



F·R·I·E·N·D·S

OF NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Supporting Friends of the Library Statewide

December 2023

F*R*I*E*N*D*S TALK

Happy Holidays, Friends!

Many Friends use these holidays as an opportunity to raise awareness of reading and public libraries; to engage the community and supporters; and to share success stories. Of course, by the time you are reading this it will be too late to capitalize on these opportunities if you have not done your planning. But it is never too late to use the holidays to thank the community, the library staff, your volunteers, and your members. So, if you do not already have a plan for this, brainstorm a last-minute way to use the holidays to thank those who need thanking.

FONCPL thanks our group and individual members for your support during 2023. Your dues and contributions support the FONCPL operations, programs, awards, and grants. We had another successful year. You can read all about our achievements in the 2023 Annual Report which will be produced in early 2024.

We wish you and your Friends a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year! Enjoy the holidays with family and Friends!

Peace be to you!

Judy Hills, President



December Days to Celebrate!

Dec 5 International Volunteer Day
If everyone volunteered, the world would be a better place

Dec 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
Honor & remember the 2,403 people killed in 1941

Dec 10 Dewey Decimal System Day
Honor Melvil Dewey, inventor of the Dewey Decimal System

12/15 National Cupcake Day
Make them/Buy them/share them!! Yummo!

12/17 Wright Brothers Day
12/17/23 is the 120th Anniversary of the First Flight!

12/21 Winter Solstice
The shortest day of the year

12/25 Christmas!
The birth of Jesus

12/31 New Year's Eve
Last day of the year

The Book lists for 2023

According to Barnes & Noble:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| The Wager | David Gann (their Author of the Year) |
| Yellowface | R.F. Kuang |
| The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store | James McBride (their Book of the Year) |
| The Creative Act: A Way of Being | Rick Rubin |
| The Berry Pickers | Amanda Peters |
| Let Us Descend | Jesmyn Ward |
| Divine Rivals: A Novel | Rebecca Ross |
| The Story of Art Without Men | Katy Hessel |
| Let Us Descend | Jesmyn Ward |
| Fourth Wing | Rebecca Yarros |

The Ten Best Books of 2023 according to New York Times:

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| The Bee Sting | Paul Murray |
| Chain-Gang All-Stars | Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah |
| Eastbound | Maylis de Kerangal |
| The Fraud | Zadie Smith |
| North Woods | Daniel Mason |

NONFICTION

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| The Best Minds | Jonathan Rosen |
| Bottoms Up and the Devil Laughs | Kerry Howley |
| Fire Weather | John Vaillant |
| Master Slave Husband Wife | Ilyon Woo |
| Some People Need Killing | Patricia Evangelista |

The Best Books of the Year by NPR:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store | James McBride |
| Y/N | Esther Yi |
| The Laughter | Sonora Jha |
| Damned If You Do | Alex Brown |
| People Collide | Isle McElroy |
| We Are A Haunting | Tyriek White |
| Vampires of El Norte | Isabel Canas |
| Lone Women | Victor LaValle |
| The Reformatory | Tananarive Due |

The #1 Selling Book in 2023 to date is: SPARE by Prince Harry the Duke of Sussex

Some December Decorating Ideas!



Isn't this a good model of an Impact Statement?!!



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Kat Blankenhorn

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—

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Publicity Chair

Marian Dieter

Technology Chair

Judy Knight

Volunteer Chair

Kathy Cabral

Ways and Means Chair

Carol Brolley

Ex-Officio President

Our Impact

Our mission is to serve our community by supporting excellence in collection and program development and more at Harper and Barbee Libraries.

1250

\$ Raised from
Grants

25277

\$ Raised from
Donations

9397

\$ Raised from
Memberships

25061

\$ Raised from
Our Book Sales

317

Friends/Memb
ers

115/7000

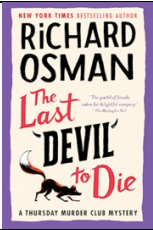
Volunteers/Ho
urs Worked

Here is what a Challenge Grant in 2022 produced!!

Aren't they the neatest place to read!!

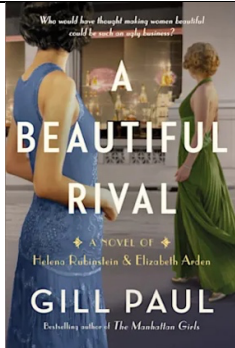


Grab a cozy blanket and your favorite warm beverage and snuggle up with one of these!!



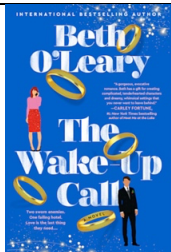
The Last Devil to Die by Richard Osman

A reader says: “Osman weaves pure gold with these characters and their investigations. He does so while touching on relevant topics like smuggling, health issues, and scammers who target older victims. I don’t think I will ever tire of the series and cannot wait for the next one.”



A Beautiful Rival by Gill Paul

A reader says: “I don’t know what I have been doing with my life that I am just now reading a historical fiction novel by Gill Paul! *A Beautiful Rival: A Novel of Helena Rubinstein and Elizabeth Arden* sucked me in immediately, and I was instantly drawn into this story of two very different but also eerily alike women who knew exactly what it meant to work hard for what you have. I knew absolutely nothing about Rubinstein OR Arden heading into this book, and I feel like I learned so much about both of them. Even with the liberties Paul took with the storyline, so much of it was based on real life that it still all felt very real. Paul’s writing is fantastic and so engrossing that I literally started the audiobook and listened to it all the way to the end in one sitting.”



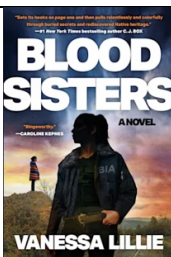
The Wake-Up Call by Beth O’Leary

A reader says: “I think this is my favorite book by Beth O’Leary to date. I found it very fun and quirky. It’s like the feeling of a small-town romance, but with the hotel standing in for the small-town part and with the bonus of it taking place during the upcoming holiday season. It checks all the boxes. If you’re looking for a feel-good story leading into the holiday season, I don’t think you need to look further than *The Wake-Up Call*.”



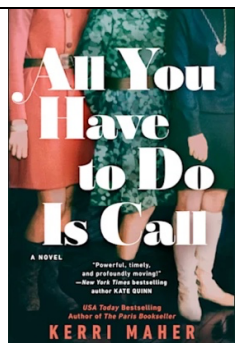
Godkiller by Hannah Kaner

A reader says: “Prepare to be captivated by Hannah Kaner’s *Godkiller*, a masterfully crafted adult high fantasy that takes readers on an exhilarating journey of self-discovery and sacrifice. What sets this novel apart is Kaner’s seamless and unapologetic inclusion of characters with disabilities. They are portrayed as everyday individuals who exist organically within this richly woven tapestry of a fantastical world (and the real world).”



Blood Sisters by Vanessa Lillie

A reader says: “It’s not often that a book comes around that consumes you. With the astounding rates of disappearance and violence against Indigenous Native American women, I wanted to read this book to hopefully learn more. Not only will the story blow you away, but the author has a raw talent that will suck you right into the storyline and not let you go until long after you turn that last page.”



All You Have to Do Is Call

Kerri Maher

A reader says: “Excellent and engaging historical fiction. I could not put this down — the author wrote this so well and engagingly that the reader cares about these characters and their decisions and plights. The women in this novel became real and I wanted, needed, to know how they fared. *All You Have to Do Is Call* is, unfortunately, relevant again today which makes this title very timely. Ms. Maher’s research and writing brings the reader a fictionalized glimpse of the Jane Collective, a real women’s rights group that sourced safe abortions for those in need.”

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|  | <p><u>Witch of Wild Things</u> by Raquel Vasquez Gilliland</p> <p>A reader says: “This was a fun book as much about the love between sisters and family as it is about romantic love... This book had everything that I look for in a great work of fiction. There was just enough romance to make my heart go pitter-patter but not so much that this is a standard romance. There was a perfect blend between family drama and mystical magic to show that the two are not entirely separate, [both] of which are drawn together around a beautifully crafted story that has at its heart a mystery that compels you on from chapter to chapter.”</p> |
|  | <p><u>A December to Remember</u> by Jenny Bayliss</p> <p>A reader says: “I absolutely loved this story! This is the first book I have read by Jenny Bayliss but I can tell you after this book it won’t be the last. This book has a little bit of everything. If you like families reuniting, small-town romance, celebrating Christmas, and [books that] wrap you in a big hug then this is the book for you. I HIGHLY recommend this book for the holiday season!”</p> |
|  | <p><u>The Witches at the End of the World</u> by Chelsea Iversen</p> <p>A reader says: “Do you believe in magic? Well, I do after reading <i>The Witches at the End of the World</i>, a mystical debut novel by Chelsea Iversen. Set between an enchanted forest and a fishing village in 1677 Norway, Iversen’s tale of sisterhood is transportive. Kaija and Minna were young girls when their mother was accused of being a witch and burned alive. They survived by fleeing with their grandmother, who has just died. They express their grief differently: Kaija longs for community and flees to the fishing village they grew up in, hoping enough passed time and magic will allow her to blend in and become a part of the community again; Minna burns with a blistering rage and casts a curse that will have long-reaching and unexpected results. This is a story of actions and consequences, of sisters’ love for one another, of what being different would have meant in those times. Iversen wields magical realism like Minna’s carefully sharpened hunting knife and knows just when to slice with it.</p> |
|  | <p><u>The Hurricane Wars</u> by Thea Guanzon</p> <p>A reader says: “First in a Southeast Asian–inspired romantic fantasy trilogy, this debut was such fun to read and kept my attention riveted through the entire book. This story revolves around a long-standing civil war between the ruthless Night Emperor with their shadow magic and basically everyone else in their sphere. Talasyn is a young, orphaned resistance fighter who has known nothing but hardship and war for much of her life and has made her military comrades her surrogate family. She has a secret, however, that could change the tide of the war.”</p> |
|  | <p><u>10 Things That Never Happened</u> by Alexis Hall</p> <p>A reader says: “This story left me spellbound, evoking a roller coaster of emotions. Sam Becker’s story, a mix of workplace struggles and unexpected romance, felt remarkably genuine. His witty, flawed boss, Jonathan Forest, made the narrative rich with depth. Despite initial reservations, I found solace in their unconventional love story, appreciating Hall’s knack for crafting imperfect yet relatable characters. The novel delved into complex family dynamics, adding layers of authenticity to the plot. Hall’s writing was raw and honest, making me laugh, cry, and reflect deeply. While the romance was unconventional, its genuine portrayal of human connection made it an emotionally resonant read, leaving me profoundly moved by the characters’ journey.”</p> |

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|---|--|
|  | <p><u>The Stranger Upstairs</u> by Lisa M. Matlin</p> <p>A reader says: “Holy bananas! The main character, Sarah, is one of those... snarky as can be, unreliable narrators and Matlin nailed it. I was completely fascinated with watching this woman unravel. At one point when the first twist was revealed my smug self thought I had this one figured out but I was nothing but a clueless idiot. Matlin continued to surprise me time and time again. This is a psychological thriller with nods to horror and that’s a cocktail I’m always fond of. I also commend the author for sharing her own mental health journey in the author’s note. From the gorgeous cover to the very last page I was completely riveted and I can’t wait to see what she treats us to next!”</p> |
|  | <p><u>One Puzzling Afternoon</u> by Emily Critchley</p> <p>A reader says: “<i>One Puzzling Afternoon</i> is a heartwarming, captivating tale that takes you into the life of Edie Green, an eighty-two-year-old woman who, although struggling with a mind that is quickly losing the present while scattering the past, is determined to do whatever she can to piece those memories together before they’re gone for good to find her beloved friend, whom she glimpsed only the other day, but who actually hasn’t been seen since she disappeared almost 70 years ago. The prose is evocative and warm. The characters are troubled, genuine, and endearing. And the plot, told in a past/present style, is a delightfully affecting tale about life, love, loss, family, friendship, deception, tragedy, community, dementia, and secrets.”</p> |
|  | <p><u>The Scandalous Confessions of Lydia Bennet, Witch</u> by Melinda Taub</p> <p>A reader says: “<i>The Scandalous Confessions of Lydia Bennet, Witch</i> is a very well-written, wildly imaginative, and charming story. It is so much fun! The author has done great work presenting us with the locations and characters we know and love (or love to dislike — I’m looking at you, Mr. Wickham), along with magical hijinks and mayhem aplenty. It was very enjoyable to see our favorite characters in this new and original magical setting. The speed of the plot is perfect, the author’s writing style is smooth and sparkling with wit, humor, and heart, and the story was always captivating and never dull.”</p> |
|  | <p><u>Maybe Once, Maybe Twice</u> by Alison Rose Greenberg</p> <p>A reader says: “Maggie has always felt big emotions and carried big dreams. She won’t settle for a job that makes her money when she can live what she loves through writing and playing music. At the age of 35, her life is exactly what she doesn’t want. But a marriage pact (or two?) from her past spins her world into chaos. Alison’s writing is so lyrical. I am not big on highlighting or marking up books, but I couldn’t help myself with how beautiful the sentiments came across to me. I loved every minute of it.”</p> |
|  | <p><u>The Reformatory</u> by Tananarive Due</p> <p>A reader says: “<i>The Reformatory</i> by Tananarive Due, takes place in 1950 Florida, in the midst of the extreme racism and Jim Crow laws governing the South. I knew going into this that it would be a tremendous read, but even I hadn’t been prepared for the horrors on the page... This novel was so emotionally charged that I doubt anyone could tear themselves away once they started it. Many of the scenes were so horrific that it was difficult to believe it was only a book... because things like those depicted DID actually occur. The subject material here is heavy, and more so when you realize the reality of the situation it was based on.”</p> |

Looks like some great reads on this list!!

This display is at the Lexington Public Library honoring the Friends for their support since 1999!!



Have you sent in your Membership Dues for 2024?

Planning for 2024

by Judy Hills

We hope your board is in the process of developing a plan of work for 2024 and that you are going to try one new event or one new fundraiser this coming year. If you keep doing the same old things over and over because it is easy or convenient, you are painting yourselves into a corner—entropy sets in.

What do we need to prioritize as leaders to achieve organizational goals? When we create the ideal processes for our Friends, we design and control a model. For example, by now Friends that do book sales probably have a model in place (ideal process). But when was the last time you consciously adjusted the model? Yes, you may have had to adjust due to factors beyond your control (e.g., loss of the facility where the sale had been being held), but when did you last make a true change (e.g., started taking credit cards as payment)? To avoid putting physical or mental work into these processes means entropy will increase, making our goals less probable and less achievable. Simply said, if we don't continue to put energy into our planning and projects, the goals we hope to achieve are going to elude us.

We invite you to set one or more goal to align your Friends organization with the current times by instituting meaningful change. If you have questions, join our Open Mic night or put your question out on the Friends listserv. Others may have already made that change and can provide guidance.

Since we are talking about planning for the next year,
Why not go ahead and budget in your Group Membership dues for 2024?

If you pay before February 28, 2024,
your Friends Group will be entered in to a **\$200 drawing!!!**

That's FREE money for just paying ahead!!



IT'S TIME !! *Join us now for 2023!!*



Membership
runs from
January thru
December
each year



F·R·I·E·N·D·S

OF NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Supporting Friends of the Library Statewide

FONCPL offers two membership options:

Group membership is open to Friends organizations and public libraries.

The Group Membership form and the Individual Membership form are available on our website.

<https://foncpl.org>

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Don't forget to join
so you can win a
chance for \$200

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

