Not knowing how long the growth process would take till bloom, we suggested a contest where library patrons could submit a "guess" as to when the very first agave blossom would open! The idea quickly caught on, and the submission of patron guesses began on May 18. It was decided that contest submissions would be closed when the first composite flower "arm" or individual flower stalk was evident. This occurred on June 1.

We were fully expecting some lucky patron would win shortly thereafter. Even though the main flower stalk had grown very tall over the preceding weeks, I don't think anyone was prepared for the extended length of time to go from main stalk initiation to actually opening one of the composite flowers: 6+ weeks! The first "bloom" opened (actually two flowerets opened the same day) on June 30! And it turns out that no one guessed June 29 or 30, but two patrons did guess July 1!

So we declared two winners – congratulations to Annie Gross and Phyllis Devlin! And what did these lucky patrons win? What else...but a plant! And yes, we'll continue to chronicle the full blossom in its glory, and the slow decline of the "mother" plant. And regardless of whether or not we get some "pups," we'll replace this spectacular specimen with another, albeit smaller, version.

As an added bonus, in addition to the pollinating bats mentioned in the last newsletter, I've noticed some new birds visiting the library grounds to take advantage of the one-time agave blossoms, like the Scott's oriole pictured below!



When we first noticed its bloom



See how much it has grown in one day!



First "arm" peeked out



Two flowerets of composite flower opened



Congrats Annie G. – contest winner!



Congrats Phyllis D. – contest winner! (Photo: Annie G.)



Dying agave post-bloom – 8/20



Scott's oriole

**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*

CHECK OUT 2022'S TOP BANNED BOOKS!

#5 (tie)

**MOST CHALLENGED
BOOK OF 2022**

FOR LGBTQIA+ CONTENT,
CLAIMED TO BE SEXUALLY EXPLICIT



ALA.ORG/BBOOKS
ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation

**CLICK HERE TO CHECK
OUT THIS BOOK FROM PCL**



**PLACITAS
GARDEN TOUR**

ARTISTS EXHIBIT
SEPTEMBER 2-28

OPEN HOUSE
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 10

“Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as the paint and the soil and sky as canvas.”

~ Elizabeth Murray

Artists on display:

- Meg Leonard: Oil, Pastels
- Mary Lou Skelton: Gourds
- Jude Rudder: Watercolor, Oil
- Sabina Turner: Textiles
- PK Williams: Mixed Media
- Erica Wendell-Oglesby: Mosaic, Jewelry, Photography

The Open House will be held on Sept 10. Artists' works will be displayed at the library from Sept 2-28.



“We must reject not only the stereotypes that others hold of us, but also the stereotypes that we hold of ourselves.” ~ Shirley Chisholm

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 Gracie 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. **An artist reception will be held on Oct 13 from 5-6:30 PM. The exhibit runs from Sept 30-Nov 13.**

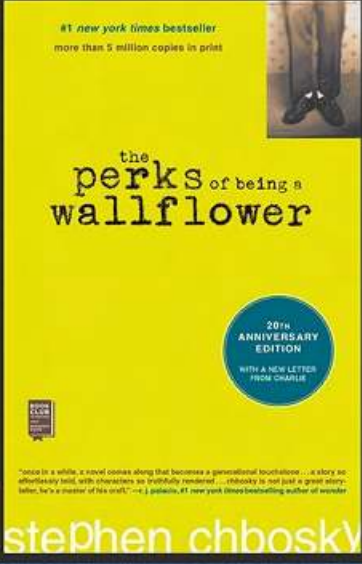
CHECK OUT 2022'S TOP BANNED BOOKS!

#5^(tie)
MOST CHALLENGED BOOK OF 2022

FOR DEPICTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE, LGBTQIA+ CONTENT, DRUG USE, PROFANITY, CLAIMED TO BE SEXUALLY EXPLICIT

ALA.ORG/BOOKS
ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation

[CLICK HERE TO CHECK OUT THIS BOOK FROM PCL](#)



#1 *new york times* bestseller
more than 5 million copies in print

the perks of being a wallflower

20th ANNIVERSARY EDITION
WITH A NEW LETTER FROM CHARLIE

stePhen chbosky

"once in a while, a novel comes along that becomes a generational touchstone... a story so extraordinary, with characters so vividly rendered... *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is not just a great story, but a master of his craft." — J. Pollock, #1 *new york times* bestselling author of *Wonder*



**DUNGEONS
DRAGONS
GROUP**

EMAIL ANNE FROST (ANNEGREY3@GMAIL.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION



Sept 16 (1-3 PM): Kids' Polished Glass Art Program with Karen Shatar

Karen will guide your child through the process of decorating a polished glass hot air balloon. All materials will be provided. This program is for children ages 6-12. We are also offering a pre-k activity at the same time for children 0-5. This age group will decorate a paper hot air balloon. Special thanks to *Karen Shatar, A Touch of Glass Art* and the *Placitas Artist Series* for providing this program. If possible, please RSVP to [Nora](#) with the age of each child attending so we can provide adequate supplies.

October 29 (1-3 PM): Annual Halloween Party

We will have scary stories with Indiana Bones, activities, and trick or treating! Wear your costume and bring the entire family.

The
PLACITAS *Community* LIBRARY

Children's Committee

presents

polished glass
**HOT AIR
BALLOONS**

with
Karen Shatar

**SEPT 16
1 - 3**

Join Placitas glass artist, *Karen Shatar*, as she guides your child through the creation of a beautiful polished glass hot air balloon with decorations! Don't worry: polished glass means no rough edges!

Thanks to *The Placitas Artist Series*, there is no charge and all materials will be provided.

For children 6 - 11.
Pre-K paper balloon activity will be available for kiddos ages 0 - 5.

In our effort to ensure that we have enough materials, kindly RSVP with the number of kids and their ages to:

nntimmons@comcast.net

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Karen Shatar &
A Touch of Glass Art
Born of Sand,
Shaped by Hand

*The
Placitas
Artists
Series*

453 hwy 165 | 505.867.3355 | placitaslibrary.com



Free Kids Books

No cost ever!

One book each month mailed to your home

All infants through age 5 living within

Sandoval County are eligible



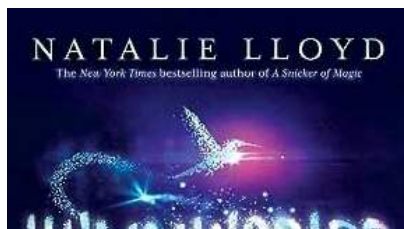
Complete and mail in the Registration Flyer available at PCL Help Desk or visit www.imaginationlibrary.com

CHILDREN'S BOOK NEWS

By Nancy Guist
Children's Collection Coordinator



A new school year has begun for our children. A combination of jitters and excitement mixed in with a bit of apprehension is felt by all – children and teachers! The books below revolve around such feelings starring a variety of characters as they confront the challenges which new school experiences can produce.



Hummingbird

by Natalie Lloyd

Suggested ages: 8-12 years

Olive has successfully convinced her parents that she is ready to attend



Macklemore Midschool. This is a major milestone because Olive has always been homeschooled due to her being *fragile*. Olive has brittle bone disease (osteogenesis imperfecta). She has experienced frequent broken bones and moves about in a wheelchair. Her parents have been reluctant to expose her to environments where the hustle and bustle of moving students might increase the likelihood of such accidents. But Olive is determined and more than anything else she wishes for a BFF – her own best friend.

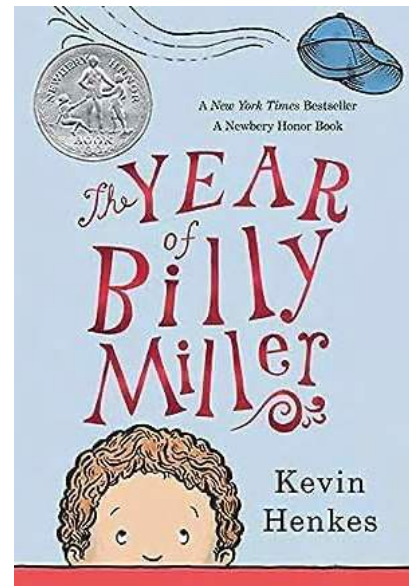
Hummingbird is told in Olive’s spirited voice filled with energy and pluck. One can’t help but become her cheerleader! Her first weeks of school bring new voices into her life – Mr. Watson, her sixth-grade teacher (“*Miracles are all around us*”) and Grace Cho, a special classmate (“*The magic is real*”). Other characters who have been part of Olive’s life evolve and take on added meaning for her as the story develops.

The “miracles” and the “magic” play a role in the search for a magical hummingbird that grants a wish to whoever finds it. It is said to be in a spot that reflects both fear and wonder. And as the plot progresses, we see that the mixture of both feelings can create amazing outcomes. The reader will enjoy the ride as Olive finds her wings for her own miracle!

The Year of Billy Miller **(A Newbery Award Honor Winner)** **by Kevin Henkes**

Suggested ages: 6–8 years

Billy Miller, who is beginning second grade, is preoccupied by the premonition that he is not quite smart enough. On the way home from a vacation to South Dakota, his family had stopped to see a statue of the Jolly Green Giant and it was there that the wind picked up his new Black Hills baseball hat. Billy had reached over the guardrail to grab it and found himself falling, hitting his head. The result was a goose egg, but doctors assured them all that Billy was otherwise unharmed. Still, the newness of second grade made him worried.

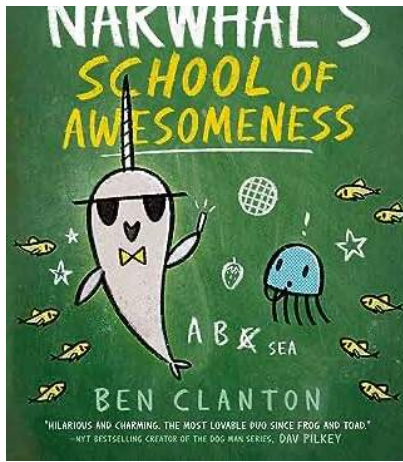


Billy, however, finds that all is well as he navigates his 2nd grade year. He survives know-it-all Emma who sits in his classroom group. While creating his bat habitat diorama, he learns to persevere, turning an unexpected accident into a positive attribute. Billy even begins to appreciate his younger sister, Sal, after their failed attempt at staying up all night. And after frustrating efforts, he creates a poem to honor his mother. Even his casual idea for his stay-at-home artist father, who is hoping for a breakthrough, leads to an artistic success.

Henkes has a quiet, direct writing style that evokes the day-to-day life of a 2nd grader in a natural, realistic way. The short chapters and larger print, with occasional line drawings, are approachable for young readers who have begun to investigate longer chapter books. *The Year of Billy Miller* successfully reflects the varied relationships which are inherently a part of early school days along with the dependable warmth and support of family.



Narwhal's School of Awesomeness (A Narwhal and Jelly Book #6)

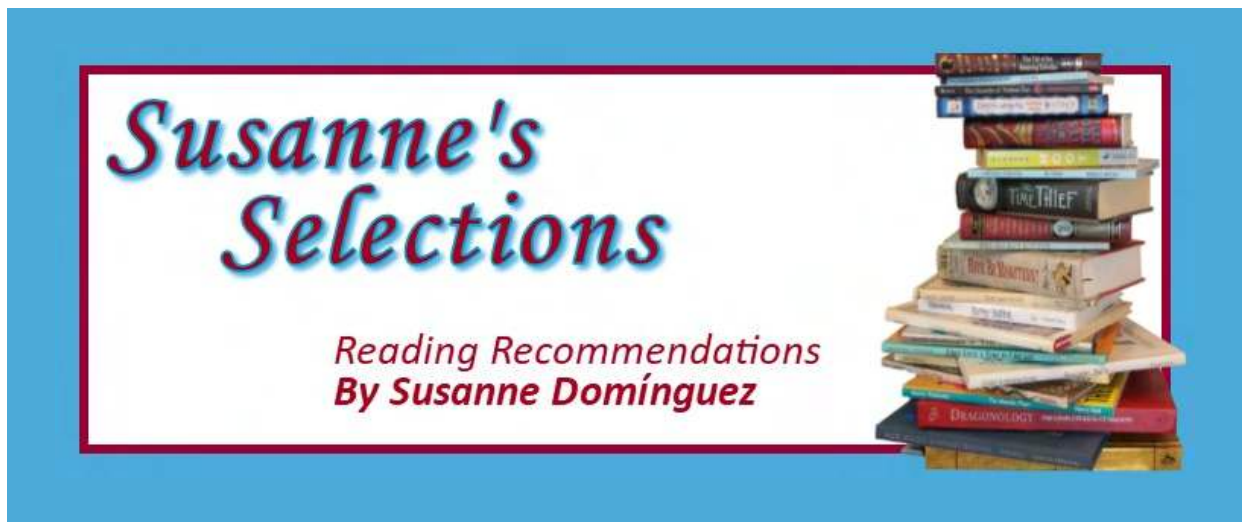


by **Ben Clanton**

Suggested ages: 5–8 years

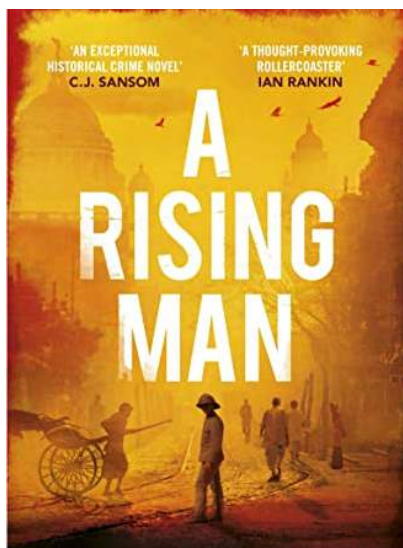
This is the sixth book in the zany and humorous Narwhal and Jelly graphic novel series. But instead of seeing school days through the eyes of a student, Narwhal and Jelly become the teachers – substitute teachers! A school of fish are without their teacher, Mr. Blowfish, and so Professor Knowell (Narwhal) and Super Teacher (Jelly) save the day. From Wafflematics to a science scavenger hunt to a hilarious game of tag at recess, the two buddies make for a creative school day. Humor and positive thinking are sprinkled throughout.

Besides this graphic novel series which are cataloged as EASY, there are also a couple of Narwhal and Jelly board books in our collection.



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



A Rising Man

by **Abir Mukherjee**

The first in the Wyndham & Banerjee series of five books (at present), this gripping historical novel is set in Calcutta, India in 1919, during the waning days of the British Imperial power over India. Britain attempts to maintain its elitist status, while the Indian people protest and clamor for equality for themselves and independence from the British.

Witty and filled with plenty of verve and social commentary regarding the tense Anglo-Indian relations and the diverse culture, former Scotland Yard detective, Captain Sam Wyndham narrates the story. After the trauma of the Great War and the loss of his wife, Wyndham seeks a change in his life. He decides to accept a position in India at the

ABIR MUKHERJEE

Imperial Police Force. His assistant, Sergeant Surendranath “Surrender-not” Banerjee is a colorful and insightful character. Because he is Indian, he is limited by where he is allowed to go, and frequently encounters racist behavior, which he handles with aplomb, despite the rude behavior he endures and the difficulties it poses in performing his work.

Upon his arrival to Calcutta, Wyndam is faced with a brutal murder of a high-ranking British official, the aide to the Lieutenant Governor. Wyndam must determine if it is politically motivated and locate the culprit, while keeping the local people’s animosity and resentment of the mostly-white police force’s investigation at bay and prevent civil unrest. It’s an intriguing and brilliantly-written mystery. I’ve read all the books in the series. Except for one which was quite bleak, I enjoyed them immensely!

A Rising Man won the CWA Endeavour Dagger for best historical crime novel of 2017 and was shortlisted for the MWA Edgar for best novel. Mukherjee’s second novel, *A Necessary Evil*, won the Wilbur Smith Award for Adventure Writing. His third novel, *Smoke and Ashes*, was chosen by the Sunday Times as one of the 100 Best Crime & Thriller Novels since 1945. Mukherjee grew up in Scotland and now lives in England with his wife and two sons.

The Reading List by Sara Nisha Adams

“Please try to remember that books aren’t always an escape; sometimes books teach us things. They show us the world; they don’t hide it.”
~ Sara Nisha Adams

17-year-old Aleisha, working a summer job in her local library in London, is bored and restless until she discovers an elderly widower, Mukesh, at the library. Mukesh is retired and has never been to the library, despite his wife having been an avid reader. Aleisha helps him work through his grief over the loss of his wife, Naina, via library books. Mukesh is also attempting to develop a closer relationship with Priya, his granddaughter, who loves to read. Naina previously suggested he become closer to Priya by reading with her, thus his reason for going to the library. Aleisha has challenges of her own. Her mother Leilah is mentally ill and caring for her is an enormous effort, although her brother Aidan, performs most of the caregiving.

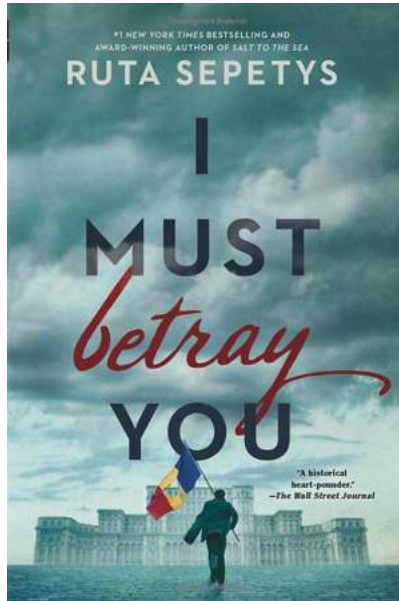
Aleisha finds a piece of paper inside a library book listing eight books. Curious, she wonders who wrote the list. Unfamiliar with the book titles, she begins to read them. She shares the first book, *The Time Traveler’s Wife*, with Mukesh, who, like Aleisha, is a former non-reader. As he cautiously reads the book, he’s surprised how “*this book felt like one little glimpse into Naina’s soul, into their marriage, their life together.*”

Each book in the list evokes different responses and connections between the book’s characters and the reader. For example, in *Beloved*, Toni Morrison’s masterpiece, Morrison shows how community is critical in providing much-needed emotional support. We need to leave our comfort zone, and reach out and ask others for help and/or advice. In my experience, most people want to help.

Eventually, Mukesh and Aleisha bond and help each other prevail over seemingly impossible life challenges, with the impetus being the connections created by the shared books. Sensitive and evocative, *The Reading List* is an enchanting novel.



In addition to the eight books included in the reading list, at the end of the novel the author included her own personal book list: "...books that have changed the way I've thought about writing, people, the world. Books that inspired me, taught me more than any school lesson could. Books that made me want to be a reader and eventually a writer...These books found me at just the right time in my life...They've stayed with me ever since." Included in her list are such phenomenal novels as *The God of Small Things*, *Americanah*, and *A Fine Balance*. I've read all of the books. They are worthy, thought-provoking books and would be perfect book club choices. What books have transformed and/or impacted your perspectives?



I Must Betray You by Ruta Sepetys

In this riveting historical thriller, seventeen-year-old Cristian chronicles his struggle against the totalitarian regime of the dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu. (Ceaușescu and his wife, Elena, ruled Romania from 1965 to 1989, when the communist regime was finally overthrown. They were both tried and convicted of murder and other related barbaric crimes, and executed by firing squad on Christmas day in 1989.)

Cristian is blackmailed by the Securitate, the notorious Romanian secret police, into becoming an informer. He realizes in order to stay alive he must betray everyone he cares about – his family, sweetheart, friends, and neighbors, OR choose to surreptitiously fight the regime. (One in ten citizens were informers.) The story describes how repressive the society was at that time, and how citizens managed by stealth and imagination to survive despite the stringent restrictions and censorship. Birth control was illegal, and breaking the law or criticizing the regime was cause for imprisonment, torture, and often death. Medicine, food, basic necessities, and energy shortages were the norm.

After finishing this compelling novel, read both the author's note regarding the revolution, the bibliography, and the epilogue section. Archival photographs of the people and daily life during that time period enhance the novel. As in most bibliographies, this bibliography provides many informative, related books to read for the inquiring mind.

I always eagerly await Sepetys's new novels. She conducts impeccable research and her books possess immense heart. Exceedingly enlightening, they shed light on lesser-known notable issues and history. I previously reviewed her excellent novel, *The Fountains of Silence*, which can be read [here](#).

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