



F·R·I·E·N·D·S

OF NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Supporting Friends of the Library Statewide

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

November 2025

Dear Friends,

FALL HAS ARRIVED! Especially here in the mountains. I hope, wherever you are, that Mother Nature has put on a show like she has for us here. While some of the trees are shedding their leaves, others are just glorious! The deer are feasting on falling acorns that you can actually hear hit the ground! You do not want to be standing under one of those huge trees at this time of the year.

In other local news from Alleghany County, Debbie Brewer, Alleghany County's head librarian, is going to retire. In fact, her last day is Friday, October 31. Debbie has worked in our library for 43 years! In that time the library has moved more times that she would like to admit before landing in its current location. Adjusting to a space that is over three times larger than the former building was fun for all, and Debbie wasted no time in filling it with a huge number of programs for all ages. She will be sorely missed, but we wish her well and hope she will return for visits on occasion.

If you are a computer nerd or geek, this issue is for you. It contains lots of information about AI. For old fogies like me, it's important to keep up. So, read on and learn!

The week of November 9 is StoryWalk Week! If you have one (or more), tell us about it and send pictures! It was one of Debbie's last big projects for us in Sparta. The stands have arrived but are in storage until spring. Other big projects in our park where the StoryWalk will be installed take precedence. Plus, the ground is getting harder with the arrival of cold weather. We can be patient, but it's hard!

Festivals are a big thing in North Carolina all throughout the year. It is the fall, however, when my favorites occur. It may be the cooler weather. It may be that some focus on traditions or special crops - like pumpkins. They are not just for Halloween, you know! Think about pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving, for instance. The varieties are numerous. My brother (a great cook) and I argue about who has the best recipe for pumpkin pie. What is your favorite recipe? Where did it come from? Has it been handed down in your family? Did it come from a special recipe book? Was it written by hand by a special relative? I had a relative who read recipe books in bed but didn't cook! Do you know one of those? Whether you are reading or cooking this season, share with us and your friends.

On a different topic, please note that the address for our treasurer has changed. His new address is printed on the last page of this newsletter. It is especially important when you are renewing your membership! We don't want your membership to go astray. **Dues are due in January!**

Wishing you a safe & Happy Thanksgiving!

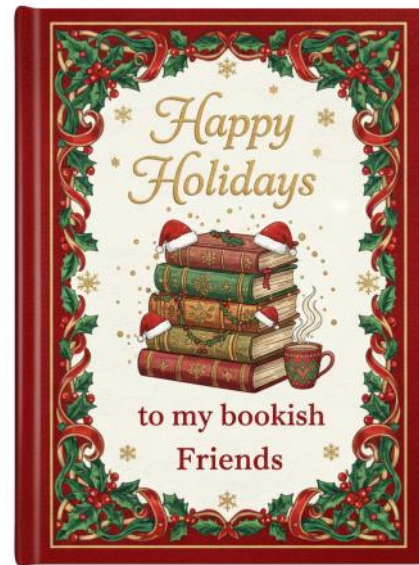
Yours in Friendship,

Joyce Speas, President



DECEMBER MEMBER CONTEST—JUST FOR FUN

Members, here is your opportunity to try your hand at using the [AI image generator](#). To save this editor from having to find holiday messages or cards to run in the December newsletter, we invite you to use your AI skills to create one. Send it in an image format (jpeg or png) to jahnbnc@gmail.com. This way you can wish all your Friends a Happy Holiday without incurring the cost of postage! LOL!!! (See example on right). There are no prizes—just an opportunity to have a little seasonal fun.



SPOTTING DISINFORMATION OR MISINFORMATION

From **PEN America** submitted by Karen Robbins.

In March I wrote about how to begin to figure out media literacy and to pay attention to sources and to never forget the 5 W's: who, what, where, when, why.

Now I'd like to recommend PEN America's take on combatting disinformation. Challenges to combatting disinformation are everywhere—the use of AI tools; increased polarization; declining trust in the news. As we have seen, even media giants are not immune to censorship and manipulation of content.

What is the difference between disinformation and misinformation?

Disinformation may be false or misleading, but *with an intent to deceive the reader.*

Misinformation is false or misleading information presented as fact.

How can mis- and dis- information confuse readers? Because of the digital age we live in now, many social media platforms rely on readers' impulsivity and on "likes" or "shares" to generate content. Scrolling, clicking, reposting happen at a breakneck pace, often without readers stopping to consider the content. It is up to us to

slow the process down, pay attention to content, and think about how we react to it before sharing or reposting. It is crucial to check the profile of the poster, and to decide if that person is using information to get noticed or to inform readers. Look for credible news sources and corroboration.

Once you find outlets you can trust, continue to track the story across those sources, to see if the coverage differs and how. Continue to check the "About Us" page to be sure with whom you are dealing.

News, commentary, opinions, and analysis are very different. There are so many sources online, on cable, and on network television, but many of the shows are not straight news. Online, be careful to apply the same test—is it news, commentary, opinions or analysis? And beware of ads that look like news.

Most of all, think before you send, repost, or share the information you have gathered. Tuning in to what you are looking at and reading takes a little more time, but will yield better information.

LIBRARY ADVOCACY BY KAREN ROBBINS

Recently at lunch with neighborhood friends, I was asked about the garden our Friends of the Library are funding/building at the library branch. After a quick update, one of the neighbors said she hadn't been to the library in ages. When I asked why not, she said she reads books from our neighborhood library of donated books.

That got me thinking. If the readers don't stop in the local library, how can they know what they are missing? My first thoughts were simple things: the library has been refurbished recently; there are new staff members who are delightful and could help recommend books; the library has interesting programs each month. These things interested her. She asked if she could use a computer, and if so, how much would it cost. Yikes! The computers are free to use.

What innovations do libraries offer? She and others at lunch were not aware of NC Cardinal, a consortium which allows patrons access to the collections of all the members around North Carolina. That way, getting a hard to find local copy becomes much easier. And, once you place a hold, the book comes within a day or two directly to the your local library to pick up.

What else? The staff can help her find more ways to read online, from checking out ebooks, to online databases, to local, state and national newspapers and magazines. It just takes a library card. The staff can get you started. At the circulation desk are many colorful cards with clear instructions so patrons can try it themselves at home. Access to news and culture for free.

Throughout the library posters and slides of events announce author talks, children's programming, and club meetings. The library has comfortable seating, a teen room, and meeting rooms that can be reserved for use. The library is a hub for the community, and some folks aren't going in because they have outdated notions that libraries are only quiet spaces to check out books.

And what about others who are busy and may read less? How will they know the advantages of a library card? What can we as FOL members do to advocate for our libraries? Here are some tips.

- **Connect and communicate**—This can be as simple as talking to friends at lunch, like I did. Or follow the library or Friends of the Library on social media, and post activities and events to your accounts so friends and neighbors can join in. Participate in activities and fundraisers. Reach out to local and state officials for funding and support. Be visible.
- **Create awareness**—Campaign through social media, blogs, or posters. Join the Chamber of Commerce. Reach out for support from local businesses. Write articles for the local paper.
- **Raise funds**—Donate to the library. Encourage membership to the Friends of the Library. Get friends to join. Help plan programs that will draw attention to the library. Promote those programs, and raise funds to cover costs. One example is our Learning Garden which was funded through engraved brick sales, and will increase the footprint of the library space, offering unique opportunities for outdoor education and programming.

Now more than ever, we need everyone to help advocate for libraries. Funding is disappearing and the state and local funds are stretched a little thinner. So bring people to your library. Keep officials aware of the ongoing value of libraries. And be sure to thank local organizers, officials, and businesses who sponsor good things for your library.

BOOKSALES DONATIONS ADVOCACY
FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEERING COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS SPECIAL EVENTS
MEMBERSHIP DRIVES SUPPORT
CELEBRATIONS RESOURCES PROMOTION
COLLABORATION LIBRARY LOVE

Thank the Friends.

HOW ARE THE LIBRARY AND FRIENDS DIFFERENT?



AI LIBRARY PROGRAMMING FOR JOB SEARCHERS

Submitted by Cindy Shipley.

Artificial Intelligence offers many possibilities for Public Library programming for patrons. These programs help library staff teach patrons about digital literacy and the growing field of AI. Some ideas for AI programming include hosting an AI book talk or club; demonstrations on generative AI platforms and how they work; exploring how AI intersects with creativity and the arts; creating a food program using AI to encourage patrons to try pairings suggested by chatbots; teaching a job search and resume building program using AI tools; designing a newsletter using AI to generate headlines, photo captions and story summaries; using AI in genealogy research to create a family tree and how to be safe when using AI tools. I will expand on these programs in future articles. This article will cover AI tools for providing a comprehensive program for job searchers.

According to a recent study by [eweek.com](https://www.eweek.com) 53% of job searchers in 2024 used AI tools in their search and they predict an increase in 2025 to 81%. A library workshop for job searching patrons should include the following topics where AI can assist.

Preparation - Brainstorming key skills and experiences to highlight on your resume.

Research - Offering information on specific companies, industries, and job market trends.

Resume - Making content suggestions and helping to tailor a resume to a specific position and providing feedback to make the resume more impactful.

Interview - Offering practice interview questions and tips and video capabilities.

Follow up - Generating template emails for follow up questions and responses and scheduling thank you notes.

Negotiation - Offering advice on how to negotiate salary and benefits.

AI job matching tools should help connect

job seekers and employers efficiently by using data-driven insights and automation. Analyze resumes/profiles: Extract skills, experience, education, and preferences. Infer soft skills and strengths: Use language patterns, past achievements, or assessments to detect traits like leadership or problem-solving.

AI job matching tools include *ChatGPT*; *LinkedIn*; *ZipRecruiter* and *Google's Career Dreamer*.

AI job searching tools should help job seekers find, evaluate, and apply for the best opportunities more efficiently and accurately. The tool should use natural language processing (NLP) to understand resumes and job descriptions. It should match candidates to roles based on skills, experience, interests, and goals, not just keywords. It should provide fit scores (e.g., 0-100%) that explain how well a job aligns with the user's profile. The tool should learn from the user's past searches, clicks and applications and provide updates in real time as the user refines preferences.

AI job search tools include *Google for Jobs*; *Job Wizard*; *Simplify.jobs*; *Indeed* and *JobPal*.

AI resume tools should help job seekers create, optimize, and tailor their resumes efficiently using artificial intelligence. They should analyze the content, structure, and format of a resume; Identify weaknesses (e.g., unclear job titles, missing keywords, grammar issues); suggest improvements for clarity, conciseness, and professionalism; compare the user's resume to a specific job posting; recommend ways to rephrase experiences to match job requirements naturally. Resume tools should also offer ATS (applicant tracking system) friendly templates (simple formatting that parses correctly). Also important are consistent fonts, spacing, and section organization, detecting spelling, grammar, and punctuation issues and allow easy export to PDF, Word, or LinkedIn.

Continued on next page

AI LIBRARY PROGRAMMING (CONTINUED)

AI resume tools include **Rezi**; **Kickresume**; **MyPerfectResume**; **Teal** and **Canva.com/ai-resume-builder**.

An Interview preparation AI tool can do a lot more than just ask questions. The best ones combine personalization, simulation, feedback, and analytics to help candidates improve. Interview tools should generate role-specific and company-specific questions to include timed responses and follow-up probing, not just static questions. Difficulty level of the questions should be tailored to the candidate's experience and. They should include behavioral, technical, and situational interview type questions. They should simulate live interview scenarios using voice or video by using AI avatars or voicebots to mimic real interviewer tone, pacing, and follow-up questions. It is also important to provide instant feedback on clarity, conciseness, and structure communication style (confidence, filler words, tone) technical accuracy and reasoning quality. Final needs are the ability to summarize strengths and areas for improvement and help candidates write personalized elevator pitches or closing statements

AI interview tools include **ChatGPT**; **InterviewBuddy**; **FinalRoundai** and **Behired.net**.

An AI salary estimation tool should help

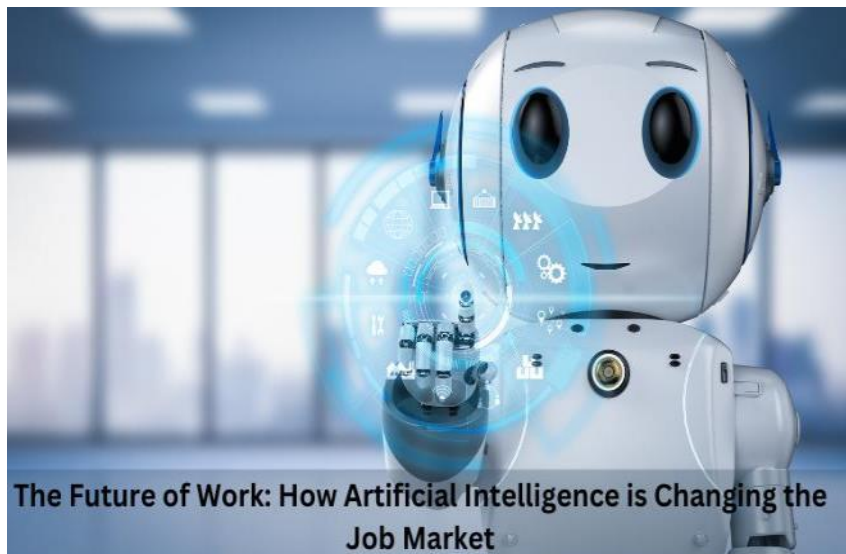
users understand and predict fair, accurate, and personalized salary ranges based on multiple data sources and contextual factor.

Using real-time data from job boards, company postings, and labor market databases and including regional and industry-specific salary trends, an AI tool should analyze job market data and provide accurate salary estimates based on experience levels and locations. A good tool should show base pay, bonuses, stock options, and total compensation when available and adjust predictions based on education, experience, skills, certifications, and company size/type.

AI salary estimation tools include **Pay-scale.com**; **Salary.com**; **Glassdoor.com** and **Payscale.ai**.

Use AI as a starting point in your job search, not the final word. AI-generated content is a fantastic foundation, but it can sometimes sound generic or robotic. Take the suggestions and personalize them with your own voice and style. Add unique accomplishments, tweak phrasing, and make sure your personality shines through. This balance keeps your resume professional yet authentic. As always, there are risks to using AI tools, especially as they handle your personal, professional, or sensitive data.

Use AI as a starting point, not the final word



The Future of Work: How Artificial Intelligence is Changing the Job Market



2024 CENSORSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

NUMBER OF LIBRARIES IN NORTH CAROLINA

122
Academic

2,340
School

84
Public

2,546
Total

LIBRARIES THAT RESPONDED TO THE 2024 CENSORSHIP SURVEY

Note: There was a significantly lower response rate than 2023.

20%



Academic
Libraries

20%



Public
Libraries

1%



School Media
Centers

Unique books
challenged

26

21

total attempts to
censor library
materials or services

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER



Providing
confidential
support,
advocacy, and
resources for
NC library
workers.

www.ReadFreeNC.org
@ReadFreeNC on IG & FB

THREATS OR HARASSMENT REPORTED

- Patrons moving or hiding library books
- Patrons confronting library staff with harassing questions
- Patron bumping library director with car
- Patrons accusing library staff of "grooming children for sex trafficking"
- Separation from regional library systems



NCLAOnline.WildApricot.Org/Intellectual-Freedom-Committee

Titles that were challenged in North Carolina public or school libraries due to LGBTQ+ content, mature themes, language, nudity or negative cultural portrayals during 2024.

The Girl From the Sea by Molly Ostertag

The Big Bath House by Kyo Maclear

Cultural Traditions in Australia by Molly Aloian

Wise Blood by Flannery O'Connor

Better Place by Duane Murray

We are the Majority by Mark Robinson

Pip: The Story of Olive by Kim Kane

Ugly Dumpling by Stephanie Campisi

How Animals Have Sex by David Strom

Yo Duermo, Collected Biography

It Isn't Rude to be Nude by Rosie Haine

The Visitors by Catherine Burns

Tricks by Ellen Hopkins

Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Picoult

Me and Earl and the Dying Girl by Jesse Andrews

Sold by Patricia McCormick

This Book Is Gay by Juno Dawson,

A Court of Mist and Fury by Sarah Maas

Looking for Alaska by John Green

The Truth About Alice by Jennifer Mathieu

Dark Lord: The Early Years by Jamie Thomson

Unico: Awakening by Osamu Tezuka

Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West
by Gregory Maguire

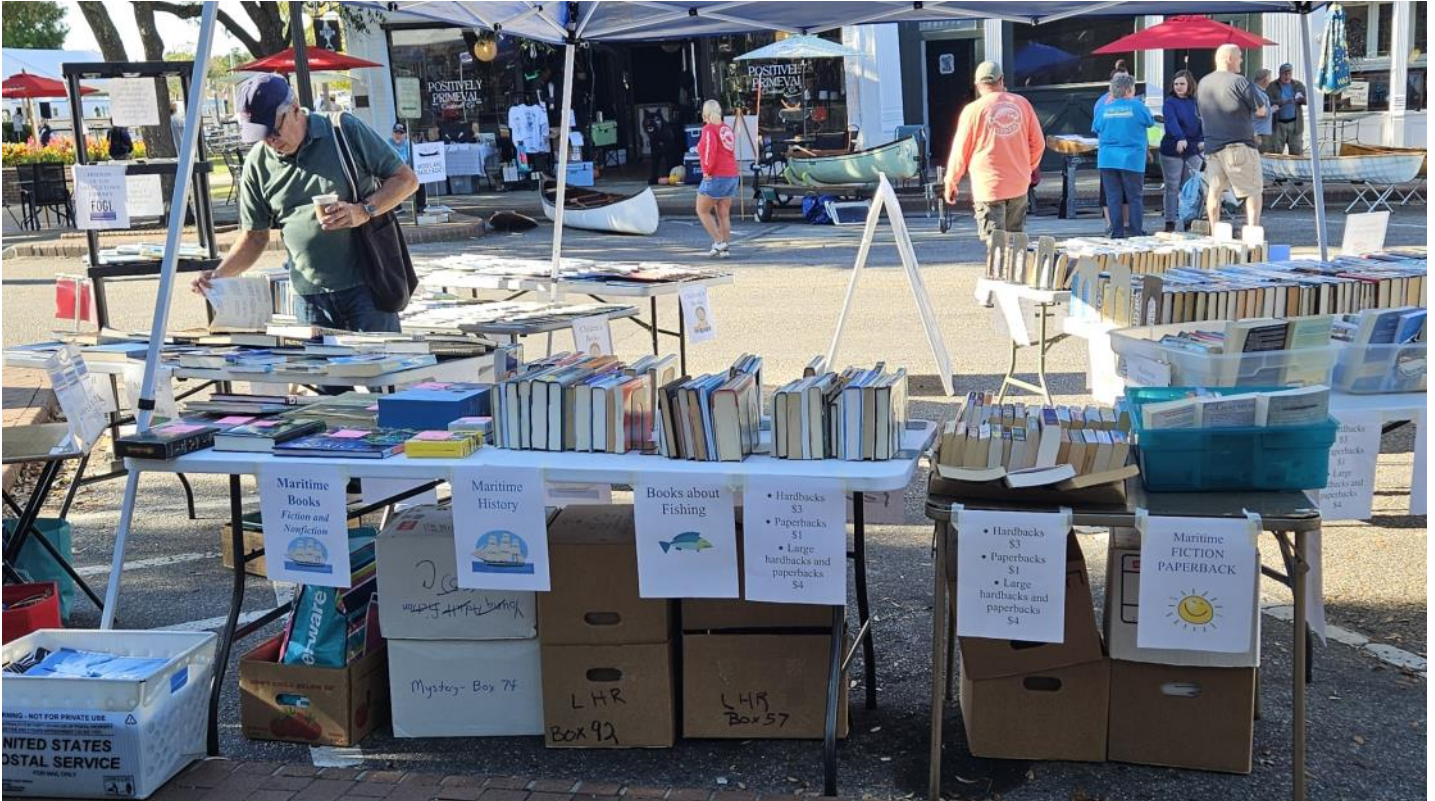
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

From the Desk of Zoe Washington by Janae Marks



Festivals & Events—Pop-up FOL Booksale

A friend was attending a boat show in October in Georgetown, SC and sent this photo. The FOL of Southport and Oak Island do this at the annual Southport Wooden Boat Show (November 1st). Festivals and events are a good time to sell books, to gain exposure, and to recruit new members.



Unique & Delightful Book Dedications (Inspiring Quotes)

Most all writers dedicate their books—sometimes simply in a word or two but with an air of mystery or intimacy. However, a few authors get playful and mischievous. Here are a few of those to make you chuckle.

- "For anyone who has ever dreamed of finding a body in the library." Maureen Johson, "Truly Devious"
- "For Colin Firth, You're a really great guy, but I am married, so I think we should just be friends." Shannon Hale, "Austenland"
- "Thanks, Dad. This book's for you. Please don't read chapters 7,9,11,17,19,21, or 28." Tessa Dare, "The Duchess Deal"
- "For the students of Lyons Township High School in Illinois. Because that kid in the back row asked." Kendare Blake, "Mortal Gods"
- "For everyone who only hears from me when I need something." Sean Dinker, "Admiral"
- "To my parents, for always supporting me. There wasn't a parenting book in the world that could have prepared you for my eccentricity. I'm sorry for denting the coffee table with my ninja sword. Yes, it was me." Chris Colfer, "The Land of Stories: beyond the Kingdoms."
- "To my mother, Belzie. I would have made a terrible doctor, mom. People would have died." Ben Philippe, "The Field Guide to the North American Teenager"
- "To my wonderful readers: Sorry about that last cliff hanger. Well, no, not really. HAHAAAAHA. But Seriously, I love you guys." Rick Riordan, "The House of Hades."

The Lisa Libraries: Children's Books for the Underserved

Are you affiliated with an organization, in the United States, in a low-income or underserved area that needs a small library, needs to rebuild or add to a library, or serves children who would benefit by being given new books to take home? Or do you know of such an organization?

Please write to The Lisa Libraries (lisalibraries@gmail.com) and include the following:

- information (letter, brochures, news items) about your program
- the number of children served
- age range of children served
- information about the socio-economic status of the community served by the appli-

cant organization (such as eligibility statistics for Title I and Federal School Lunch Programs)

- a breakdown of how the books would be used

Please also include:

- most recent ruling on your U.S. tax exempt 501(c)(3) status
- current annual budget
- a list of current funding sources



A donation of books from The Lisa Libraries is free. We do request that recipient organizations cover the shipping and handling costs, which is based on the destination and quantity of books. [Click here](#) to read more.

Books and Nature

The picture to the right is AI generated as is the article below that answers the question, "What do books symbolize in nature-themed art?"

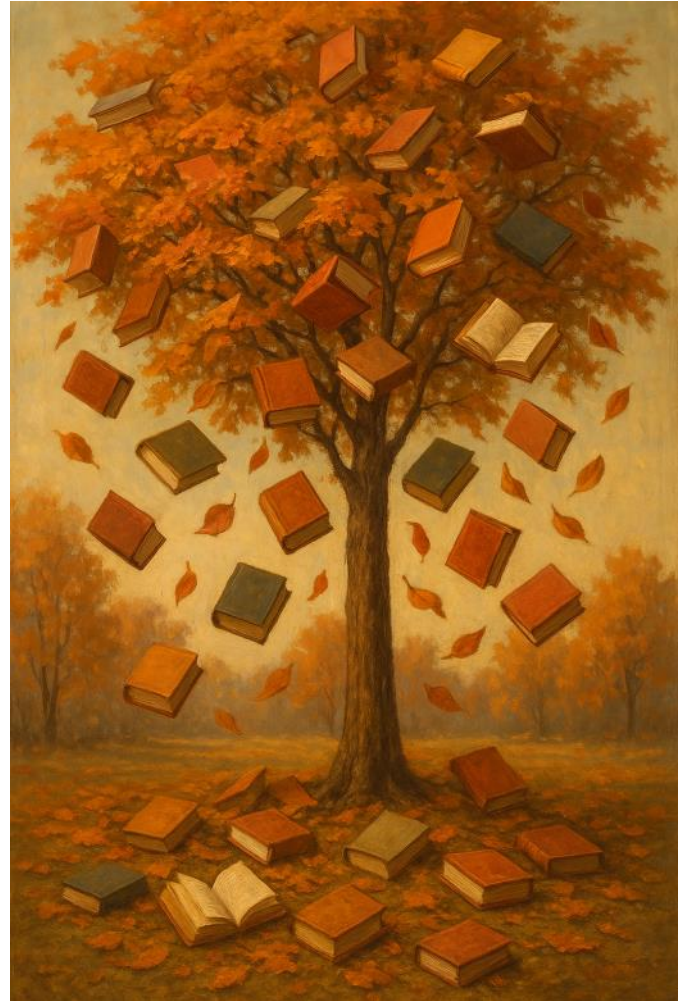
In nature-themed art, books often act as a poetic bridge between the human world of intellect and the untamed rhythms of the earth. They aren't just objects—they're metaphors that quietly invite reflection. Here are some rich interpretations:

▢ Knowledge rooted in nature Books growing on or falling from trees can suggest that wisdom isn't separate from the natural world—it springs from it. It's a visual reminder that human learning is grounded in and nourished by nature's cycles.

▢ Seasons of discovery When books replace leaves, it often echoes themes of transition, letting go, or personal growth. Just as trees shed leaves to prepare for renewal, books symbolize the shedding of outdated beliefs or the passing of knowledge through time.

▢ Quiet contemplation In tranquil forest scenes, an open book might symbolize silence, serenity, and introspection—nudging the viewer to sit still and absorb what's around them.

▢ Stories as seeds A book nestled in soil or sprouting leaves might suggest that stories are seeds planted in the imagination, capable of growing into entire new perspectives or emotional landscapes.



Would you like to build a nature-inspired narrative around this symbolism? Could be a short story, a poem, or even a concept for another image! Or a garden kiosk with nature poems instead of a story.

Reading for Fun in US Has Fallen by 40% in Last 20 Years

Researchers at the University of Florida and University College London have found that between 2003 and 2023, daily reading for reasons other than work and study fell by about 3% each year.

The number saw a peak in 2004, with 28% of people qualifying, before falling to 16% in 2023. The data was taken from more than 236,000 Americans who participated in

the American Time Use Survey and the study was published in the journal *iScience*. The definition of reading in the survey wasn't limited to **books**; it also included magazines and newspapers in print, electronic or audio form. The literacy level in the US is **estimated** to be about 79%, which ranks as 36th globally.

[Click here](#) to read more.



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Public Libraries**

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CALENDAR

All material for the newsletter is due to editor **Judy Hills** by the 25th of each month.

Click here for the 2025 Calendar of National Events—use these to plan your activities.

FONCPL Board Zoom Meetings 10 AM annual meeting on 11/15.

Here are a few dates of note:

NOVEMBER

11/1 National Authors Day

11/2 All Souls' Day

11/2 Daylight Saving Time ends

11/8 National STEAM/STEM Day

11/9-11/15 National StoryWalk Week

11/9 Carl Sagan Day

11/10 Marine Corps Birthday

11/11 Veterans Day

11/12 Chicken Soup for the Soul Day

11/11 National Young readers' day

11/15 National Drummer Day

11/20 National Smoke Out Day

11/18 National Princess Day

11/19 World toilet day

11/27 Thanksgiving Day

11/28 Day After Thanksgiving, Black Friday

DECEMBER

12/1 Cyber Monday

12/2 Giving Tuesday

12/5 International Volunteer Day

12/7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

12/7 National Letter Writing Day

12/9 Christmas Card Day

12/10 Dewey Decimal System Day

12/10 Human Rights Day

12/13 National Guard Birthday

12/15 National Cupcake day

12/17 Wright Brothers Day

12/19 National Ugly Sweater Day

12/20 Go Caroling Day

12/21 Winter Solstice