



the ORLA newsletter.

MAY 2021



YEARS OF LIBRARIES IN VENANGO COUNTY



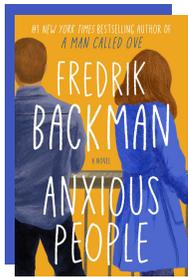
Looking Back at 150 Years of
Local Library History



Cooperstown Branch Manager
Nominated for FLEX Award



New Interactive Music Garden Installed
at the Oil City Library



ANXIOUS PEOPLE

FREDRIK BACKMAN

"Backman continues his ability to develop relatable, quirky characters addressing familiar underlying concerns to the reader. He wraps this into a blend of thought-provoking seriousness and silliness that will keep you engaged throughout. This particular story is

about a bank robbery-turned hostage situation. The book will remind you it's also about a bridge. And idiots. As the reader unfolds the layers within each character, you will develop a genuine interest and concern for all of them. You'll experience a roller coaster of emotions and might find yourself rooting for different outcomes than what you would initially expect."

-- Dan Flaherty, Oil Region Library Association

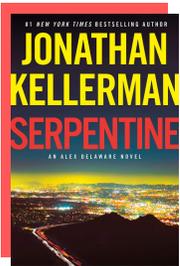
STAFF PICKS

KILLER PLANTS: GROWING AND CARING FOR FLYTRAPS, PITCHER PLANTS, AND OTHER DEADLY FLORA

MOLLY WILLIAMS



"Have you ever wondered what it's like to care for a plant that can "eat" small lizards and rodents? Wandered the aisles of your local home improvement store to see sad, wilting Venus flytraps that you want to save? Or maybe you want to turn your home into a swampy pond. If you've answered yes to any of the above and are a gardening beginner, this is the book for you. This book provides a very general overview of how to care for carnivorous plants from the most recognizable snap traps to rarer pitcher plants that come with a heftier price tag. It even has a great list of resources for organizations of carnivorous plant enthusiasts, and even some shops where you can find your own plants. The illustrations are gorgeous, but I found myself googling images because I just wanted to see the real things. If you do decide to try and care for your own killer plant, you'll want to do some research beyond this book, though it is a great starting point for those, like me, who know nothing about the world of deadly flora." -- Emily Kluck, Oil City Library



SERPENTINE

JONATHAN KELLERMAN

"Jonathan Kellerman never fails to deliver in his novels featuring the team of psychologist Alex Delaware and homicide detective Milo Sturgis. Serpentine takes the reader on a journey through a cold case with twists and turns in unexpected directions." -- Cheri Pearce, Oil City Library



All Locations Now Accepting Book Donations

In anticipation of upcoming book sales, all ORLA locations are now accepting donations of used books & media. We unfortunately cannot accept textbooks, magazines and encyclopedias. Can't wait for the next sale? No worries! The Friends of the Franklin Public Library have opened their Book Sale Room in the basement of the Franklin Library. The Room is open on Tuesdays & Fridays from 12pm-5pm. Please use the elevator.

Cooperstown Branch Manager Nominated for FLEX Young Professional of the Year Award

The Young Professional of the Year Award is an award presented annually by FLEX (Future Leaders' & Entrepreneurs' Exchange), a division of the Venango Area Chamber of Commerce. Nominations were put forward by community members based on the young professionals' contributions to the community through civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Amanda Barker is the Branch Manager at the Cooperstown Public Library. She started at the Oil City Library part-time as a typist in 2018, then accepted a job one year later at the Cooperstown Library where she began training to become Branch Manager. In her current position, Amanda is the only employee at the library and in charge of the day-to-day tasks as well as the programming initiatives. She has created a community presence for the library through social media and by attending local township meetings, has started children's programming, and also implemented many shifts during the pandemic, such as virtual programming and curbside service.

In 2020, Amanda formed a partnership with the other ORLA libraries to offer an online summer reading program. She has also created the library's emergency plan and how-to manual, and helped secure the Bridge Builders Community Foundations Meise Grant.

In addition, Amanda has been part of the Western PA Mushroom Club since 2019 and has helped document some of the species that grow in our local parks. Congratulations, Amanda!



Amanda Barker
Oil Region Library
Association

summer @ your
ORLA
LIBRARY

Join us for a Summer of
reading, STEM & Maker
activities, & prizes for all
ages!

COMING THIS SUMMER
TO
FRANKLIN PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Oil City History Blog Coming to the ORLA Website

New content is coming soon to oilregionlibraries.org that history lovers will thoroughly enjoy. The series of articles, written by local writer Judy Etzel & compiled in collaboration with Kay Dawson & the Oil City Heritage Society, will explore Oil City's rich history, as well as some quirky stories that many today may never have heard before. "The Oil City area's hidden heritage is one filled with ingenuity, largesse, culture and so much more. The city's incredible success was fueled by great wealth and exceptional talent. Much of our heritage, though, is unknown to many of us," said Etzel. "The Oil City Heritage Society and the Oil City Library believe our city's legacy should be shared and enjoyed. To that end, we will share our community's stories and pictures on our *Hidden Heritage* blog. Stay tuned for historic as well as quirky entries that tell our history."





YEARS OF LIBRARIES IN VENANGO COUNTY

Oil City Library

Oil City has a long history of library support. The concept of a library in our community began in 1864 when a group of citizens formed an organization called the Petroleum Institute. Aside from buying books for the public's use, the group met weekly to listen to essays, music, readings and to debate.

The Institute reorganized in 1871 to form the Oil City Library Association. Many of the ideas were not widely supported by the general public and library service suffered due to serious economic problems.

The picture brightened however in 1890 when the Belles Lettres Club was formed for the purpose of studying literature and maintaining a library. An active member of Belles Lettres, Cora Hull Ramage, began corresponding with Andrew Carnegie of Pittsburgh. She requested that Mr. Carnegie donate money for a library. He did agree to donate \$44,000 to build the library provided that the citizens provide a site and guarantee \$3,000 annually to maintain it. Andrew Carnegie once said, "A library outranks any other thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never sailing spring in the desert." Mr. Carnegie contributed an estimated 150 million dollars to about 2,800 libraries in the United States and Great Britain. Oil City was fortunate to be one of the recipients but the library has never received any other Carnegie monies. The women of Belles Lettres went to work and raised over \$11,000 to purchase the present site at the corner of Central Avenue and West Front Street. On July 6, 1904, the Carnegie Library of Oil City opened its doors with 5,000 books that were donated by the Belles Lettres Club.

For over 50 years, the original building served the community well without capital improvements. However, the building was upgraded and modernized in 1959 with funds from the Smedley and Justus estates. An expanding book collection and increase in public use made the need for more space obvious by the early 1970's. The 1959 renovation had provided no extra space and the collection had grown to over 54,000 volumes. Again, the Oil City Library Commission went to the people of Oil City with a building fund drive. With a matching grant from the Justus trusts, over \$800,000 was raised to finance the new wing and the major renovation of the existing building.

Since 1990, the Library's service area has expanded beyond the city limits to include some of the surrounding municipalities. On July 1, 1995, the Library was designated by Commonwealth Libraries to be one of 29 district library centers in the state of PA. The Library is also known as the Oil Creek District Library Center and is the district center for the 14 public libraries in the counties of Venango, Clarion and Jefferson. The present facility currently provides space for over 100,000 items and serves over 15,000 individuals in the library's service area. In 2004, the Library building celebrated 100 years of quality service to the community with a memorable year in the Library's history. The celebration of a century of existence sets in motion for the next one hundred years a continuation and enhancement of the quality library service that our patrons expect and depend on. Beginning 2016, the Oil City Library split from a department of the City of Oil City and became the first library under governance of the Oil Region Library Association where it currently operates as the main library.



Carnegie Library, Oil City, PA, 1911.

Franklin Public Library

The Franklin Public Library was founded in 1894 and has had several homes, although its current location on Twelfth Street has been its home since 1921. The original structure was built in 1849 as a residence and required extensive renovations in 1921 to make it suitable for library use. A children's room was added in 1964 and another wing was added for the adult collection in 1978. Both of these additions greatly expanded the public use areas of the library.



The present building after being converted from a home & boarding house into a library, 1921.

Local men Judge McCalmont, W.B. Sawyer and J. H. Simonds started a Reading Room in the Fall of 1864 for a fee of \$5/year. This allowed adults access to read magazines and newspapers, write letters and meet friends. J.D. Hancock and Professor Kinsley urged members of the 1894 graduation class of the local schools to each purchase one book for a library. Advertisements were published in the Franklin Evening News urging citizens to contribute books, money and time. In 1894, the Franklin Library Association (FLA) was established after the tireless effort of the Hancock family, the Mullins family, Henry Sibley and S.C. Lewis. Fifty people each paid \$50 for the privilege of a life membership in the association. A charter was written stating the wish to found and main a public library in the City of Franklin. The charter also provided for a 5-member Board of Directors to manage the Association. The library was not a free, public library but a subscription library. The subscription fee was \$1/year. The FLA was first housed on the 2nd floor of the Printz Co. Building, until it outgrew the space and moved across the street in 1897. The library was now housed in two connecting rooms in the Hancock Building. Records of the Association from 1904-1917 have been lost to time, but through newspaper articles we've learned that the City of Franklin was offered a Carnegie Library building. However, unlike Oil City, it was turned down. In support of the decision to deny funds from Mr. Carnegie, local millionaire General Miller wrote a letter to the people of Franklin expressing his opinion that this offer would not be accepted because he adamantly opposed a library dedicated to someone not of Franklin and who apparently had no interest in the city. General Miller was willing to contribute a fourth of the money needed to build a local library and he presented drawings by a local architect of a possible plan.

When documentation of minutes resumed in 1917, the library was still housed in the Hancock building, so General Miller's plan was not accepted. However, it is known that the FLA purchased Judge McCalmont's home prior to 1917 but it was used as a boarding house until enough funds required to convert the home into a library were raised. \$30,000 was raised by 1921 and on Saturday, June 17th, 1922, the Franklin Public Library opened to the public in its current location. In April 2017, the Franklin Public Library became the first branch of Oil Region Library Association.



Home of Mrs. Lee Miller, Original Location of Cooperstown Public Library.

Cooperstown Public Library

In 1908, the Women's Christian Temperance Union established a Public Reading Room in the home of Mrs. Lee Miller, pictured at left. The Public Reading Room would eventually evolve into the Cooperstown Public Library, with the establishment of the Cooperstown Public Library Association in 1908.

In 1923 Mrs. Mary L. Boal, willed her home to the Cooperstown Public Library Association as a permanent home for the library. Mrs. Boal was a Charter Member of the Association and one of it's most interested friends. The deed for the property was formally transferred to the Association by Mrs. Emma Rice. A one dollar consideration was paid and the deed accepted by the Association and in due time was recorded. The library moved to its current location at 182 North Main Street in June of 1988. From that point forward, retired ORLA employee Jane Beach & her family were instrumental in providing quality library service to area residents. Beginning in 2018, Cooperstown Public Library became the second branch of the Oil Region Library Association, bringing all three public libraries in Venango County under the same organization.

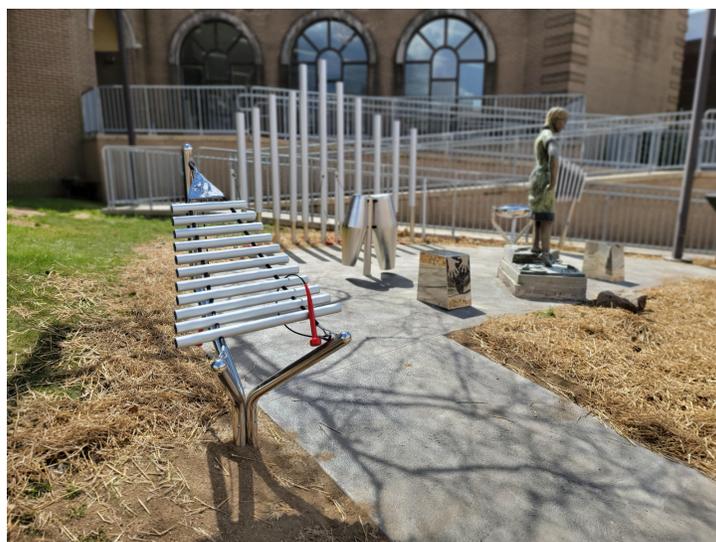
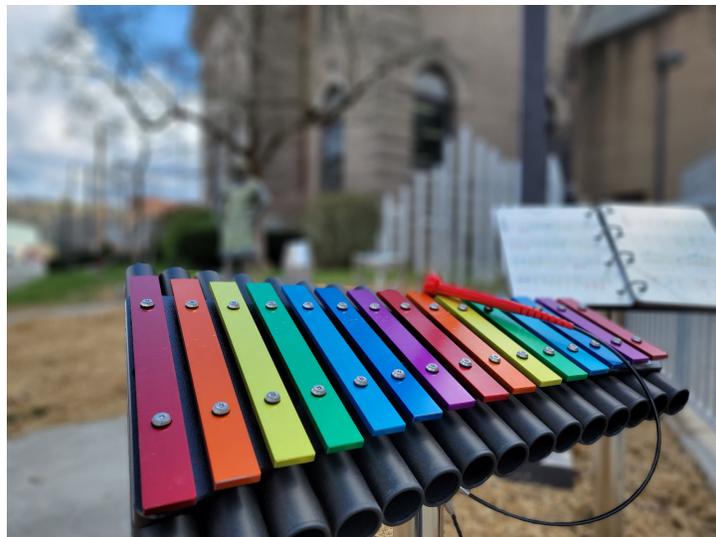
Interactive Outdoor Music Garden Installed at Oil City Library

We're excited to announce the newest addition to the Oil City Library: an interactive music garden, graciously funded & made possible by the PNC Foundation!

"PNC believes it's never too early to invest in a child's future," said Jim Stevenson, regional president for PNC in Northwest Pa. "Since its inception in 2004, a core mission of our signature philanthropic initiative PNC Grow Up Great® has been to foster early learning by providing tools and resources that help develop curious young minds. The music garden at the Oil City Library will do just that, bringing a unique and effective educational opportunity to children in this region."

The new Music Garden by the Front Street entrance features a colorful xylophone, large chimes, various drums & more, complete with rubber mallets & even a songbook for playing music whenever...even while the library is closed!

The library is very fortunate to have been a recipient of such a unique fixture, one that will serve our community for years to come. We can't wait to hear all of your beats, chimes & melodies! Come visit us soon & check it out!



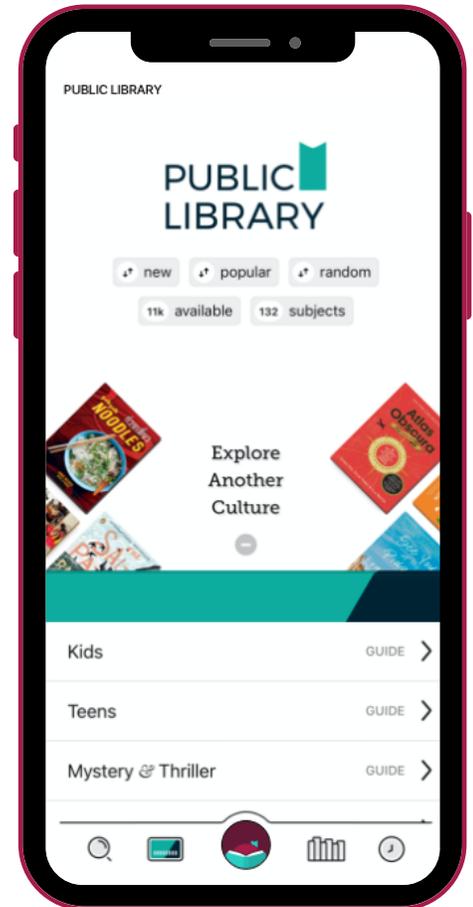
1 Library Card, 5 Collections: Patrons Now Have Access to Even More E-Books & Audiobooks

New Castle, Oil Creek, Seneca Library Districts and Erie County Public Library/Crawford County Federated Library Systems have entered into an expanded Reciprocal Lending Agreement (RLA) through OverDrive. The new agreement allows patrons to use all 5 OverDrive collections with just their home library card to access over 38,000 e-books and audiobooks.

The OverDrive resource provides free access to digital content such as e-books and audiobooks through a web browser or mobile app, and content is available to any public library card holder within the Northwest PA region.

“The expanded RLA began on April 12, 2021, and our patrons are very happy with the project. Our collections are relatively small, but they each have a different selection of materials, so our patrons are really getting a whole different library to explore” says Erin Joyce of Oil Creek District.

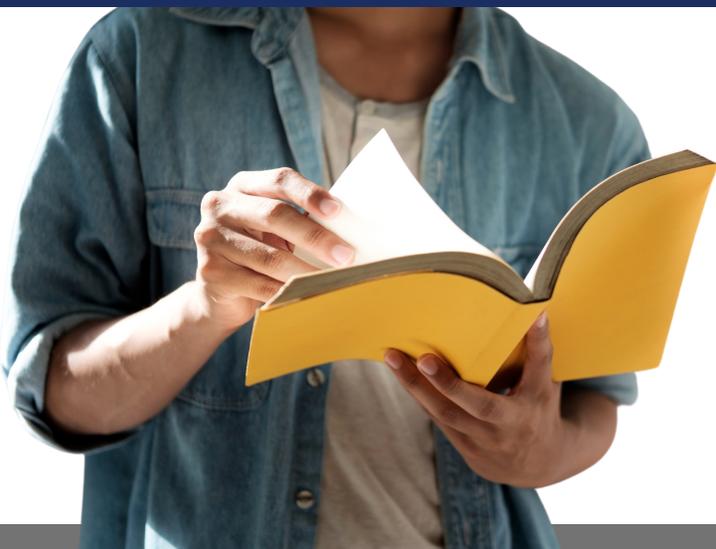
“We are always looking for ways to maximize the impact of our limited resources,” says Amy Geisinger of New Castle Library District. Leslie LaBarte of Seneca Library District adds, “With so many of our member libraries being very small and very rural, this agreement allows them to provide resources that they would not be able to afford on their own - and that makes all of us better.”



The Bookmarkers BOOK CLUB

Next Meeting:

May 11th - The Giver of Stars by Jojo Moyes

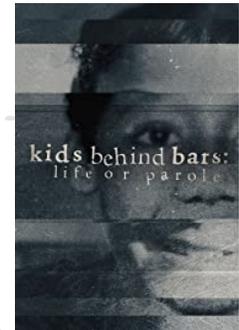
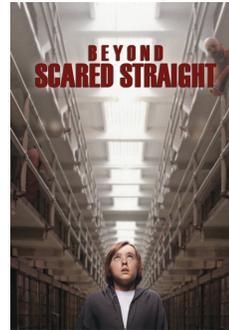
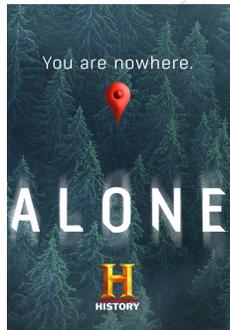


The Bookmarkers Book Club at the Franklin Public Library is BACK! The Book Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 12:00pm-2:00pm currently over Zoom. For the Zoom link, please contact Cindy Fultz by emailing her at fncfultz@icloud.com. The Book Club is planning to move the meetings to in-person to the Riverside Park, with Zoom as a back up for inclement weather. For a current reading list & more information, visit www.oilregionlibraries.org.

FEATURED DIGITAL RESOURCES

Available at www.oilregionlibraries.org

Featured Reality Series available on [kanopy](https://www.kanopy.com)

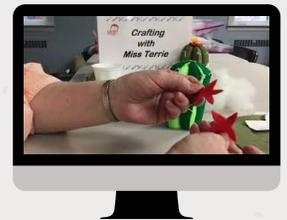


Stream these & more for free with your library card.

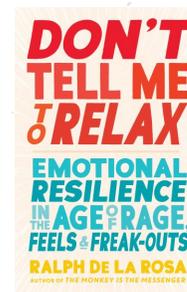
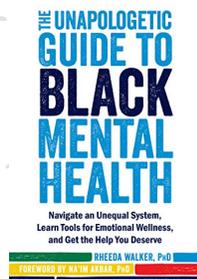
NEW VIRTUAL PROGRAMS EVERY WEEK



Take advantage of the many virtual programs ORLA has to offer! An optional Take-and-Make activity to complete at home is always included & new programs are posted every week. Check our website for **Storytimes**, **Library Bobbins**, **Crafting with Ms. Terrie**, & call the Oil City Library for information about **LIVE Zoom Storytime** with Annie!



Keeping Mentally Healthy
a collection on
OverDrive & Libby



Read & listen for free with your library card.



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