



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

July 2026

Dear Friends,

Well, are you ready?!? Is your library, office, bookstore, home, etc., festooned with the red, white, and blue?! 250 years! Think about all that's transpired in our nation in those years! There is so much to celebrate and be thankful for; but there are also things/events we should vow never to repeat. But, let's focus on the positive.

Our country, state, and local communities have been through so much, so many transitions to bring us to where we are today. What are you proud of? How will you acknowledge and celebrate the positive - parades, picnics, parties, gatherings? Fireworks at the end?! You have seen me celebrate our little bookstore on Main Street in Sparta, our new (ish) library with a new director, and our new storywalk. I know you have similar events, projects, etc., that you can celebrate in your community - DO IT! Make a big splash. Have fun! Enjoy!

Check out Cindy Shipley's article on what Friends groups provide for their libraries. She has captured exactly what I mean about focusing on the positive. This newsletter is an open forum. Take advantage of that and let us hear from you.

With that in mind, let's celebrate with the Brunswick County Friends and their library with their new expansion! It's the coming to-

gether of lots of supporters and hard work. Then, there is Polk County's Music Garden! Wait till you see the pictures! We also have National Ice Cream Day on July 19. Now, I'm looking forward to that! Then, planning ahead, National Book Lovers Day is August 9. Put your thinking caps on and have fun.

But, (you knew there was a "but" in there didn't you?) resolutions are usually made at the beginning of a new year, but what about starting a new tradition that will lead our libraries and Friends groups into the future with kindness, respect, and a welcoming attitude so that in the next 250 years there will be something to celebrate! There is a reason we are called "Friends."

Yours in Friendship,

Joyce Speas, President



eBook Licensing Burdens in North Carolina

On May 19, LALS hosted a webinar on [Ebook Licensing for Libraries — What's Happening, and What States Are Doing About It](#) (recording linked), presented by Kyle K. Courtney, Esq., Founder of eBook Study Group, Patricia Dew, Library Director of Brunswick County Public Libraries (NC), David Hansen, J.D., MSLS, Executive Director, Author's Alliance, Ryan Livergood, Executive Director at Warren-Newport Public Library District (IL), and Ellen Paul, Executive Director, Connecticut Library Consortium (CT). This webinar presented helpful information about some of the legislative action on eBook licensing costs for libraries taking place nationwide from leaders in this movement. Since the presentation, there has been action on this front in [Rhode Island](#) as well as a growing coalition of [library organizations speaking out](#) on this issue.

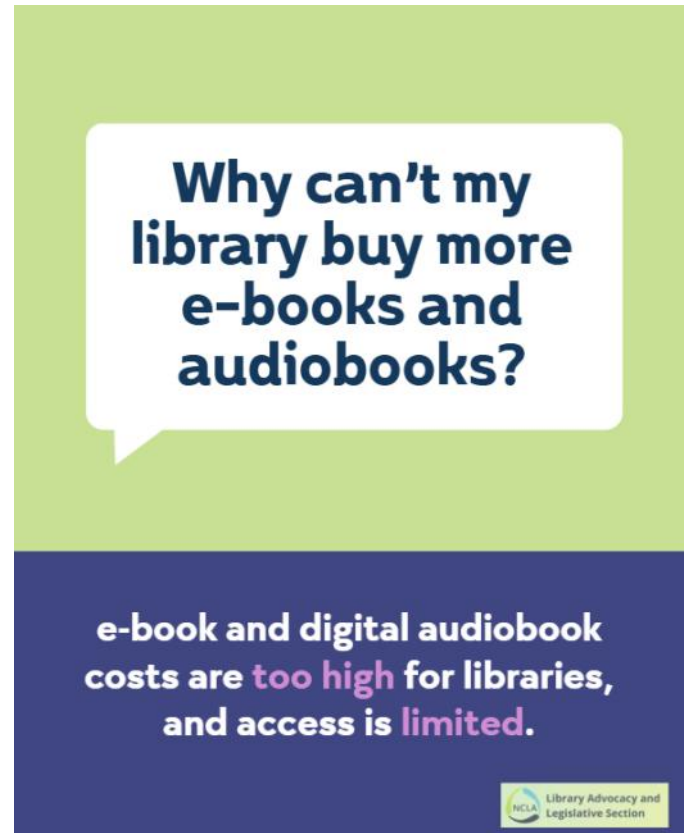
If your library would like to share more information with patrons about what eBook licensing looks like here in North Carolina, consider these [eBook infographics](#), revised with permission from the [Reaching Across Illinois Library System](#), and based on North Carolina Public Library Expenditure data from the past two years. Materials can be downloaded and circulated as-is, or adapted in Canva with your specific institution's data.

We are in the process of convening a task force to explore avenues for fair and equitable eBook pricing for libraries and authors in North Carolina. This group is open to librarians and library

Contributing to the FONCPL Newsletter

Recently we received an email complaining about the content of this newsletter. We aim for a balance of advocacy, AI usage, tips for running a successful Friends group, ideas to pursue, grant information, and news from Friends around the state (the good and the bad). The intent is to keep you informed.

Don't complain! Submit articles, pictures, and items of interest. [Click here](#).



Trustees, Friends, and Foundation members. If you are interested in joining, please [complete the form at this link](#). Email advocacy@nclaonline.org with any questions.

Submitted by: Diana Fotinatos, Chair, Brunswick County Library Board of Trustees



Fundraising: The Engine That Powers Our Library's Future by Cindy Shipley

When people think about libraries, they often picture shelves of books, quiet reading spaces, and educational programs. What many may not realize is that behind many of these valuable resources and services stands a dedicated Friends of the Library organization working to provide support beyond what public funding can cover.

Fundraising is at the heart of that mission.

While municipal and county budgets typically provide funding for essential library operations such as staffing, utilities, and basic collections, they often leave little room for enhancements that help a library truly thrive. This is where Friends groups make a meaningful difference. Through fundraising efforts, Friends organizations help transform libraries from simply meeting basic needs to becoming vibrant centers of learning, culture, and community engagement.

The impact of fundraising can be seen throughout the library. Funds raised by Friends groups often support children's story times, summer reading programs, author visits, lectures, literacy initiatives, and other educational programming that enriches the lives of patrons of all ages. Fundraising also helps expand collections by providing new books, audiobooks, digital resources, and specialty materials that might otherwise be beyond the library's budget.

Technology is another area where Friends support is essential. Computers, tablets, maker-space equipment, and accessibility tools frequently rely on supplemental funding. In many communities, Friends groups have also contributed to building improvements, including furniture, signage, meeting spaces, and other enhancements that make libraries more welcoming and functional for visitors.

The benefits of fundraising extend beyond financial support. Successful fundraising efforts help build a sense of community ownership. When residents donate, volunteer, attend events, or become members, they develop a stronger connection to their library and become advocates for its continued success. This visible support sends an important message to local officials and decision-makers about the value the community places on its library.

Strong fundraising efforts can also strengthen a library's ability to secure grants and other funding opportunities. Many foundations and government agencies look for evidence of community support when awarding grants. Active Friends organizations provide that evidence through both financial contributions and community engagement.

Conversely, organizations that place less emphasis on fundraising often face challenges in maintaining membership, recruiting volunteers, and sustaining their impact. Without the resources generated through fundraising, programs may be reduced, opportunities lost, and community visibility diminished.

Perhaps most importantly, fundraising events themselves help keep the library connected to the community. Whether through book sales, membership drives, special events, or other initiatives, fundraising activities provide opportunities for residents to engage with the library and support its mission. These events are not simply about raising money; they are about celebrating the library as a vital community institution.

The most successful Friends organizations recognize that fundraising is not a once-a-

Continued on next page

Fundraising continued

year activity but an ongoing commitment. By developing a diverse, year-round fundraising strategy, Friends groups create a strong foundation for advocacy, programming, community engagement, and long-term sustainability.

Simply put, fundraising is the engine that powers everything else. Through the generosity and involvement of supporters, Friends of the Library organizations help ensure that libraries continue to educate, inspire, and serve their communities for generations to come.

Here are some fundraising ideas for a Friends of the Library organization:

Classic & Reliable

- **Book sales** — Collect donated books and sell them in the library or at community events; can be ongoing or seasonal
- **Read-a-thon** — Participants get sponsors to pledge money per book or page read over a set period

Library card sign-up drive with donations

— Encourage new card sign-ups paired with a suggested donation

Events

- **Author talks & signings** — Invite local or regional authors for ticketed events
- **Trivia night** — Host a literary or general knowledge trivia night at the library or a local venue
- **Murder mystery dinner** — A ticketed theatrical event with a book/library theme
- **Gala or dinner auction** — Annual formal event with silent and live auctions
- **Escape room** — Create a temporary book-themed escape room experience in the library

Battle of the Books — Competitive reading event for kids or teens with entry fees and sponsors

Community Engagement

- **Local business sponsorships** — Partner with businesses for naming rights on library rooms, collections, or programs
- **Adopt-a-shelf or Adopt-a-Book** — Donors sponsor the purchase of new books in a subject they love
- **Wish list registry** — Post a curated list of needed books/materials on Amazon or similar so donors can buy directly

Community read with sponsors — Organize a town-wide book club with local business underwriting

Online & Digital

- **Crowdfunding campaigns** — Use GoFundMe or a library-specific platform for targeted projects (e.g., new children's section)
- **Social media challenges** — Create a viral reading challenge tied to donations
- **Virtual author events** — Lower overhead than in-person; can reach a wider audience

Online auction — Solicit donated items and experiences for a timed online auction

Merchandise & Products

- **Branded merchandise** — Tote bags, mugs, bookmarks, t-shirts, and journals with library branding
- **Custom library cookbook** — Collect recipes from community members and sell bound copies

Calendar featuring local art or photography — Themed around books, reading, or local history

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Fundraising continued

Year-Round Giving

- **Friends membership drive** — Tiered annual memberships (\$25 basic, \$100 patron, \$250 sustainer, etc.) with small benefits
- **Legacy giving / planned gifts** — Encourage bequests in wills for long-term funding
- **Matching gift campaigns** — Recruit a lead donor to match all gifts during a specific period

Amazon Smile or similar programs — Passive fundraising through everyday shopping
Unique & Creative

- **Blind date with a book** — Wrap books in brown paper with clue words; sell at a small markup

Fine amnesty day — Library waives overdue fines in exchange for a donation or food bank contribution

Ever Wanted to Run A Bookstore?

Escape to Wigtown. In the late 1990s Wigtown was crowned Scotland's National Book Town. The Open Book bookstore offers a unique chance to live and work among books for a week. You'll feel like a character in a bookstore novel. Visitors can experience life as a bookseller, with local volunteers providing guidance. Accommodation is available upstairs (when available). This initiative, started by an American writer, funds the bookstore and the town's book festival.

And The Open Book is only one of many bookstores in town. Other features of this unique experience include rugged coastline, azure pastures, emerald green forests, distilleries, cycling paths, rural villages, and nature preserves. Definitely life in the slow lane! [Click here](#) to check it out.

If your Friends run a book store, this might be an interesting concept for a new fundraiser.



Polk County Library Music Garden

Children visiting the Marye Jane Priddy Children's Library section of The Polk County Public Libraries are often energized by the enticing books, reading nook, wall mural and interactive displays, etc.

Like most libraries, we are faced with an open floor plan which allows the sounds of excited children to spread throughout the library. What could be added to direct all this energy into something new and exciting? Answer: The Lilian Jackson Braun and Earl Bettinger Music Garden!

With generous donations from the Friends of The Polk County Public Libraries, a small amount of unused outdoor space was resurfaced, enclosed (for safety) and durable musical "instruments" installed for the enjoyment of all.

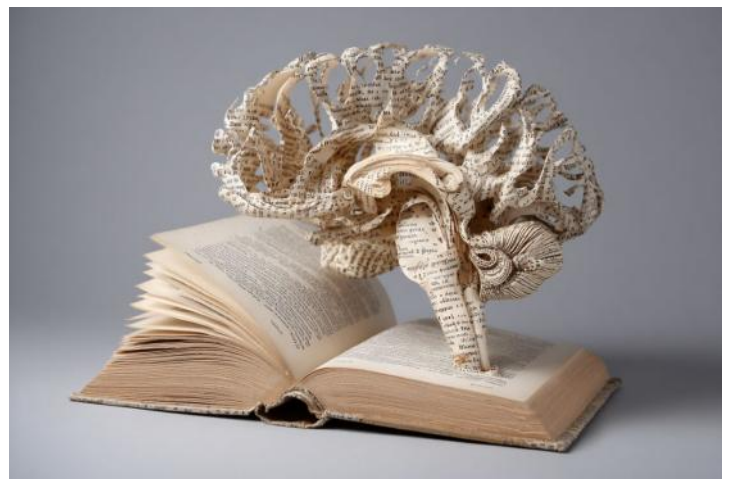


Hot Off the Press: Brain Integration Paper vs. Digital

"A pioneering functional neuroimaging study provided the first neurological evidence detailing how reading mediums alter story comprehension. The research compares how the brain processes narrative arcs when read on paper versus digital tablets.

"By measuring localized brain blood flow via functional MRI (fMRI) scanners, investigators demonstrated that paper reading provides stable spatial and tactile cues that allow the brain to organize and retrieve complex story information with significantly less cognitive effort."

So, as a reader, have you noticed any difference between when you read a paper book vs. reading a novel on an e-reader?



[From Neuroscience June 3, 2026](#)

FOLSOI Help a Library to Grow by Cindy Phillips, President

Brunswick County, in Southeast North Carolina, is the fastest growing county in the state. The population is exploding and FOL's across the state know what that means—how do libraries to keep up with the expanded growth?

Thanks to The Friends of the Library Southport & Oak Island (FOLSOI) G.V. Barbee Library on Oak Island will get an expansion to help them meet the needs of the expanding population. They have wanted to do this for 2+ years. Now, with a new library director, and a partnership with the county, things have come together at last. At a cost \$4,500 apiece for both the FOL and the county, they agreed to have an architectural assessment for a design and to price out the expansion, setting a goal for the construction of \$300,000.

On April 20th, with strong advocacy from Library Director, Patricia Dew, the

Brunswick County commissioners **approved \$150,000 of matching funds** to join FOLSOI (Friends of the Library Southport & Oak Island) in a project to expand the G.V. Barbee library program/conference space. FOLSOI already has \$60,000 of that money raised, and has been actively working throughout the communities to raise the remainder.

The Barbee Library program room is oddly shaped currently. It seats only 27 patrons, limiting programming. The new space will enable a program for 50-100 people. It will finally match the growing needs of the library patrons. To make that a reality, the architectural design to **doubles the size** of the main program room, while also adding a **new small group meeting space**.

FOLSOI is excited to begin this new project bringing expanded services to library patrons on Oak Island.



FIREWORKS SAFETY

CELEBRATE ★ ENJOY ★ STAY SAFE

★ A LITTLE PREP TODAY MAKES FOR A BIG DIFFERENCE TOMORROW! ★

 KNOW THE LAW Use only fireworks that are legal in your area. Follow all local laws and regulations.	 KEEP YOUR DISTANCE Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from people, buildings, vehicles, and flammable materials.	 SUPERVISE CHILDREN Fireworks are not toys. Keep children and pets at a safe distance and always under adult supervision.	 LIGHT ONE AT A TIME Never try to light more than one firework at a time.
 BE PREPARED Always have water, a garden hose, or a fire extinguisher nearby.	 NEVER RELIGHT If a firework doesn't go off, wait 20 minutes, then soak it in water before discarding.	 WEAR EYE PROTECTION Protect your eyes! Use safety glasses when handling or lighting fireworks.	 DISPOSE SAFELY Soak used fireworks in water before throwing them away.

★ Celebrate Responsibly. ★

MAKE MEMORIES, NOT REGRETS.

★ CHECK LOCAL ORDINANCES FOR FIREWORK LAWS. | WHEN IN DOUBT, DON'T LIGHT IT! ★

**BE SMART.
BE SAFE.
HAVE A HAPPY
AND SAFE
CELEBRATION!**

Silent Book Clubs Gaining in Popularity

A silent book club is a designated time and place where people gather to read in a shared space. Often described as an "introvert happy hour," these clubs strip away the assigned reading and homework of traditional book clubs, replacing them with peace, focus, and low-pressure socializing.

How it Works

The Arrival: Members gather in a public space—like a local cafe, bookstore, library, or park—and order food or drinks.

The Intro: People briefly chat, introduce themselves, and share what they are currently reading (without judgment or long critiques).

The Reading Hour: A designated time (usually one hour) begins where the room falls completely silent. Attendees read whatever book they brought in whatever format they prefer (paperback, Kindle, audiobook, etc.).

The Wrap-Up: After the silent period, members can choose to socialize more, discuss their books, swap recommendations, or simply pack up and head home.

Why People Love Them

- **No Homework:** You don't have to read a specific book on a timeline.
- **Community:** It offers the comfort of reading alone at home, but with the built-in motivation, camaraderie, and accountability of being around other book lovers.
- **No Pressure:** There are no forced discussions, quizzes, or pressure to sound smart about a piece of literature.

The concept has exploded into a global phenomenon, with thousands of independently run local chapters operating worldwide. You can find an existing meetup or register to start your own using the [Silent Book Club Chapter Map](#).

Sponsorships

What is a sponsorship?

A sponsorship is a mutually beneficial commercial agreement where one party (the sponsor) provides support—usually financial, in-kind, or promotional—to another party (an event, nonprofit, or organization) in exchange for access to their audience, credibility, or branding opportunities.

Why use a sponsorship?

Unlike traditional advertising that merely interrupts audiences with sales pitches, sponsorships integrate a brand into experiences or causes that the target demographic already cares about. Key reasons to use sponsorships include:

- **Enhanced Brand Perception:** Aligning with a respected nonprofit, sports team, or community event builds trust and goodwill.
- **Targeted Audience Access:** It allows companies to directly reach highly specific, niche markets that are already engaged and receptive.

- **Increased Visibility:** Sponsors gain valuable exposure through logo placement, event banners, merchandise, and media shout-outs.
- **Lead Generation & Networking:** Sponsoring conferences, trade shows, or industry gatherings creates direct opportunities to interact with potential clients and partners.

How does this apply to Friends?

Now Friends might want businesses to sponsor all or part of an event or program of the Friends (e.g., books for foster kids at Christmas). If you do that, your sponsor should have a clear understanding of what they get in return such as recognition on each book, recognition in promotional materials, or recognition at the event itself. A written memorandum of understanding might prevent any misunderstandings.

The same goes for Friends support or sponsorship of library programs, events, or physical assets. **Your group NEEDS to be recognized for your contributions!**

The World Science Fiction Society

For you sci-fi fans out there, "the World Science Fiction Society (WSFS) is an unincorporated literary society whose purposes, according to its [rules](#), are as follows: to choose the recipients of the annual Hugo Awards (Science Fiction Achievement Awards), to choose the locations and Committees for the annual World Science Fiction Conventions (the Worldcons), to attend those Worldcons, and to choose the locations and Committees for the occasional North American Science Fiction Conventions (the NASFiCs). (A NAS-FiC is held in North America in any year when the Worldcon is outside of North America.)"

The 2026 finalists list features award-winning names, and spans the breadth of the genre: from murder mysteries to literary fiction, from medieval knights to alien contact - this is a year of variety. And, yes, the Hugo is a n-chosen award, voted on by members of the WSFS.

LAcon V, the 84th World Science Fiction Convention, is pleased to announce the finalists for the 2026 Hugo Awards, the most prestigious honors for excellence in science fiction and fantasy.

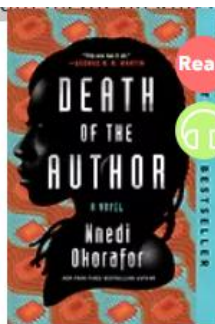
The members of the 2025 and 2026 World Science Fiction Conventions cast 1,488 valid nominating ballots, including 6 paper ballots, for the 2026 Hugo Awards. The nominators made 23,543 nominations for 4,299 works and individuals across 21 categories.

Six novels were nominated. 1,153 ballots were cast for 555 nominees. The finalists each garnered between 126 and 210 votes each. The 2026 Hugo Awards will be presented on Sunday evening, August 30, 2026 at LAcon V.

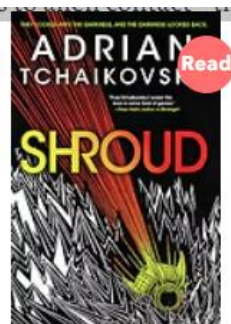
The finalist are pictured below. [Click here](#) for more sci-fi award nominees.



1
A Drop of Corruption
by Robert Jackson Bennett



2
Death of the Author: A Novel
by Nnedi Okorafor



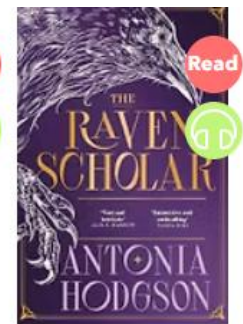
3
Shroud
by Adrian Tchaikovsky



4
The Everlasting
by Alix E. Harrow



5
The Incandescent
by Emily Tesh



6
The Raven Scholar
by Antonia Hodgson

2026 Library of Congress Prize—American Fiction

On August 22, 2026 at the National Book Festival, acclaimed author Ann Patchett will accept the 2026 Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction. This prestigious award is presented annually to an American literary writer who showcases a "mastery of the art, as well as its originality of thought and imagination." Patchett has written ten novels, most recently *Whistler*.

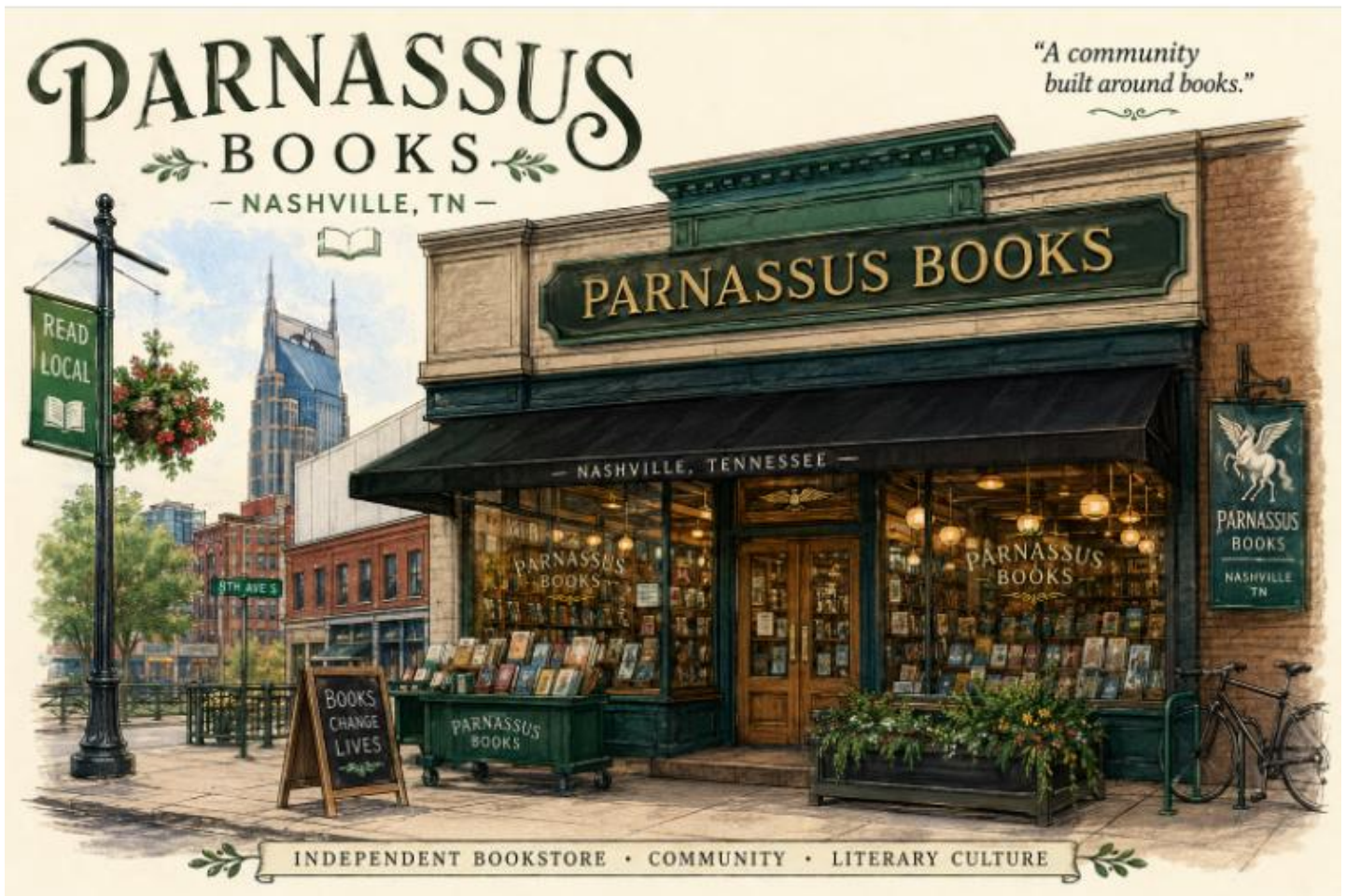
Patchett has received other acknowledgements of her writing skills including the PEN/Faulkner Award, the Women's Prize for Fiction, the National Humanities Medal and the PEN/Audible Literary Service Award.

When she isn't writing, Patchett is the owner of the Nashville [bookstore Parnassus Books](#). Her Parnassus Books Foundation gives

books to students in Nashville Title I schools. She has also had the honor of being the inaugural ambassador of the [Book Industry Charitable Foundation](#).

PS: Did you know that the bookstore is named for Mount Parnassus, Greece's mythic source of creative inspiration?

PPS: Did you know that the **Twin Rivers Friends in New Bern, NC** gives books at Christmas to all students in one Title I public school? They rotate the schools each year and last year they included the local Head Start program.



BookTok Literary Tourism: A Global Adventure

BookTok is a massive, global subcommunity on TikTok where readers discuss, review, and recommend books. Known for driving massive spikes in physical book sales, the community largely focuses on genres like romance, fantasy, young adult (YA), and "romantasy" (romance-fantasy). But literary tourism takes this one step further—into the real world.

BookTok has transformed literary tourism into a multi-billion dollar travel trend, inspiring readers to step out of their reading nooks and into the physical settings of their favorite novels. Gen Z and millennials are driving this boom, trading traditional vacations for highly curated, story-driven itineraries.

Top BookTok Travel Destinations & Packages include:

- **Croatia:** Book a spot on an Adriatic cruise à la Emily Henry's *People We Meet on Vacation*, exploring Dubrovnik's Old Town.
- **Switzerland:** Journey to the Swiss Alps, which serve as the aesthetic backdrop for the *A Court of Thorns and Roses* (ACOTAR) series.
- **Scotland & Ireland:** Walk in the footsteps of your favorite characters with Fourth Wing-inspired itineraries that span five cities.
- **London & Scotland:** Relive the magic of Harry Potter with themed escapes that take fans straight through the screen to real-life filming locations.



- **Prague:** Visit the city's historic Baroque libraries, the infinity book tower at the Municipal Library, and the Bohemian National Park.

There are specialty tour operators that offer packages including bundled book-club discussions with themed, guided experiences. There are boutique spots that feature reading retreats that host curated reading weekends and author events. There are also self-guided bookings with itineraries that mirror the fiction worlds and author histories that you love.

So we ask not "what's in your wallet" but "what's your next literary adventure?"

If your area has some tie to a successful author or book location (e.g., New Bern—Nicholas Sparks), how might you capitalize on this trend, especially during the "shoulder season" of spring and fall? This could be a really big fundraiser if presented in the right way.



NYC Central Park Carousel—immortalized in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*.



New Zealand Hobbiton Movie Set



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Public Libraries**

Helping Friends Build Resilience

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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 2026 Calendar of National Events—use these to plan your activities.

FONCPL Board Zoom Meetings 10 AM quarterly

Here are a few dates of note:

July

7/1 International Joke Day

7/2 World UFO Day

7/4 Independence Day--250th

7/17 World Emoji Day

7/19 National Ice Cream Day

7/26 Uncle and Aunt Day

7/26 Parents' Day

August

8/4 Coast Guard Birthday

8/4 National Night out

8/7 National Lighthouse Day

8/7 Purple Heart Day

8/9 National Book Lovers Day

8/13 National Left-Handers Day

8/16 Tell a Joke Day

8/19 World Photography Day

8/21 Senior Citizens Day

8/22 National Tooth Fairy Day

8/26 Women's Equality Day

September

9/6 Read A Book Day

9/7 Labor Day

9/8 International literacy day

9/9 International Sudoku Day

9/11 National Day of Service

9/13 Roald Dahl Day

9/13 National Grandparents Day

9/15 National online learning day

9/16 National Step Family Day

9/17 Constitution Day and Citizenship Day