

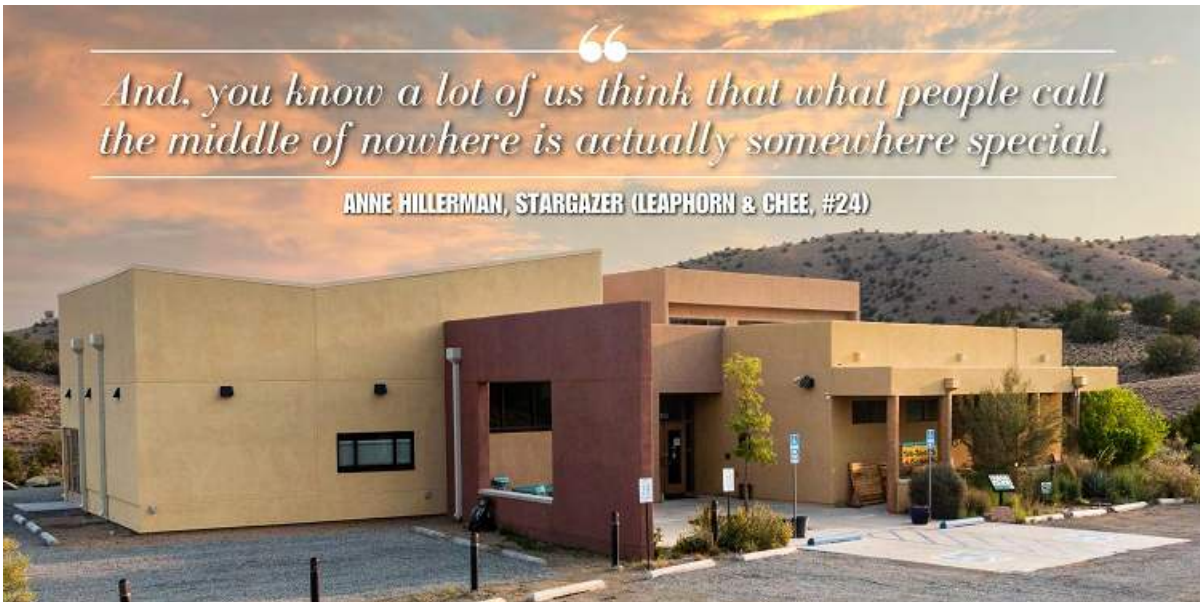
PLACITAS *Community* LIBRARY



NEWSLETTER MAY/JUNE 2024

“
*And, you know a lot of us think that what people call
the middle of nowhere is actually somewhere special.*

ANNE HILLERMAN, STARGAZER (LEAPHORN & CHEE, #24)



PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY HOURS

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

ADULT PROGRAMS

- **MAY 4 (6 PM):** Placitas Star Party and Star Talk with The Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS)
 - **JUNE 23 (2 PM):** Anne Hillerman in Conversation with Ron Franscell (signed copies of Anne's latest book, *Lost Birds*, will be available at the library beginning late April)
-

ART RECEPTIONS & EXHIBITS

- **APR 20–MAY 12:** Exhibit: 27th Placitas Studio Tour Preview
 - **JUNE 21 (5–6:30 PM):** Artists' Reception: Our America – A Tapestry of Cultural Diversity (exhibit will be displayed June 8–July 18)
-

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

- **MAY 14 at 10 AM:** Pre-K Story Time. The theme is “The Amazing Honeybees.” Activities include stories, finger plays, craft, game, and a honey snack.
- **MAY 18 at 1 PM:** Summer Registration Party. A treasure hunt in the Pearl Room and a celebration of the 80th birthday of Smokey Bear. There will be books and prizes given for registering early and completing the treasure hunt. Many of the prizes are from Smokey. There will be a raffle and birthday cake.

Summer Reading Program and Reading Challenge: “Adventure Begins at Your Library”

- **JUNE 8 at 12 PM:** "The Modern Pop Art Experience" with artist, Michael Albert. Michael is the creator of "Cerealism," which is creating collages with cereal boxes. His first was created with Frosted Flakes. Since that first collage, he has become a nationally-acclaimed artist showing his art in museums in New York and at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. Michael will bring examples of his work and conduct a hands-on workshop to show your children how to create their own collage. The program finishes with a free poster giveaway and signing. A great opportunity!
 - **JUNE 15 at 2 PM:** Meet the Exotics of the Rainforest. Carolyn and Sparky Newell will return with over 30 animals they have rescued over the years. Meet snakes, beautiful tropical birds, and many more. A wonderful adventure!
 - **JUNE 22 at 2 PM:** Stephanie Kaylan, founder of the Wanagi Wolf Fund and Rescue, will return with her wolf ambassador, Jioyti, to share her experiences when she first created the wolf rescue. Stephanie will describe the care and training of her beloved wolves and wolf dogs, and how she helps rescue wolves all over the country. Another amazing adventure!
 - **JUNE 29 at 1 PM:** STEM Goes to the Olympics. Explore the relationship of sports and science presented by our very own volunteers, Stephanie and Walt Witowski. Remember their terrific windmill activity last summer? This summer participate in more science adventures.
-

RECURRING EVENTS

- **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!
- **La Parranda: Club de Español** (Every Wed at 10 AM): Use and learn español with Diane Herrera Shepard and other guests. Open to anyone, especially beginners. No registration or regular attendance required!
- **Drumming Circle** (1st Sun of each month at 4 PM): Bring your own drum or use one of the many we have.
- **Dungeons & Dragons Group:** Email Anne Frost (annegrey3@gmail.com) for more information.

“

The old songs her mother had taught her rang in her head, gentle greetings for the day to ask blessings for the world and all the creatures it contained.

Anne Hillerman, *Spider Woman's Daughter* (Leaphorn & Chee, #19)



NEWS FROM YOUR LIBRARY BOARD

By Lynnette Fields, PCL Board Chair

Please join me in welcoming our newest Board member, Seth Betterly. He joins our current board, Susan Brown, Jillian Gonzales (Secretary), Margaret (Maggie) A. Huber (Treasurer), Jill Kennedy (Vice-Chair), Linda Lucero Hughes, Kendra Lucero-Matteucci, and Kate Miller.



Seth Betterly

I was born and raised in New Jersey outside of Philadelphia and have lived in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Montana, Scotland, and Texas. My wife and I moved from Houston to Placitas three years ago and fell in love with the town instantly. While in Houston, I was employed as a seismic interpretation geophysicist, whose primary jobs were developing existing oil fields and working in oil exploration projects in areas as diverse as Peru and Scotland, to right here in the Land of Enchantment. I have bachelor's degrees in geology and geography from the University of Delaware, and a master's degree in geophysical engineering from Montana Tech in beautiful Butte America.

Libraries are in my DNA. My mother has been an active board member in my hometown's library for decades. Some of my fondest early memories are of my mom taking me to the library

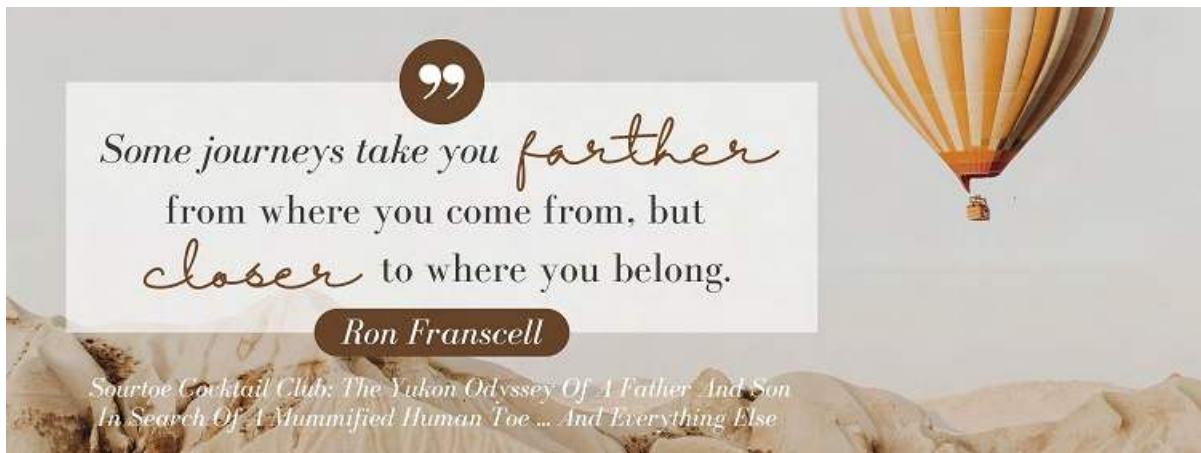
to pick out books about famous characters from American history. I believe this love for reading helped foster my interest in travel and experiencing new cultures and places. My current hobbies include travel, camping, reading, hiking, snowshoeing, snowboarding, golfing, and kayaking. I have also developed a strong love for photography in the last five years and I enjoy participating in various photography shows in the Albuquerque area. Placitas is a great town and I feel lucky to live here. I

volunteer to give back to the great community I live in.

Strategic Planning

Systemic strategic planning is an integral part of every organization and it's time for the Placitas Community Library (PCL) to embark on this process. The Board has hired Chris Montoya, a fellow Placitan, to guide us. His work focuses on organizational culture assessment, strategic visioning, and creating reputable strong teams. He has many years of experience and the Board felt he was the perfect person to work with as we create a strategic plan for the next three years. The Strategic Planning Committee consists of Dennis Bumgarner, Jillian Gonzales, Lynne Hynes, Jim Neal, Jenny Trujillo, and me. We are very excited about this opportunity to take PCL to the next level.

The Committee began meeting in March and hope to complete the process in the next six months. We will be eliciting feedback from the community in a variety of ways: one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and surveys. You will be hearing much more about this in the next few months. We want you to help us make PCL the very best library it can be.



*Sourtoe Cocktail Club: The Yukon Odyssey Of A Father And Son
In Search Of A Mummified Human Toe ... And Everything Else*



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, MAY 16, 6:00 PM
THURS, JUNE 20, 6:00 PM**



Lynne's Letters

MESSAGE FROM
THE DIRECTOR



What Are You Reading?

As a library director and a librarian, I am asked the question **“What are you reading?”** I always enjoy answering this question because I get to talk about books and I get to promote our collection here at PCL. I also enjoy learning about what others like to read as well. Everyone is different and I find it interesting when people describe why they have chosen the book they are currently reading.

I am currently reading *Everyone on This Train Is a Suspect* by Benjamin Stevenson. I personally enjoy reading new books the most. I find myself scanning our new book section and finding on average 3–4 books that I cannot wait to read. I do find that I am drawn to books with interesting covers. I primarily read fiction and mystery books. I like to read books that are part of a series because I get to know the characters and want to read about their next adventures.

On Sundays, I get the New York Times Book Review and look through it for new best sellers. Our cataloging team does a wonderful job ordering and preparing new and donated books to add to our collection weekly.

We always appreciate requests from our patrons to purchase items to add to our collection and we always want to know **what you want to read.**

Happy Reading!

Lynne

WITH BEAUTY BEFORE ME MAY I WALK.
WITH BEAUTY BEHIND ME MAY I WALK.
WITH BEAUTY BELOW ME MAY I WALK.
WITH BEAUTY ABOVE ME MAY I WALK.
WITH BEAUTY ALL AROUND ME MAY I WALK.

ANNE HILLERMAN, SONG OF THE LION (LEAPHORN & CHEE, #21)



Almost everyone who visits PCL has the same thing to say: “*This is an amazing library.*” We ARE an amazing library, and it is only because of our incredible volunteers. In this series of articles, the newly established Appreciation Committee is going to highlight just what volunteers do for our library. We would not be able to function without the dedication and enthusiasm of our volunteers. PCL has only two part-time employees: the Library Director and the Library Administrator. They work very hard, but without the volunteers they wouldn’t be able to keep the library functioning at the high level we have come to expect.

Over the next several newsletters, we are going to pick one or two areas of the library and highlight the work of our volunteers. The focus of this first article will be the Building Maintenance (BMC) and Landscape (LC) Committees.

PCL does not have a building engineer, but we do have the BMC. This Committee takes care of all the day-to-day maintenance of the building, and any surprises that pop up throughout the year. In addition to making sure that everything is working as it should, the BMC:

- Maintains the multiple Reverse Osmosis water treatment systems
- Purchases and maintains salt in the water softener
- Replaces water filters when necessary
- Periodically reads the water service meter
- Replaces security system batteries when necessary
- Completes a monthly check of the fire extinguishers
- Arranges for annual fire panel inspection, and periodic septic tank clean out

And if this doesn’t keep them busy enough, they also install our memorial walkway bricks, take care of the parking lot, including ensuring American Disability Act compliance of the handicap parking spaces, and maintain outside lighting and two outbuildings! Thank you so much to the BMC for keeping PCL in such good working order. You do a stellar job.

We’re sure every time you come to the library, you marvel at how beautiful our landscaping and gardens are. Did you know that our gardens are registered as a USDA People’s Garden, a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat, and recently joined the local ABQ Backyard Refuge Program? This is all thanks to the hours and hours put in by our LC. They have multiple work days throughout the year when they work on all the gardens, the labyrinth, parking areas, and surrounding acreage. There are a myriad of tasks involved in the periodic work days including weeding, cutting back native perennials, pruning native trees/shrubs (like mountain mahogany, desert willows, privets, and Apache plumes), maintaining access to our roadside sign, and clean out and maintenance of the water feature for human and wildlife enjoyment. Another huge job the LC manages is maintenance and improvements on the drip irrigation system. Although most of the

garden plantings are xeric in nature, many of these plants thrive with some water, and there are times when even some of the native plants not on drip irrigation require watering.

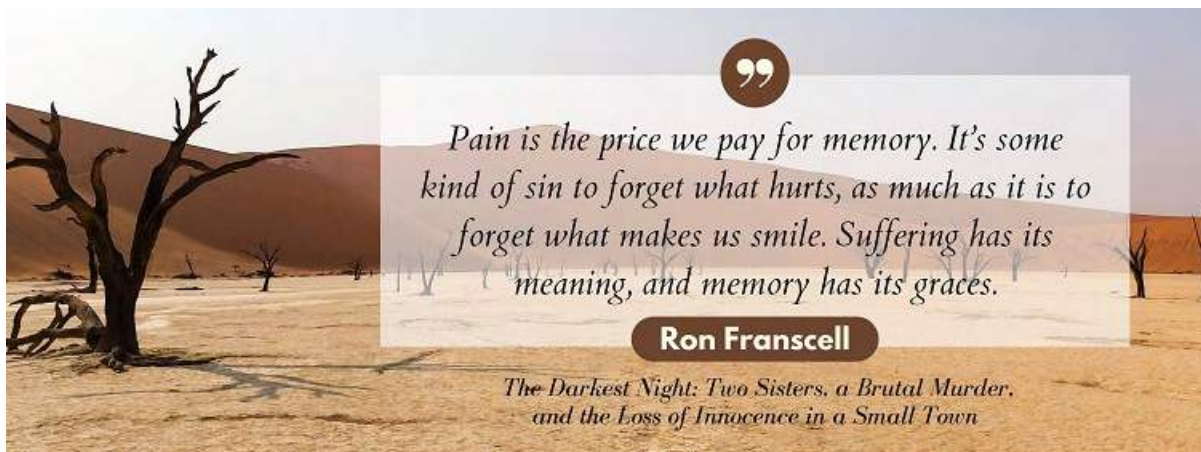
The LC has also just completed a plant database that lists nearly all the plants in the garden, with details about each plant, including sun and water requirements, color and bloom time, wildlife benefactors, and helpful hints regarding use/care of these various plants. This database will soon be available on the PCL website, as well as a print copy at the Help Desk.

The LC is also always looking for new ways to educate our community and enhance our gardens such as maintaining our bluebird houses, purchasing/building bee houses and documenting the birds that visit our garden. Many, many thanks to the LC for making our outdoor space so spectacular.

If you think you might be interested in serving on either of these committees or would like more information, please contact Diane Gonano, our Volunteer Coordinator at coordinator@placitaslibrary.com.

Again, thank you so much to everyone who works so hard on these and all our PCL committees.

The PCL Appreciation Committee is comprised of Dennis Bumgarner, Doris Fields, Lynnette Fields, Linda Hughes (Chair), Jill Kennedy, and Sue Ortiz.



PCL's Spring Star Party had to be rescheduled due to very cloudy weather in March. The new date is **Saturday, May 4**. The Star Party begins at 6 PM with Solar Viewing. At 7:30 PM, The Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS) will offer a presentation from Tom Grzybowski on "*The Sun, its Features, and Observing Safety.*" This will be followed by a presentation by the TAAS Fabulous50 Team on the

“*Spring Sky and Constellations*,” highlighting the important planets and stars that will be visible – Jupiter, Uranus, Sirius, double stars, and galactic nebula. By then, the sky will be dark and viewing will continue into the night. There will be a variety of types and sizes of telescopes to guide you to the wonders of our dark skies.

The Placitas Star Party is free and open to all people between the ages of ages 1 day and 120 years, so bring your family, friends, and your curiosity. The enthusiastic members of TAAS will be on hand to share their knowledge of the heavens, as well as the different telescopes on hand. Star Parties are a fun and informal way to learn, meet other sky watchers, and inspire lifelong learning about our universe.

It is highly recommended that you arrive well before dark for ease of parking and for watching the setup of the various types of telescopes. Dress warmly and only use red flashlights or headlamps in the observing area in order to preserve night vision. This event is co-sponsored by TAAS and PCL. Please have only parking lights on as you come into the parking lot. PCL’s magnificent “Parking Jedis” will be on hand with their light sabers to direct you. If you bring a flashlight, please cover it with red which is the only light which does not affect night vision.

For more information, see www.taas.org, www.placitaslibrary.com, call (505) 867-3355 or email to taas@taas.org. We look forward to seeing you and the stars on **Saturday, May 4 at 6 PM** or later.



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 plusuperstar at www.freepik.com

The poster features a central illustration of five raised fists in various skin tones (light, medium, dark, and two shades of brown) against a light background. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with a dark brown background for the top and bottom sections.



“Traditional Navajo weavers like her mother held several ideas in their mind simultaneously, moving one to the forefront and then another, focusing on details while simultaneously remembering the big picture and making the process seamless.”

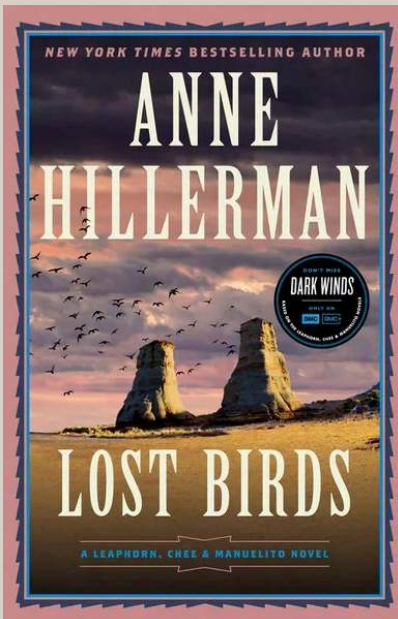
Anne Hillerman, *Rock with Wings* (Leaphorn & Chee, #20)

The quote is set against a background of a sunset over a mountain range. The sun is a large, glowing yellow circle on the right side, partially obscured by the mountains. The sky is a gradient of orange and red. The mountains are dark silhouettes against the bright sky.



ANNE HILLERMAN IN CONVERSATION WITH RON FRANSCCELL

SUNDAY, JUNE 23 | 2 PM



PCL is delighted to host a conversation between two of our favorite authors, Anne Hillerman and our own Ron Franscell, on **Sunday, June 23 at 2 PM**. Over the last 14 years, Anne has become a dear friend of this library and she honors us with a visit with each new book. *Lost Birds* is the ninth book in her Leaphorn, Chee & Manuelito series. Each novel explores complex emotional issues which test the detectives in different ways. This time, Anne has taken on the extremely complicated issues involving the adoption of Indigenous children by non-native parents. Once again, in *Lost Birds*, she delivers a thought-provoking, gripping mystery that brings to life the vivid terrain of the American Southwest, its people, and the lore and traditions that make it distinct. To the delight of many Hillerman readers (father and daughter), Joe Leaphorn features prominently in this story.

Anne will be joined by her friend Ron Franscell, a New York Times bestselling author of true crime and fiction mysteries, including *Deaf Row* and *The Darkest Night*. Ron and his wife moved to

Placitas a few years ago and have become fast friends with PCL. Anne and Ron will converse about their approaches to writing and much more.

Signed copies of *Lost Birds* will be available at PCL beginning in late April. Thanks to Anne's generosity, all sales benefit your library. Anne and Ron each draw big crowds, so please come early for a good seat. We look forward to seeing you on **Sunday, June 23 at 2 PM**.

FAITH IS SEEING THE
BRILLIANT COUNTENANCE OF
GOD SHINING UP AT US
FROM EVERY CREATURE.

RON FRANSCCELL. SHADOWMAN: AN ELUSIVE
PSYCHO KILLER AND THE BIRTH OF FBI PROFILING





The PCL Landscape Committee recently completed a digital database of most, if not all, of the existing plants within our various gardens. An electronic version can soon be found on the newly-updated PCL website, but in the meanwhile a hard copy version can be found at the Help Desk. Detailed information for each listed plant includes:

- General garden location
- Plant type (e.g. tree/shrub, agave/yucca/cacti, perennial, or grass)
- Botanical and common plant name(s) and varietal/cultivar name, if appropriate
- Thumbnail photograph
- Sun exposure and water needs
- Blossom color and bloom season
- Hardiness zones
- Identifies which plants are native
- Wildlife benefactors
- Additional comments (may include helpful information related to pruning, soil preferences, longevity/mature size, pests, rabbit/deer resistance, and more)

As some of you may be aware, the USDA updated its [Plant Hardiness Zone Map](#) in 2023. “The USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map (PHZM) is the standard by which gardeners and growers can determine which perennial plants are most likely to thrive at a location. The map is based on the average annual extreme minimum winter temperature, displayed as 10-degree F zones and 5-degree F half zones.”

There is some interesting information on the new 2023 Plant Hardiness Zone Map versus previous maps (1990 and 2012 versions) on the USDA website noted above. Although it seems there is not much change here in Placitas [we remain listed as Zone 7 (a or b depending where you're located)], the USDA website notes that *“Compared to the 2012 and 1990 maps, zone boundaries in this 2023 edition have shifted in many areas. The new PHZM is generally about one quarter-zone warmer than reported in the 2012 PHZM throughout much of the United States, as a result of a more recent averaging period (1976–2005 vs. 1991–2020).”* For additional information on how the new 2023 PHZM was derived and subsequent changes visit the USDA website noted previously.



“Blown up” version



Average Annual Extreme Minimum Temperature 1991-2020

Temp (F)	Zone	Temp (C)	Temp (F)	Zone	Temp (C)
-20 to -15	5a	-28.9 to -26.1	0 to 5	7a	-17.8 to -15
-15 to -10	5b	-26.1 to -23.3	5 to 10	7b	-15 to -12.2
-10 to -5	6a	-23.3 to -20.6	10 to 15	8a	-12.2 to -9.4
-5 to 0	6b	-20.6 to -17.8	15 to 20	8b	-9.4 to -6.7

And finally, spring irises, the first to bloom, are unfurling their purple flags while many of the other garden plants are just waking up! The last of the winter pruning is complete, and the refurbished water feature is up and running, so our most recent Landscape Committee Work Day volunteers – Wayne Gordon, Sue Ortiz, Betty Vreeke, Carol Warren, and Stephanie & Walt Witkowski – came out to play in the dirt. As usual we weeded (we always weed!), removed overly abundant little bluestem grasses, straightened and secured the parking bumpers adjacent to the front High Country Garden, and placed border rocks/stones around the Flagpole Garden.

Happy Gardening!

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*

27th Placitas Studio Tour May 11-12, 2024 | 10 am – 5 pm
 79 Artists at 61 Locations!

Free Preview Exhibit April 20 – May 12
 at the Placitas Community Library
 Brochures and maps for the Studio Tour will be available.



Image above features works of (clockwise from left) Lani Hitchens, Daniella Willett-Rabin, Phillip Timper, John DeCamp, and Althea Cajero

PCL's Art Committee is proud to present the 27th Placitas Studio Tour Preview Exhibition in the Gracie Lee Community Room. Featuring examples from all 79 artists who will be exhibiting their fine arts and crafts in 61 locations throughout the Placitas area, this show gives the viewer a sneak peek of the artwork that can be found during the open studio event on May 11 and 12.

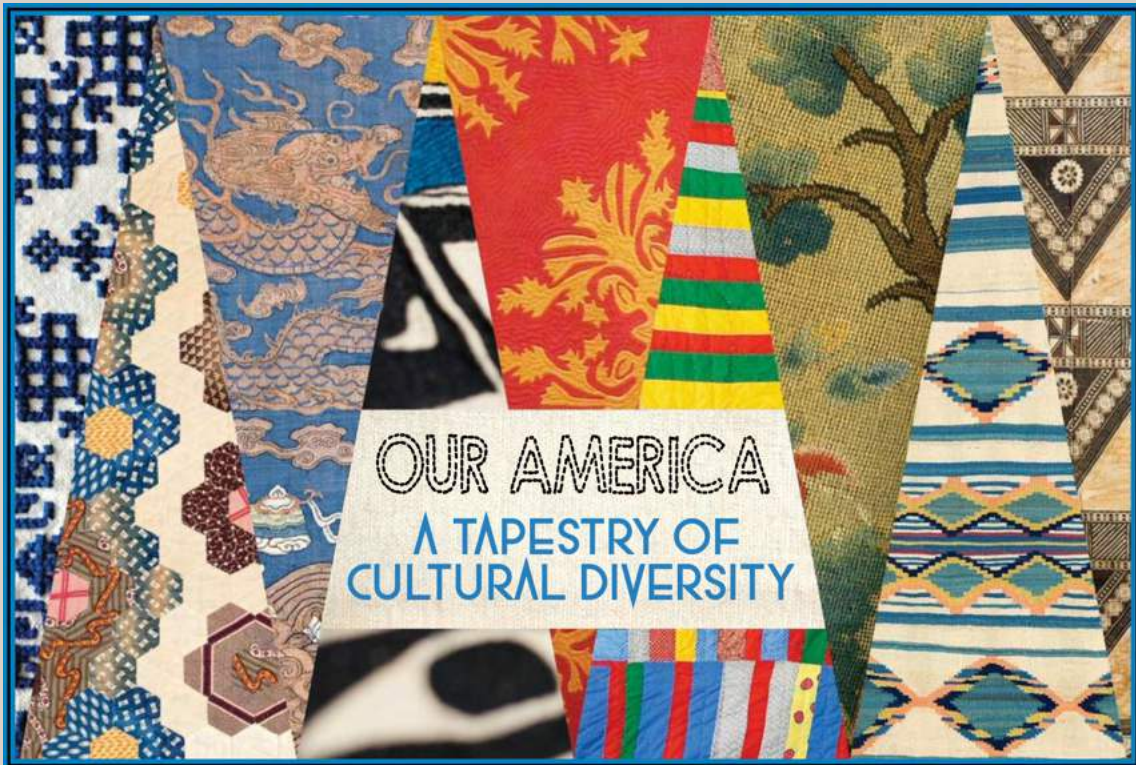
The exhibition will be presented by neighborhood, providing the public an opportunity to map out the studios they plan to visit during this traditional Mother's Day event. Brochures and maps for the Studio

Tour will be available at the library throughout the exhibition, which will have extended viewing hours of 10 AM to 5 PM on May 11 and 12.

To see more of the artists' works before the Placitas Studio Tour, visit placitasstudiotour.com. There you will find a poster of all participating artists, with links to individual artist pages containing contact and website information.

Thanks to a generous donation by the Placitas Studio Tour Board of Directors to PCL, 100% of the proceeds from all sales at this preview exhibition will go directly to the artist.

For additional information or images, please contact exhibition coordinator Colleen Gregoire at czgregoire@gmail.com.



Dates of Exhibit: June 8 - July 18

Artists Reception: June 21, 5 PM - 6:30 PM

"Our America" is a tapestry of cultural diversity bound together by the unique weft and warp of stories and experiences of all people representing various backgrounds and origins of the American landscape.

Through the lens of art, we explore and celebrate the richness and complexity of our collective identity.

Artists are invited to reflect and draw inspiration from their personal connections with family legacies, ancestral roots, and cultural traditions, and how those are woven into the canvas of "Our America."



Children's Programs in May

- **May 14 at 10 AM:** Pre-K Story Time. The theme is "The Amazing Honeybees." Activities include stories, finger plays, craft, game, and a honey snack.
- **May 18 at 1 PM:** Summer Registration Party. A treasure hunt in the Pearl Room and a celebration of the 80th birthday of Smokey Bear. There will be books and prizes given for registering early and completing the treasure hunt. Many of the prizes are from Smokey.

There will be a raffle and birthday cake.

Summer Reading Program and Reading Challenge: "Adventure Begins at Your Library"

Your adventures begin in June with:

- **June 8 at 12 PM:** "The Modern Pop Art Experience" with artist, Michael Albert. Michael is the creator of "Cerealism," which is creating collages with cereal boxes. His first was created with Frosted Flakes. Since that first collage, he has become a nationally-acclaimed artist showing his art in museums in New York and at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. Michael will bring examples of his work and conduct a hands-on workshop to show your children how to create their own collage. The program finishes with a free poster giveaway and signing. A great opportunity!
- **June 15 at 2 PM:** Meet the Exotics of the Rainforest. Carolyn and Sparky Newell will return with over 30 animals they have rescued over the years. Meet snakes, beautiful tropical birds, and many more. A wonderful adventure!
- **June 22 at 2 PM:** Stephanie Kaylan, founder of the Wanagi Wolf Fund and Rescue, will return with her wolf ambassador, Jioyti, to share her experiences when she first created the wolf rescue. Stephanie will describe the care and training of her beloved wolves and wolf dogs, and how she helps rescue wolves all over the country. Another amazing adventure!
- **June 29 at 1 PM:** STEM Goes to the Olympics. Explore the relationship of sports and science presented by our very own volunteers, Stephanie and Walt Witowski. Remember their terrific windmill activity last summer? This summer participate in more science adventures.

And continue into July!

Summer Reading Challenge

The most important part of our summer program! The goal is simply to read as many books as possible starting May 18 until July 27. Reading during the summer break from school helps your child stay on their reading grade level or even raise it higher. This benefits your child when school starts again. Each child will receive a reading log where they record the titles of the books they read. Remember the **4 R's: Read, Record, and Remember** to bring your reading log to each program. **Receive a Raffle** ticket for a prize drawing. There will be special prizes for the top readers in each age group such as Isotopes tickets, gift certificates, and more!

The PLACITAS Community LIBRARY Children's Committee invites you to our **Summer Reading Program**

ADVENTURE — BEGINS AT — YOUR LIBRARY

REMEMBER THE 4 Rs:
READ books (or have them read to you).
RECORD the titles in your log.
REMEMBER to bring the log to each event.
RECEIVE a raffle ticket!

There'll be special prizes for the top readers in each age group, such as Isotope tix, gift certificates, and MORE!

Join us for the most important part of our summer program: the **SUMMER READING CHALLENGE**. The goal is simply to read as many books as possible starting **May 18** until **July 27**. Reading during summer break from school helps your child stay on their reading grade level or even raise it higher. This benefits them when school starts again. Each child will receive a reading log where they record the titles of the books they read.

8 2:00 **EXPLORE CEREALISM**
Join modern pop artist, Michael Albert, who makes collages from cereal boxes, who'll guide you as you make your own collage.

15 2:00 **EXOTICS OF THE RAINFOREST**
Carolyn and Sparky Newell visits again with many beautiful tropical birds, snakes, and other animals.

22 2:00 **THE WANAGI WOLF RESCUE**
Stephanie Kaylan returns with her beautiful wolves and wolf dogs.

29 1:00 **STEM GOES TO THE OLYMPICS**
Explore the relationship between science and sports with Stephanie and Walt Witkowski. Remember their terrific windmill activity from last summer?

13 1:00 **BEADSI BEADSI BEADSI**
A beading party where kids will make several friendship bracelets with the help of the library beading group.

20 1:00 **CLASS WITH GLASS**
Glass art with Karen Shatar. Kids will paint a design of their own choosing on glass. Remember decorating glass balloons last September with Karen?

27 1:00 **SCIENCE WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY!**
An *Explora!* Family Science Event! Reading prizes and gift bags will be given out. And did we mention cake?!

JUNE JULY

453 hwy 165 • www.placitaslibrary.com • 505.867.3355

CHILDREN'S BOOK NEWS

By Nancy Guist
Children's Collection Coordinator

Voting for a child's favorite *Land of Enchantment* book ends May 15. Hopefully, your child has had an opportunity to explore the nominees for this year and have read (or have read to them) some of the selections. The desk by the Reader's bookshelf has information concerning this event along with some of the nominated books. (Others will be found shelved in our collection.) As a last motivation, three of the nominees are presented below. Happy enchanted reading!

Where Butterflies Fill the Sky

by Zahra Marwan

A book nominee in the Roadrunner group (Grades K-3)



A young girl recounts her story of leaving her homeland along with her family and immigrating to a new country in *Where Butterflies Fill the Sky*. She describes her daily life and those who are a part of it in her homeland – the sky is filled with butterflies and the calm sea is a comforting constant. But due to circumstances she does not understand, her family must leave for a new home. Her father describes the new land where they will live as “magic,” but that magic seems a distant image as she adjusts to a new life – new surroundings, new words, new traditions.



With time the girl begins to sense a new beauty – hot air balloons fill the sky and the river along which she walks is lined by green cottonwood trees. Even though she senses her differences, she feels the warmth of others reaching out to her. She will always carry the memories of her homeland and those she left behind, but she has also found a home in the high desert of New Mexico!

Marwan, who immigrated here with her family from Kuwait, adds end notes at her story’s end which tell the “Story of My Family” along with insight into her art, “About the Art.” Her illustrated pages evoke detail that is not only personal but often symbolic. This is a lovely book to share with children – to pore over the detailed pictures together and to share an empathy with others.



The Ogress and the Orphans

by Kelly Barnhill

(author of the 2017 Newbery Medal winner, *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*)

A book nominee in the Coyote group (Grades 3-5)

Stir together a kindly Ogress, a lost Orphan, and a self-promoting town mayor with a tinge of mystery, and one is pulled into the story of *The Ogress and the Orphans*.

A small town, Stone-in-the-Glen, once a happy, thriving community, is going through a bleak period. Due to numerous disasters, its residents are without a library, park, and school. Community members have turned inward, not reaching out to help their neighbors as they once did. They instead rest their hope on their flashy mayor, a self-proclaimed dragon slayer. He focuses the town folk’s misery and fear upon a lonely Ogress who lives on the town’s outskirts.

Meanwhile, the Orphans of the Orphan House are contending with little food to feed themselves. But, as the days pass by, mysterious gifts of food begin to appear on the Orphan House doorstep followed by one of their own suddenly missing. The precocious Orphans are determined to find answers. In so doing, they discover many of life’s guiding principles: What is true happiness? What is genuine wisdom? And most importantly, all discover that “Goodness begets more goodness.”

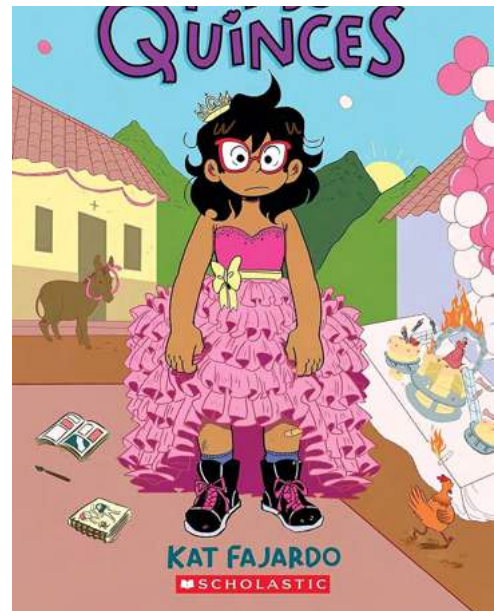
Miss Quinces



by Kat Fajardo

A book nominee in the Lizard group (Grades 6-8)

Sue, the star of Fajardo's first graphic novel, loves to read and create comic strip art. She often feels out of sync with her contemporaries partially due to her strict mother's reluctance to permit her joining in on get-togethers at her friends' homes. Still, she has the hope that she can join them at camp for a week during the summer. However, summer plans begin with an unexpected family trip to Honduras where they will spend time with Sue's extended Latino family. Life in the country, without internet, along with rambunctious younger cousins, proves to be challenging. In addition, Sue learns that her mother plans to have a quinceañera for her while there. The thought of this event overwhelms her. She will be in the spotlight having to wear a fancy, puffy dress, along with dancing and the expectation of a speech.



Sue's days in Honduras encompass introduction to new foods, new traditions, and most importantly an opportunity for the development of a tender relationship with her abuela. Her summer is painted with feelings of rebellion, laughter, and tears, along with a sudden loss. Through it all, Sue gradually accepts her individuality and gains a renewed love for her family.

Fajardo's colorful, dynamic art successfully conveys the events and emotions of Sue's summer. Fajardo ends the book with her own author's note providing an insight into her motivation for creating *Miss Quinces* along with separate notes on various aspects of a traditional quinceañera.

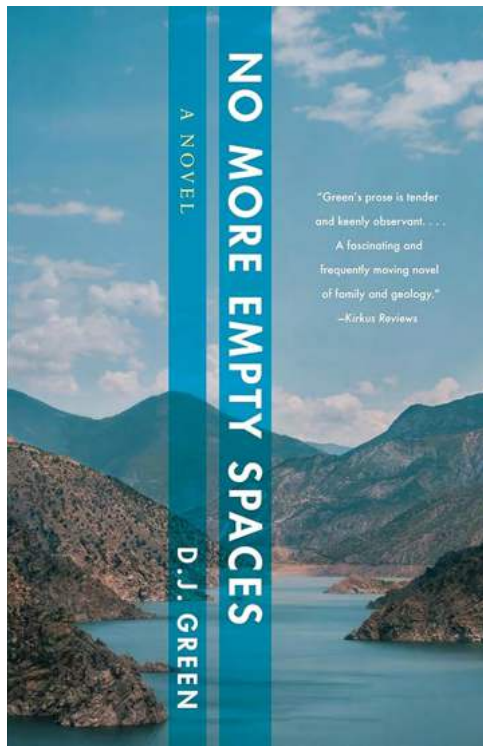
Susanne's Selections

*Reading Recommendations
By Susanne Domínguez*



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No More Empty Spaces

by D.J. Green

In this thoughtful, engaging novel, divorced father, single parent, and geologist, Will Ross attempts to make a better life for his family, Kevin, Rob, and Didi. We all know there is no "handbook" on raising children. Will blunders along with his often-misguided intentions of being a good dad. Between his family, his demanding divorced wife, and work obligations, he is clueless regarding his children's needs and desires.

He receives and accepts a job in Turkey which he considers an excellent opportunity for the family to experience a different culture. However, amazingly, he fails to consider how they will react to the change. Teen-aged Kevin reacts negatively and the resulting rift with Will becomes almost insurmountable.

The exploration of family dynamics and conflicts, work-related ethical considerations, and appealing, well-developed, and relatable characters all combine to create an outstanding, insightful and heart-warming novel. I especially enjoyed the

character Paula, a strong, steady woman. I am eagerly looking forward to reading Green's next book. Green is local to Placitas.

From the publisher:

D. J. Green is a writer, geologist, and sailor, as well as a bookseller and partner in Bookworks, an independent bookstore in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She lives near the Sandia Mountains in Placitas, New Mexico, and cruises the Salish Sea on her sailboat during the summers. No More Empty Spaces is her first novel.

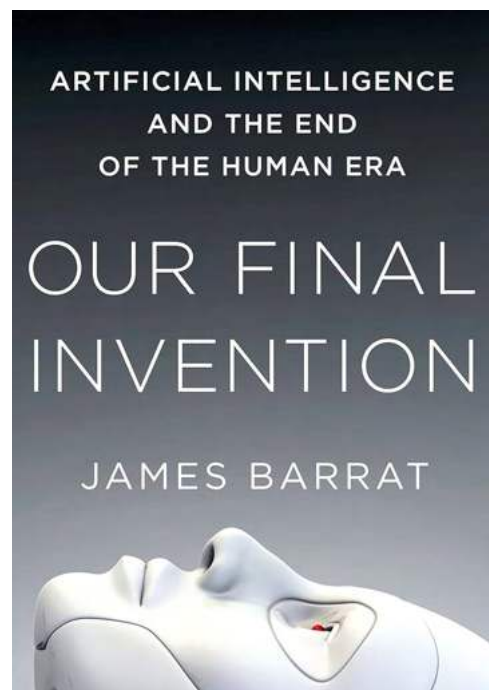
The following two books about artificial intelligence complement each other and although they are similar in content, offer differing perspectives.

Our Final Invention: Artificial Intelligence and the End of the Human Era

by James Barrat

"The intelligence explosion idea was expressed by statistician I. J. Good in 1965: 'Let an ultraintelligent machine be defined as a machine that can far surpass all the intellectual activities of any man however clever. Since the design of machines is one of these intellectual activities, an ultraintelligent machine could design even better machines; there would then unquestionably be an 'intelligence explosion,' and the intelligence of man would be left far behind. Thus the first ultraintelligent machine is the last invention that man need ever make.'"

"Humans need to figure out now, at the early stages of AI's creation, how to coexist with hyperintelligent machines. Otherwise, we could end up with a planet — eventually a galaxy — populated by self-serving, self-replicating AI entities that act ruthlessly toward their



creators." ~ James Barrat



Elon Musk, along with other notable visionaries recommends *Our Final Invention* as a book everyone should read about the future.

What will it be like if and when we share our world with an intelligence a million times more intelligent than us? Will our species, *Homo sapiens*, become extinct as the other less intelligent species in the *genus Homo* did in the past? Numerous significant decisions are already made by AI, such as indispensable tasks in our national infrastructure and complex medical diagnoses. Then there is Google's autocomplete predictions, the ChatGPT software program that answers questions, smartphones, Amazon's book suggestions, Siri, and Facebook's recommendations of friends to connect with. These are very basic types of artificial intelligence. Consider if computers controlled more aspects of life and could truly think for themselves. We tend to anthropomorphize intelligent machines like Siri, robots, etc. They are not innately friendly or feel empathy, unless the features are programmed in them, which is unlikely, although scientists are attempting to figure out how to do so. *"Scientists do believe that AI will have its own drives. and sufficiently intelligent AI will be in a strong position to fulfill those drives."*

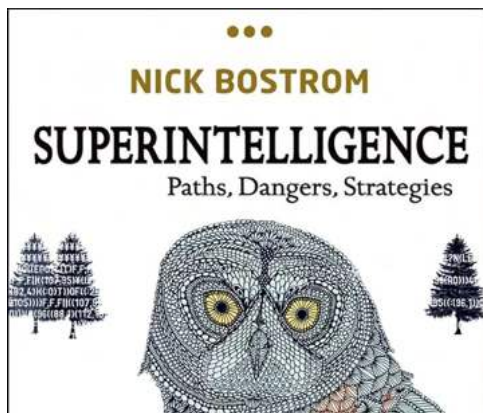
Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) is defined as a machine with intelligence comparable to that of a human across all of the domains of human intelligence, with both self-awareness and the ability to learn from errors and improve its performance. Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI) refers to a machine whose intelligence exceeds that of the most intelligent human. Since a self-aware intelligent machine will be able to modify its own programming, as opposed to the slowness of evolution, an AGI could easily and quickly evolve into an ASI via a process known as an "intelligence explosion."

This extensively researched book chronicles and assesses artificial intelligence and its potential risks in an understandable layman's manner. It presents significant issues and existential threats to consider among all of the beneficial things we know about AI.

Another subject Barrat delves into is the economic and military pressure to improve and fast track AI performances. He also discusses the relationship between AI and cyberware and the incredible number of malicious cyberattacks by entities who hack into software in order to manipulate software programs.

Cyberattacks are the new weapons of choice today. For example, *"...cyberattacks are now a basic part of China's national and defense strategies. Why spend \$300 billion on the Joint Strike Fighter program for the next gen fighter jet, as the Pentagon did in their most expensive contract, when you can steal the plans?"* The safety of AI will depend upon the designers and those who influence them.

James Barrat is a documentary filmmaker and has written and produced films for National Geographic, Discovery, PBS, and other broadcasters in the United States and Europe for several decades.



Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies

by Nick Bostrom

Superintelligence is "an intellect that is much smarter than the best human brains in practically every field, including scientific creativity, general wisdom and social skills." ~ Nick Bostrom

"Before the prospect of an intelligence explosion, we humans are like small children playing with a bomb. ... [The] sensible thing to do



would be to put it down gently, back out of the room, and contact the nearest adult. [But] the chances that we will all find the sense to put down the dangerous stuff seems almost negligible...Nor is there a grown-up in sight. [So] in the teeth of this most unnatural and inhuman problem [we] need to bring all our human resourcefulness to bear on its solution.” ~ Nick Bostrom

Highly recommended by both Elon Musk and Bill Gates, *Superintelligence* is a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and future of artificial intelligence. It explores the questions regarding the potential for AI to become a "superintelligence," thousands of times more intelligent than humans, and, soon after its creation, via its self-learning ability, could possibly become a conscious being and dominate human beings.

The author states he focuses in his narrative on possible risks rather than the positive aspects, “*since it seems more urgent to develop a precise detailed understanding of what issues could go awry, so they can be avoided.*” More sophisticated than *Our Final Invention*, it’s a more detailed and in-depth assessment of AI.

According to Bostrom, he consulted with 160 eminent AI researchers. “*He discovered 50% of them think that an artificial general intelligence (AGI), an AI which is at least our equal in intelligence will be created by 2050. 90% of the researchers think it will arrive by 2100.*” If scientists and engineers cannot ensure AI to be human friendly and control its capabilities and constraints, we will become extinct. How can we ensure AI will not override software and/or programming? Can it become an independent conscious being? Who will control AI: Billionaires? Countries? These are only some of the questions explored in this thoughtful book concerning the future of AI.

A machine with superintelligence would possess the ability to hack into vulnerable networks via the internet, take over mobile machines connected to networks connected to the internet, use them to build additional machines, invent quantum computing and nanotechnology, and do whatever it can to give itself more power to achieve its goals — all at a speed much faster than humans can respond to.

The author's biography from his website states:

Nick Bostrom is a Swedish-born philosopher with a background in theoretical physics, computational neuroscience, logic, and artificial intelligence, along with philosophy. He is the most-cited professional philosopher in the world aged 50 or under.

*He is a Professor at Oxford University, where he heads the Future of Humanity Institute as its founding director. He is the author of some 200 publications, including *Anthropic Bias* (2002), *Global Catastrophic Risks* (2008), *Human Enhancement* (2009), and *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* (2014), a *New York Times* bestseller which helped spark a global conversation about the future of AI. His work has pioneered some of the ideas that frame current thinking about humanity’s future (such as the concept of an existential risk, the simulation argument, the vulnerable world hypothesis, the unilateralist’s curse, etc.), while some of his recent work concerns the moral status of digital minds.*



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Martha Liebert, Historian and SCHS&M Member*

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