

PLACITAS *Community* LIBRARY



NEWSLETTER JULY/AUG 2025

**“The best candy shop a child can
be left alone in, is the library.”**

MAYA ANGELOU



PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY HOURS

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

ADULT PROGRAMS

- **JULY 13 (2 PM):** Placitas Community Library (PCL) Commemorates 80th Anniversary of Trinity Event
 - **AUG 16 (2 PM):** PCL Benefit Concert featuring James Bell, Dennis Bumgarner, and Anna Rudolph
 - **SEPT 5 (5:30 PM):** *Dance Out!* featuring DJ Ken
-

ARTISTS' RECEPTION & EXHIBITS

- **Through JULY 17:** Art Exhibit: *Assemblage*
 - **AUG 8 (5 PM):** Artists' Reception: *Raining Cats & Dogs* (exhibit runs 7/19 - 8/14)
 - **AUG 16 - SEPT 21:** Placitas Garden Tour Artist Exhibition
-

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

JULY: 2025 SUMMER READING PROGRAM, *COLOR OUR WORLD*, CONTINUES

All dates are on Saturdays from 1-3 PM

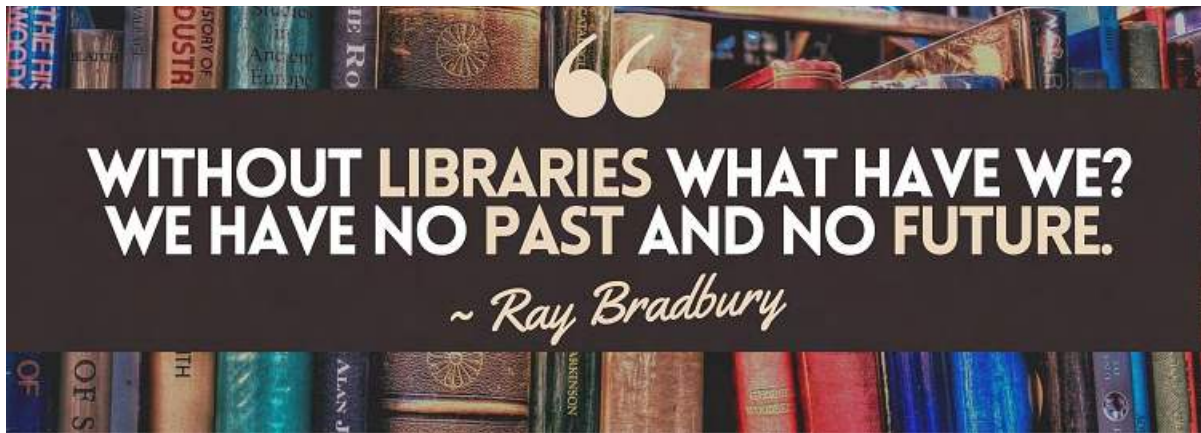
- **JULY 12 – Let's Go to Collage!** Presented by members of the library's outstanding Art Committee
- **JULY 19 – Rock Painting:** Presented by the very talented artist, Kay Naranjo
- **JULY 26 – ¡explora!** Conduct some colorful experiments for an outstanding conclusion to the summer!

AUGUST

- **TUES, AUG 12 (10 AM):** Pre-K Story Time
 - **SUN, AUG 17 (10 AM):** Visit from the NM Department of Cultural Affairs' Wonder on Wheels Museum, including their new RV and interactive exhibit about the cultural and historic sites you can visit in New Mexico
-

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): Enjoy the opportunity to experience español with Diane Herrera Shepard and other guests. The Club is open to anyone who wants to learn, use, practice, or converse in Spanish.
- **Drumming Circle** (1st Sun of each month at 4 PM): Bring your own drum or use one of the many we have!



Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Update

In the last newsletter, I reported on actions being taken that affect IMLS. I wanted to give you an update on what is happening on that front. As a reminder, IMLS was created and funded by Congress in 1996. It was reauthorized under the Clinton, George W. Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations, and has always had bipartisan support. IMLS is bound by laws requiring that the agency conduct certain activities to support libraries and report on important issues to Congress. On March 14, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order stating that seven agencies, including IMLS be eliminated to the maximum extent of the law and the agencies were ordered to reduce their services and personnel to the minimum amount required to perform the functions required by law.

On May 1, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia granted a temporary restraining order to block the dismantling of IMLS. The decision was issued in response to a lawsuit filed by the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). The temporary restraining order was issued just days before the mass layoff of nearly all IMLS employees was set to take effect on May 4.

On June 6, a federal judge declined to grant a preliminary injunction sought by ALA and AFSCME to stop efforts to dismantle IMLS. This ruling allows the administration to continue with cuts and reductions at IMLS while the case proceeds on its merits in court. This decision does not mean the case is over; it simply means the judge did not issue an order preventing the administration from dismantling IMLS while the legal issues are being litigated.

“ALA is disappointed that the court did not grant our motion for preliminary injunction. The extent to which some libraries have already cancelled services and programming – and even lost staff in some cases – is evidence of the importance of IMLS. ALA will not rest until libraries in every state receive the funding promised and IMLS is back in full force to meet the information needs of all

Americans,” said ALA President Cindy Hohl.

PCL is incredibly fortunate that so far, we are not being affected by these cuts. This is due in large part to the generosity and support from our community. We don't know yet how the New Mexico State Library will be impacted.

Strategic Planning

Implementation of our Strategic Plan continues to move forward. Progress made since the last report:

Goal 1: Create a Library Resource Center

- Lynne continues to evaluate resources to be included in the Resource Center.
- Lynne met with a representative from the State Library about a new electronic resource GetSetUp, which will provide access to free online classes. Once this is in place, it will be a valuable addition to the Resource Center.

Goal 2: Create a patron technology needs assessment

- Planning has begun for the physical location of a library Resource Center.
- Lynne continues to go through the strategic planning survey results to see what resources our patrons are interested in.

Goal 3: Streamline operational processes to grow PCL's mission services

- The Management Team has begun working on job descriptions for all committee chairs and key volunteer positions.
- A volunteer exit survey and volunteer satisfaction survey have been drafted and will be presented to the Management Team for their review.
- A spreadsheet of all current policies and procedures has been created. Several policies have been targeted to be reviewed.

Goal 4: Deepen the value of our reciprocal partnerships with donors and community partner

- The Sustainability Committee and Appreciation Committee are exploring ways to coordinate acknowledging donors.

Goal 5: Enhance marketing communications

- Work continues on identifying community partners

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, JULY 17, 6:00 PM
THURS, AUG 21, 6:00 PM**



Did You Know PCL Has Passes?



New Mexico Family**Pass**

- ◆ Pass provided by NM State Library and NM Dept. of Cultural Affairs.
- ◆ Access to 16 museums and Historic Sites such as NM History Museum, Jemez Historic Site, New Mexico Museum of Space History and many more.
- ◆ Pass admits up to 6 people. Pass can be checked out for 7 days.

S.t.e.p.

Share the Experience **PASS**



- ◆ Pass provides free admission to Georgia O'Keefe Museum, IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe Children's Museum, Santa Fe Botanical Garden, El Rancho de Las Golondrinas, NM Museum of Art Plaza Building and New Mexico Museum of Art Vlodem Contemporary .
- ◆ Pass admits up to 6 people. Pass can be checked out one time per month for 7 days.



iexplora!

- ◆ **Interactive children's museum with 250 exhibit activities in science, technology and art.**
- ◆ **Pass admits up to 6 people.**
- ◆ **Pass can be checked out for 7 days.**

Come See Us and Check Out a Pass!!!! Best, Lynne



WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR DONATED BOOKS?

BOOK SALES

LIBRARY LOBBY

The *Donated Books Team* has revamped the lobby! Now, there are marked categories, including a section for new arrivals!

ONLINE STORE

The *Donated Books Team* maintains two online stores:

AMAZON
ABE BOOKS

There is a wide variety, plus: if you pick up your purchase at the library, shipping charges are waived! Links to the stores are available on our website; click **BOOK SALES**.

FOR MORE INFO

PlacitasLibrary.com. *click* **BOOK SALES**

TO CONTACT

DonatedBooks@PlacitasLibrary.com



SPECIAL EVENTS

You can find us at special events around town, like the Placitas Holiday Market, Spring Fling, and more!

You might also find us at PCL's art receptions with books that complement the exhibit's theme!

AUTHOR TALKS

On occasion, PCL has the opportunity to offer in advance new, often autographed, books related to upcoming Author Talks, e.g., Anne Hillerman's new title.

Check out the Adult Programs calendar on our website for any upcoming Author Talks!

All proceeds from the sale of books, CDs, DVDs, and puzzles help to cover your library's operating expenses.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Artwork created by pilsupsterstar at www.freepik.com



DISCUSSION GROUP

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

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

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

PLACITAS GARDEN TOUR



Placitas Garden Tour Seeks Volunteers

The 2025 Placitas Garden Tour, which benefits both PCL and the Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners, is again seeking volunteers to work in the high desert gardens that will be showcased this year on Sunday, September 7 from 9 AM – 4 PM. There are two shifts to choose from: morning or afternoon. Shifts run from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM, and 12 to 4 PM.

If you volunteer, you are entitled to visit the other gardens when you are not working. There will also be a Training Session on Saturday, August 23 from 9 to 11:30 AM. Volunteers are needed to work as a Garden Greeter or a Traffic Manager. There is a signup sheet at the Help Desk for anyone interested in volunteering. If you are interested in volunteering, you can also contact Peggy Butzer at (952) 381-7529 or peg.butzer@gmail.com. More information about the 2025 Tour can be found at PlacitasGardenTour.com.

A library is a place where
you learn what teachers
were afraid to teach you.

~ ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ



PLACITAS *Community* LIBRARY

invites you to commemorate
the 80th anniversary of
THE TRINITY EVENT

JULY 16, 1945

Eighty years ago this day, one of the most significant events in history occurred 133 miles south of Placitas: the "Trinity" atomic explosion. The first of hundreds of nuclear tests, it was developed just 40 miles north of PCL in Los Alamos. This would lead to the end of WWII. Interestingly, Placitas was home to several officials connected to The Manhattan Project.

SUNDAY **FILM & DISCUSSION**
JULY 13, 2025
2:00 PM

Join us for a special showing of the PBS documentary: *THE BOMB!*

After viewing the first half of the film, leading up to the Trinity explosion, we will have a discussion of the current implications of nuclear weaponry.



JULY 2025

Visit Ross's Reading Room at PCL to explore the display of photos, books, and documents that tell the history of the Trinity event.

453 hwy 165 | www.placitaslibrary.com | 505.867.3355

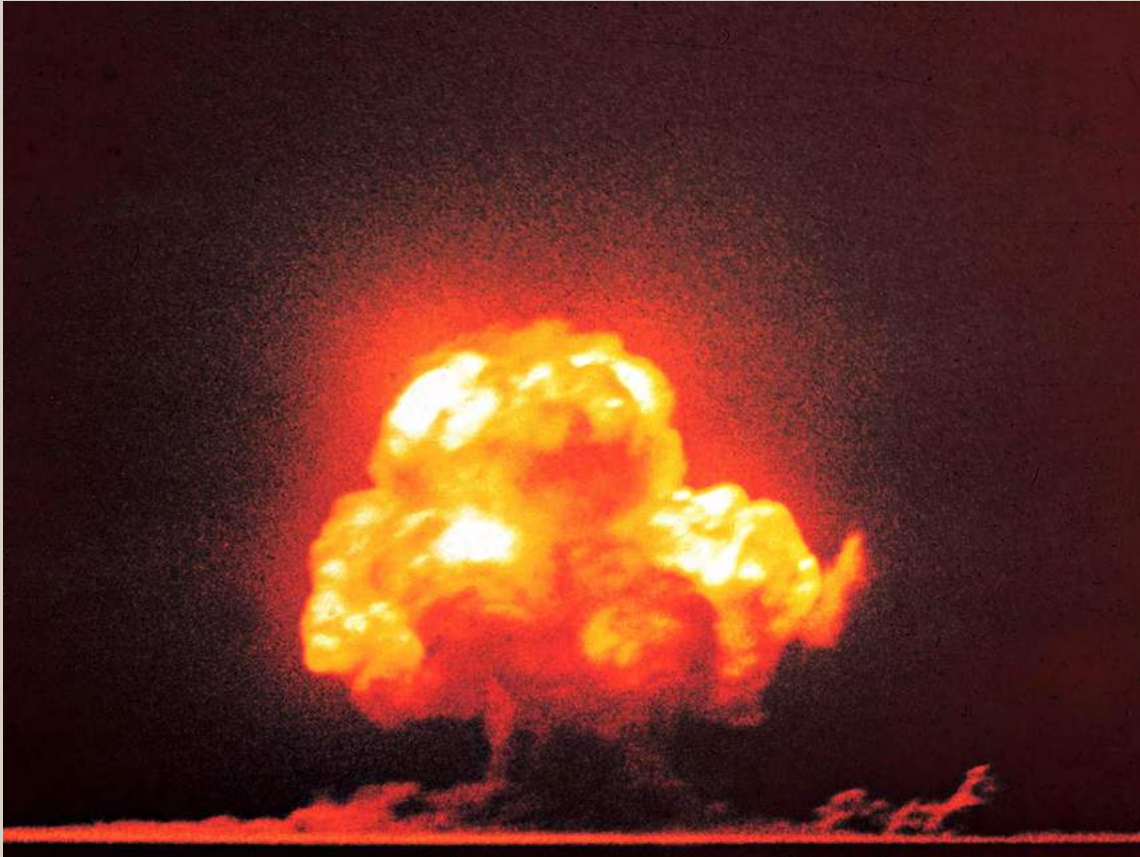
PCL to Commemorate 80th Anniversary of Trinity Event

Perhaps the most significant event in humanity's history occurred on July 16, 1945, at a remote site just 133 miles south of Placitas. The Trinity atomic explosion was the first of hundreds of nuclear tests, and remarkably, led to the end of World War II just three weeks later. Some believe humanity's reference timeline on Earth will be based on this date. July 16 will be 80 years 'after Trinity' or 'AT'!

PCL will display photos, books, and documents that tell the history of the Trinity event, which was developed and engineered at Los Alamos—just 40 miles "as the crow flies" north of the library!

Placitas was the former home of several officials that had connections with The Manhattan Project, the name given to the highly secretive project that developed “the bomb” during the war.

Join us on **Sunday, July 13, at 2 PM** at the library for a special showing of the PBS documentary, *The Bomb*. The first half of *The Bomb* will be shown leading up to the Trinity explosion, with time after for serious discussion of the current implications of nuclear weaponry. There will be the opportunity to see the second half of this film later. After each meeting, we encourage those present to share memories of “Duck and Cover” and so many other artifacts of the Cold War. This PBS program, originally aired on the 70th Anniversary of Trinity, is one of the most comprehensive histories of this topic.



Atomic blast, but not at Trinity in 1945—where only a single color photograph was recorded

¡BIENVENIDOS!

LA PARRANDA

Club de Español

Enjoy the opportunity to experience español with Diane Herrera Shepard and other guests. The Club is open to anyone who wants to learn, use, practice, or converse in Spanish.

**Every Wednesday
10 AM - Noon**

A decorative border surrounds the text, featuring colorful paper flowers in shades of red, yellow, purple, and blue. There are also bunting flags and small circular confetti scattered throughout the design. The background is a light blue and pink gradient.



PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY CONCERT & FUNDRAISER

— with singer-songwriters —

JAMES BELL
ANNA RUDOLPH
DENNIS BUMGARNER

SATURDAY | AUGUST 16 | 2:00 PM

453 HWY 165
\$20 DONATION
REFRESHMENTS SERVED

A concert in support of our superb Placitas Community Library

Listen to three Placitas singer-songwriters as they perform original compositions, each in their unique style

James Bell excels in writing vignettes that tell a story or define a moment in time or place. To this end, he has spent fifty plus years refining his skills. His guitar work ranges from raging rock to subtle and sweet acoustic. His songs can be hard hitting or ethereal, and his voice will surprise and amaze you. He hopes as listeners you enjoy his songs and find some pleasure and truth in them.

Dennis Bumgarner writes songs primarily influenced by roots and Americana music, as well as the

blues. Some of his songs have received airplay on local radio. His work as a therapist has provided a rich lode of human experience from which to draw inspiration for his songwriting. His style is straightforward and his lyrics colorful and well-crafted. His performances are highly entertaining and audiences are always delighted. He has been part of a trio of songwriters for several years and finds great enjoyment in the collaborative process.

Anna Rudolph began writing, playing and singing in 2012, and in 2013, was nominated for her first of fifteen nominations for original songs and two wins for New Mexico Music Awards (2017 and 2022). She has released six original CDs and several singles. Although she crosses many genres, she writes mostly Americana and the blues. She has played in venues across New Mexico including the El Morro Theater in Gallup and the New Mexico State Fair. She has had performance radio interviews with 99.9 Placitas Radio and KTRC /Radio Santa Fe on the Art Fusion program, and her music is played on local radio, KUNM and several streaming/internet music sites. She has also taught her own songwriting course at the Placitas Community Library and now hosts a musical radio show on local Placitas radio, KUPR. Original sultry style, intimate, not the ordinary.

**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 Placitas Artists Series

PLACITAS Community LIBRARY

YOU'RE INVITED TO BOOGIE AT

DANCE OUT!



FIRST FRIDAYS

Drop In 5:30 - 6:30 PM

CLUB GLCR

Gracie Lee Community Room
at Placitas Community Library

ALL ARE WELCOME!

*JUST COME AND DANCE
AND MOVE TO THE MUSIC!*

FEATURING:

DJ Ken

Sept 5th

ALL AGES (ADULTS & CHILDREN). ALL STYLES.
WITH PARTNERS. WITHOUT PARTNERS.
NO COVER CHARGE. NO RESERVATIONS.



453 hwy 165 • www.placitaslibrary.com • 505.867.3355



The Ethics of Seed Collecting

Buying plants for your garden (either as conservation seedlings from the NM Division of Forestry or local nurseries) isn't the only way to diversify your garden/landscape for your pleasure and our native wildlife. An alternative option is seed collecting, whether from PCL's own seed library, which has many seed packets to choose from, or "collecting" from other seed libraries and seed sources. Seed collecting can enhance both the beauty and utility of your garden/landscape. (Handling, preparing, and germinating of specific seeds are not subjects covered by this article.)

But there are some questions one should ask – both practical and ethical – before undertaking the collection of native/garden seeds: Is this a plant that I simply can't acquire any other way? And are my actions purely personal or is there a larger "good" associated with the collection of these seeds?

Below are some **DOs** and **DON'Ts** for seed collecting outside your own garden:

DOs:

- Always ask permission to collect seeds from any lands, other than your own. In general, picking flowers (yes, flowers are seeds!) is prohibited without permission (and possibly a permit) from state and federal forests, parks and other public lands, including our library grounds!
- Collect seeds from attached plant stems – not from the ground, as decay may already have begun.
- Collect seeds when ripe, typically about 4–6 weeks after flowering.

DON'Ts:

- Never take seeds from rare, threatened, and endangered plants. [See references below for NM's rare and endangered plant lists]
- Don't take more than 1/3 of the seed of a single plant, and never collect seeds from more than 5–10% of the plants at any given area/site – this ensures genetic diversity and leaves plenty of seed for wildlife and self-sowing.
- Do not collect from small populations – collecting seeds from larger populations are best for both an ethics and genetics perspective.

Additional information on NM's native flora/seeds can be obtained from the:

- Southwest Seed Partnership (SWSP – a Bureau of Land Management/New Mexico partnership with federal land managers, restoration practitioners, and native seed producers to develop

native plant materials for habitat restoration and conservation in the Southwest)

- Bureau of Land Management/New Mexico State Office Herbarium
- New Mexico State Botanist: Maria Mullins

Happy gardening!

References:

1. <https://www.blm.gov/programs/natural-resources/native-plant-communities/native-plant-and-seed-material-development/collection/new-mexico> (accessed 3/9/25)
2. <https://www.blm.gov/programs/natural-resources/native-plant-communities/native-plant-and-seed-material-development/collection/new-mexico> (accessed 3/9/25)
3. New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council. 1999. New Mexico Rare Plants. Albuquerque, NM: New Mexico Rare Plants Home Page. <https://nmrareplants.unm.edu> (Latest update: 09 Mar 2025).
4. https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/NM-ENDANGERED-PLANT-List_2021.pdf (assessed 3/9/25)



Raining Cats & Dogs

Exhibition: July 19 – August 14

Artists' Reception: August 8 at 5 PM

The idiom “raining cats and dogs” usually denotes a fierce rain, buckets of water pouring down. This colorful, old-fashioned phrase may have come from the Greek expression cata doxa, which means “contrary to experience or belief.” It is certainly beyond belief to conjure thousands of our furry friends

falling like rain drops from the sky. On the other hand, it is kind of fun to imagine what that might look like.

For the July/August exhibit in the library's Gracie Lee Community Room, artists from Placitas and environs were challenged to create images and objects, either realistic or fanciful, that include cats and/or dogs. Over a dozen artists responded through a variety of media including jewelry, sculpture, fiber, photography, paintings, and collage.

The community is invited to "paws" and visit this exhibition from July 19 through August 14 and to attend the artists' reception on Friday, August 1 from 5 - 6:30 PM. All work will be available for purchase with a percentage of sales benefiting the library.



Placitas Garden Tour Artists' Exhibition
August 16 - September 21

Save the date for an artists' exhibition of the annual Placitas Garden Tour! The artists in the gardens bring their work into the library creating a collection of color and calm. More details coming soon.



JULY: 2025 Summer Reading Program, "Color Our World," Continues

All dates are on Saturdays from 1-3 PM



- **JULY 12 – Let's Go to Collage!** Presented by members of the library's outstanding Art Committee
- **JULY 19 – Rock Painting:** Presented by the very talented artist, Kay Naranjo
- **JULY 26 – jexplora!** Conduct some colorful experiments for an outstanding conclusion to the summer!

AUGUST



- **TUES, AUG 12 (10 AM):** Pre-K Story Time. Check your email, our website, and the highway sign for more information.
- **SUN, AUG 17 (10 AM):** Visit from the NM Department of Cultural Affairs' Wonder on Wheels Museum, including their new RV and interactive exhibit about the cultural and historic sites you can visit in New Mexico. There will be a hands on activity in the Gracie Lee Room as well. This exhibit is for all ages and for the entire community. You will first enter the mobile museum to view the exhibit and then enter the library to participate in the activity.

Hope you can join us!

The
PLACITAS Community LIBRARY
Children's Committee

invites you to our

2025 SUMMER PROGRAMS

COLOR OUR WORLD
All About Art & Artists

ALL PROGRAMS:
SATURDAYS
1:00 - 3:00

JUNE

June 7 - Art Theft: A Dog Comedy

Starring Joey and Kira, Denise Gard's famous Border Collies. Dog tricks, the Mona Lisa, fame, and art abound in this program for all ages.

June 14 - Wet Felting Workshop

Using fuzzy colored wool pieces, referred to as roving, along with soapy water, children will create individual art pieces to take home.

June 21 - Kaleidoscopes!

Placitas mosaic artist, Laura Robbins, leads this fun and creative activity!

June 28 - Daniel Vandever

Award-winning Navajo storyteller, children's author and illustrator, Daniel presents a high-energy, interactive, and super-engaging program!

Children are invited to participate in a

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE!

There will be prizes, raffles, and new books given away each week. Lots of reading, entertainment, and projects to keep your child engaged in learning. Summer reading helps children to maintain their reading level and INCREASE it, too. Whether your child is home-schooled or attends a public or private school, summer reading is essential. Join us this summer at the Placitas Community Library. *Una Placita Para Todos: A Place For Everyone.*

JULY

July 12 - Let's Go to Collage!

Presented by members of the library's outstanding Art Committee.

July 19 - Rock Painting

Presented by the very talented artist, Kay Naranjo.

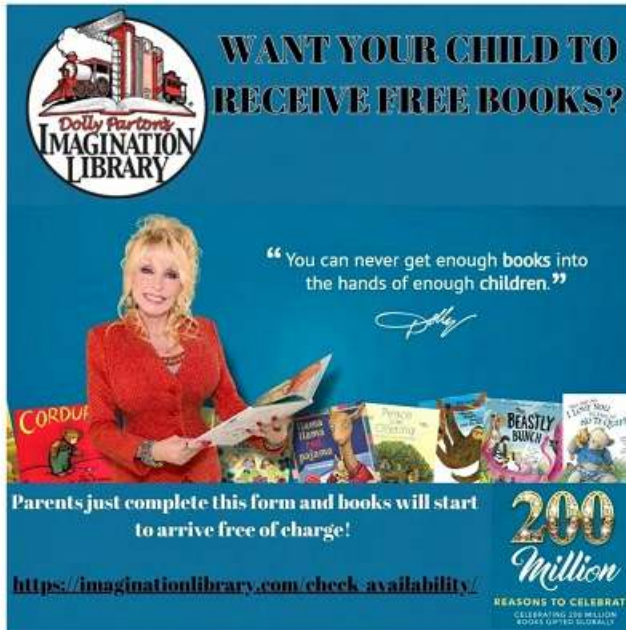
July 26 - ¡explora!

Conduct some colorful experiments for an outstanding conclusion to the summer!

For KIDS ages 0 - 5 years.

Beautiful, new books mailed each month to your home!

Absolutely no cost to parents - ever.



WANT YOUR CHILD TO RECEIVE FREE BOOKS?

“You can never get enough books into the hands of enough children.”

Dolly

Parents just complete this form and books will start to arrive free of charge!

<https://imaginationlibrary.com/check-availability/>

200 Million
REASONS TO CELEBRATE
CELEBRATING 200 MILLION BOOKS GIFTED GLOBALLY

Register Today!



Pick up a form at Placitas Library.
(Entry hall or Children's area)
or
Go Online: imaginationlibrary.com

Almost too good to be true!



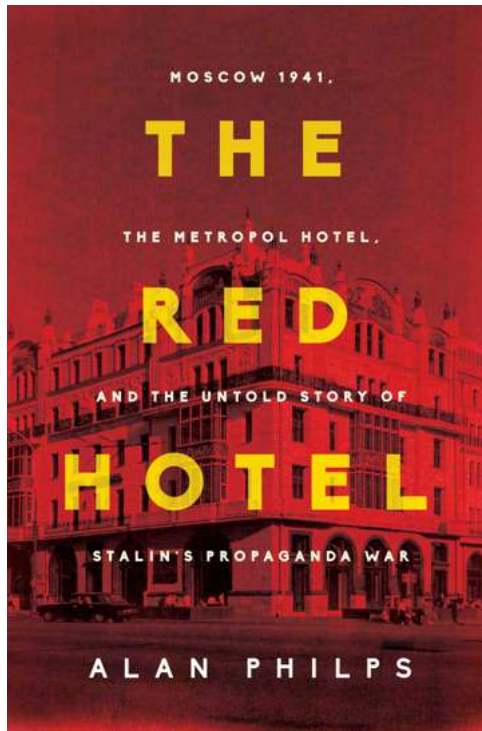
Susanne's Selections

*Reading Recommendations
By Susanne Domínguez*



Available for e-Checkout!

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



The Red Hotel: Moscow 1941, The Metropol Hotel, and the Untold Story of Stalin's Propaganda War

by Alan Philps

“Interestingly, the public was fed propaganda from the Western journalists who acted as mouthpieces of Russian propaganda, stating that Russia and the West would work together after the war. Consequently, it shocked the public when they realized that the communist leaders were found to be hardly less dangerous than the Nazis had been.”

In 1940, during World War II, Stalin imposed stringent censorship on foreign correspondents living in Russia. He suppressed all negative media coverage and forced the 50 British and American journalists and their translators to provide only positive news coverage in a very successful disinformation campaign. This was accomplished in a variety of ways. One was by providing journalists with a lavish life style, another was sanitizing all articles written by the journalist, regardless of how

trivial, and yet another was restricting travel. Journalists only obtained information via the same Stalin-approved sources. They could not travel to speak to or interview anyone. Meetings and events were carefully orchestrated. Draconian measures were taken by the Russian Gulag against anyone who did not comply.

The legendary and luxurious Metropol Hotel housed and confined all foreign journalists. Unavailable to the local population, the hotel provided hot water, decadent food such as unlimited caviar, liquor, and cakes. Meanwhile, the starving local Russians were forced to exist on a daily ration of 400 grams of black bread during the famine.

Russian translators, primarily women, risked their lives attempting to reveal the truth. Some who were discovered providing honest information were sent to prison. Philps provides eye-opening vignettes about some of the journalists, mostly men, but some women, as they struggled with censorship and dubious information.

The book reveals how the press was complicit about the censorship even after the World War II ended.

“In fact, the whole press pack and their employers kept the dirty secret quiet after returning home after the war ended. The one exception to the journalistic code of conduct was Paul Winterton, who worked for the News Chronicle and the BBC overseas service: he offered his editor a tell-all article, but the newspaper refused to run it.”

Red Hotel is both a fascinating and harrowing account of the power Stalin yielded and how he controlled information to the outside world during the War. Outstanding complements to this enlightening book are the novel *Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles, and the non-fiction *Red Notice* by Bill Browder, both of which I reviewed several years ago. They are among my favorite books.

The Lion Women of Tehran

by Marjan Kamali

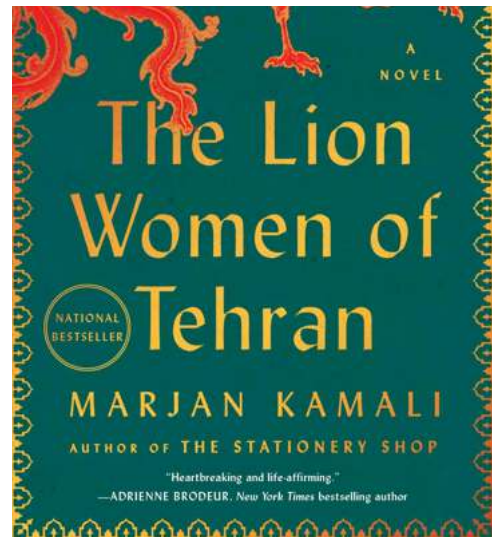
“‘Lion women,’ or ‘shir zan’ in Persian, refers to fierce and brave



women, often used to describe those who are strong and unstoppable in their fight for rights and freedom, particularly in the context of Iranian women's activism.”

I didn't plan to read this novel since I've read so many other engaging, similar books. However, several trusted reader friends urged me to read it so I did. What a moving, poignant read it turned out to be, and I am grateful for the recommendation. It's a gripping, character-driven story set in Tehran beginning in the 1950's to 2022.

As children, seven-year-old Homa and Ellie become close friends, and they share their ambitions for becoming “lion women.” However, their circumstances and consequently their relationship changes. I don't want to provide too much information because it would affect your reading experience.



The plot examines gender roles and cultural norms in the Iranian religious society, challenging these roles and traditional expectations, and the struggles and/or successes of doing so via individual vignettes of the women and their relationships. Each woman's heartfelt story exemplifies her remarkable courage and resiliency, along with the importance of women's friendships. This would be an excellent book club selection with so many themes and characters to discuss.



No More Tears: The Dark Secrets of Johnson & Johnson

by Gardiner Harris

A "must read" expose concerning a trusted company, you will never be complacent regarding medical prescriptions or medical devices again after reading this book and becoming more aware of what occurs behind closed doors.

For decades Johnson & Johnson, known for providing such famous products as Johnson's Baby Powder and Johnson's Baby Shampoo, was considered an ethical and trustworthy company by the public. However, Harris, a well-regarded investigative journalist, shines a light on the shocking corruption, deception, and drive for profit over the public's safety practiced by the company.

In the 1970's, scientists found asbestos in J&J's Baby Powder and linked talc use to ovarian cancer. J&J launched aggressive publicity campaigns to discredit the research. J&J actually

acknowledged the findings but publicly denied it. False testimony was provided along with manipulated data and incriminating documents were destroyed.

J&J sales representatives ruthlessly convinced physicians with fraudulent, manipulated data that their fentanyl product (Duragesic and Nucynta) was less prone to abuse than oral opioids, and was not as addictive as similar drugs like opium. High-risk patients were targeted to extend treatment duration, encouraging addiction.

Clinical trials for dementia indicated there was little benefit and increased risks of strokes, heart attacks, and death. Yet J&J pushed the drug on the unaware public.

Apparently, many medical devices are approved via a loophole, 510(k), by claiming similarity to devices approved before 1976, often without being tested on humans. This allowed J&J to rush potentially dangerous devices to market. For instance, a metal-on-metal hip implant similar to failed 1960's designs, was deemed dangerous. Internal testing showed it shed toxic metal debris and failed at high rates, but J&J misrepresented data to the FDA and physicians. *"Executives knew those products would disable and kill. The clinical trial for Pinnacle violated almost every sacred rule regarding the ethical conduct of human clinical trials. Emails reveal that executives knew exactly what they were doing and joked among themselves about how fully their actions contradicted the central tenets of the company's credo."*

J&J created a new form of estrogen delivery for women, the patch, which would be easier to remember to use on a weekly basis and would provide a lower dose than the oral contraceptive pill, thereby reduce chances of blood clots and stroke. Unfortunately, the clinical trials showed the estrogen patch, PHI-017, delivered to women in the study was almost four times the estrogen level in the oral pills. The company decided against conducting additional clinical trials and redesigning the patch, *"...willfully deceiving the FDA about the patch's estrogen problem...In 2004, worries about the number of deaths and strokes caused by Ortho Evra had grown. So regulators in New Zealand insisted on seeing the results of PHI-017. Once they saw the results, New Zealand regulators refused to approve Ortho Evra because evidence from the clinical trials showing a higher rate of estrogenic side effects than COC's (combined oral contraceptives) is now supported by additional AUC data from pharmacokinetic PHI-017."* AUC stands for Area Under the Curve and is a parameter of the plasma level time curve that measures the extent of drug bio-availability.

Another horrifying example is the Prolift Mesh kit, a vaginal mesh kit for pelvic organ prolapse. Internal studies and inventor warnings indicated high rates of erosion, pain, and complications, yet J&J sold it without FDA approval and concealed the risks. There were so many examples of disturbing conduct by the company, I could barely continue reading about J&J's egregious behavior!

The FDA was also complicit, possibly caused by J&J's enormous influence and power. It failed to enforce illegal marketing practices, and allowed devices to be approved without sufficient testing or create recalls when escalating injuries occurred.

J&J motivate physicians to prescribe their drugs based on profit, payoffs, and/or perks such as luxurious vacations, and not the needs of the patient. The representatives also aggressively push ineffective new drugs on the public, when older, more affordable drugs are as effective. The deceit goes on and on! How many times does your health care provider prescribe antibiotics for trivial issues? And are they new, recently-approved drugs when "tried and true" drugs could be as effective?

From Gardiner Harris's website:

He "previously served as the public health and pharmaceutical reporter for The New York Times and is now a freelance investigative journalist. He also served as a White House, South Asia, and international diplomacy reporter for the Times. Before that, he was a reporter for The Wall Street Journal, covering the pharmaceutical industry. His investigations there led to what was then the largest fine in the history of the Securities and Exchange Commission."

Dear readers, if you think this book is a worthy read and raised your awareness, please share with other readers.

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