



the ORLA
newsletter.

JANUARY 2024

BEST BOOKS OF 2023





THE WOMAN IN THE LIBRARY

SULARI GENTILL

"This book left me feeling disappointed. *The Woman in the Library* by Sulari Gentill is a story within a story. It starts with a letter from beta reader Leo to author Hannah. He's providing her with feedback on her latest novel, a murder mystery beginning with a scream and a murder at the Boston Public Library, and while we never see her correspondence with him, we see Leo's feedback after each chapter. The story (what Hannah is writing) is told from the point of view of Freddie, while she and the 3 other strangers who heard the scream at the library try to figure out whodunnit. I think I understand what the author was trying to accomplish with this story, but I think it fell flat. The reveal at the end wasn't exciting, and sort of left me asking myself: why? The explanation of why the murderer did the murder seemed hastily explained and sort of lacking believability. I can see where the author was trying to make the connection between the two stories, but it just left me feeling confused. *The Woman in the Library* has received mixed reviews elsewhere, and I can see why, as I also feel very mixed about it. The writing was average, but the plotline (until the ending) kept me entertained. I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a quick, light read." - **Emily Antkowiak, Oil City Library**

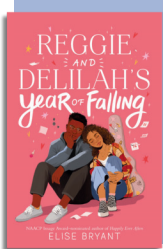
WHAT WE'RE READING



Also Available on Libby!

REGGIE AND DELILAH'S YEAR OF FALLING

ELISE BRYANT



"In this young adult meet-cute written by Elise Bryant, you'll not only have your heartstrings pulled but you'll also get a refreshing look at teenage self-discovery. The main characters, Reggie and Delilah, both struggle with living their truth. One former teen loves Dungeons and Dragons but doesn't feel accepted by his family for his passion. The second has a supportive family but feels as if she's too passive to speak her feelings and live up to her full potential, not only as a musician but also in her journey to becoming a strong independent woman. Starting on New Year's Eve and continuing throughout the year, they seem to have a knack for running into each other on major holidays, only adding to the overall endearing qualities of the story. When around one another, they strive to be the version of themselves they wish they were in their everyday lives. In the end, will they openly become these people? Or will the pressure of societal and family expectations ruin their relationship before it can fully get started?" - **Daidre Green, Oil City & Franklin Libraries**

This title was a 2023 Between the Lines Book Club pick! Between the Lines is a teen book club collaborated by the Oil City High School and the Oil City Library. If you or your teen would like more information on this club, visit our website at oilregionlibraries.org/teens.

100 MIGHTY DRAGONS ALL NAMED BROCCOLI



DAVID LAROCHELLE,
ILLUSTRATED BY LIAN CHO

✦ THE FOLLOWING REVIEWS OF THIS BOOK ARE PROVIDED BY ✦
3RD GRADE STUDENTS AT SEVENTH STREET ELEMENTARY IN OIL CITY

"Do you like funny animals in books? If you do then this is the book for you. In the beginning 100 mighty dragons are all named Broccoli. Then a mighty wind blew half of them away. At the end she went in a cave, then when she came out there was a surprise. Read to find out what happens next. What I liked about this book is the end of the book was a surprz. I would recommend this book to kids 6 or under. I give it ten stars." - **Oren P.**

"Have you been to a Green Bay Packers football game? If so, this is the book for you. In the beginning, there were 100 mighty dragons that were all named Broccoli. Then there was a wind storm that blew 50 dragons away, and then there were 50 left. At the end more dragons left and then there were 2 left, and then there was another wind storm and blew half of the dragons away, then left one dragon. Wait and read the book to find out the ending! What I liked about this book is when the dragons went to play for the Green Bay Packers that is my favorite part. I would recommend this book to about four to six years old because it is funny for kids. I would give this book seven stars." - **Oliver D.**

"Do you like nice dragons? Read this book if you do. In the beginning there is 100 mighty dragons all named Broccoli high on a mountain that were sitting near the entrance to the cave. Then a big wind blew and blew some dragons to different places like Texas and West Virginia. At the end there was one lonely dragon that sadly crawled and disappeared in to a cave. Wait until you see what is next. What I liked about this book is at the end of the story there was a surprise." - **Issac D.**

Oil City Library Welcomes New Staff

This month, the Oil City Library welcomed Karen & Richard, two new Library Assistants, to our team. We are confident that their presence will contribute significantly to the library's mission of promoting learning and literacy within our community. If you see Richard or Karen around, please make sure to give them a warm welcome!

Holiday Closure This Month

ORLA locations will have the following closure this month in observance of the New Year's holiday:

January 1.....All Locations Closed

We hope you have a wonderful holiday & we'll look forward to seeing you when we reopen for normal business hours on **Tuesday, January 2nd, 2024!**



Franklin Library Hosting Bunco Party

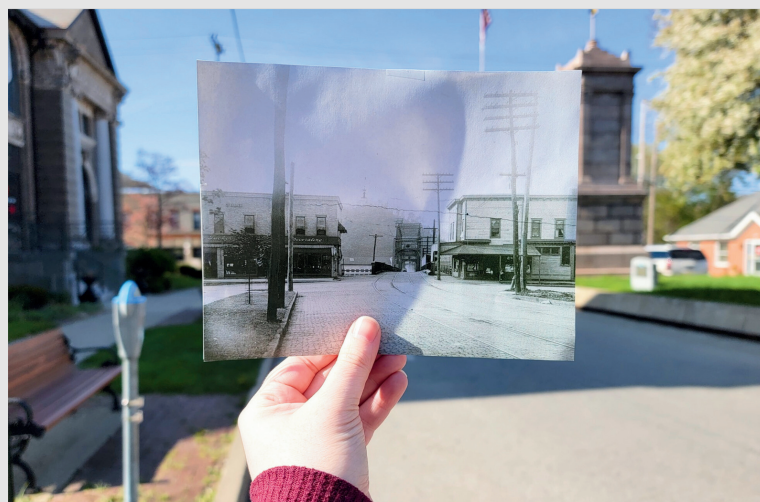
Join us at the Franklin Public Library for a Bunco Party on **Thursday, January 11th & Thursday, February 8th!** Registration is required - sign up at the Franklin Public Library or by calling (814) 432-5062. Each game is limited to 24 players & games start at 11:00AM. The registration fee is \$20/player and includes lunch. All proceeds benefit the Franklin Public Library.

Bunco is a dice game generally played with twelve or more players, divided into groups of four, trying to score points while taking turns rolling three dice in a series of six rounds. A bunco is achieved when a person rolls three-of-a-kind and all three numbers match the round number.



WRITTEN AND
CREATED BY **EMILY ANTKOWIAK**

Each month, I take one historical image & photograph it superimposed over the same area as it appears today. This allows you to see what Venango County looked like in the past with a modern reference. My hope is to share neat photos from the library's archives to make them and their history more attainable.



To kick off the new year, we're revisiting an old "then & now" photo of the Relief St. Bridge. The bridge was constructed in 1893 by John Smithman for the use of the Oil City Street Railway. Smithman was unable to gain permission to run tracks across either of the 2 existing bridges over the Allegheny, so he fought to construct his own. The Relief St. Bridge connected Central Ave. with Main St. & carried street cars as well as foot traffic. The cost to cross this bridge was only 1 cent (a great deal compared to the 3 cents it cost to cross the other bridges). In 1900 when Smithman had earned half the cost back of the bridge, he sold it to the county & it was made the first free bridge in Venango County. The bridge, in need of repair, was torn down in the years following the departure of street cars from Oil City.



THEN

NOW



Do you have an image or location you'd like to see featured?
Email eamtkowiak@oilregionlibraries.org with your suggestions!



BEST OF 2023 WINNERS

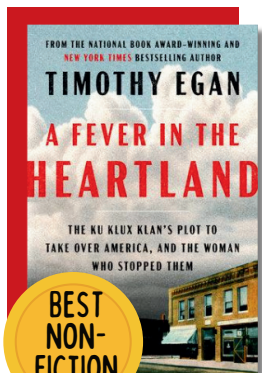
We asked you last month to vote for the best books of the year in 6 different categories. The following titles were voted as "Best of 2023" by ORLA patrons.

A FEVER IN THE HEARTLAND

TIMOTHY EGAN

The Roaring Twenties has been characterized as a time of Gatsby frivolity. But it was also the height of the uniquely American hate group, the Ku Klux Klan. Their domain was not the old Confederacy, but the Heartland and the West. They hated Blacks, Jews, Catholics and immigrants in equal measure, and took radical steps to keep these people from the American promise. And the man who set in motion their takeover of great swaths

America was a charismatic charlatan named D.C. Stephenson. Stephenson was a magnetic presence whose life story changed with every telling. Within two years of his arrival in Indiana, he'd become the Grand Dragon of the state and the architect of the strategy that brought the group out of the shadows - their message endorsed from the pulpits of local churches, spread at family picnics and town celebrations. Judges, prosecutors, ministers, governors and senators across the country all proudly proclaimed their membership. But at the peak of his influence, it was a seemingly powerless woman - Madge Oberholtzer - who would reveal his secret cruelties, and whose deathbed testimony finally brought the Klan to their knees.



HAPPY PLACE

EMILY HENRY



Harriet and Wyn have been the perfect couple since they met in college--they go together like salt and pepper, honey and tea, lobster and rolls. Except, now--for reasons they're still not discussing--they don't. They broke up six months ago. And still haven't told their best friends. Which is how they find themselves sharing a bedroom at the Maine cottage that has been their friend group's yearly getaway for the last decade. Their annual respite from the world, where for one vibrant, blue week they leave behind their daily lives; have copious amounts of cheese, wine, and seafood; and soak up the salty coastal air with the people who understand them most. Only this year, Harriet and Wyn are lying through their teeth while trying not to notice how desperately they still want each other. Because the cottage is for sale and this is the last week they'll all have together in this place. They can't stand to break their friends' hearts, and so they'll play their parts. Harriet will be the driven surgical resident who never starts a fight, and Wyn will be the laid-back charmer who never lets the cracks show. It's a flawless plan (if you look at it from a great distance and through a pair of sunscreen-smeared sunglasses). After years of being in love, how hard can it be to fake it for one week...in front of those who know you best?

DOG MAN: TWENTY THOUSAND FLEAS UNDER THE SEA

DAV PILKEY

Piggy has returned, and his newest plot is his most diabolical yet. WHAT other new villains are on the horizon? WHERE are they all coming from? And WHO will step forward to save the city when scoundrels sabotage our Supa Buddies? With themes of friendship and doing good, Dog Twenty Thousand Fleas Under the Sea is packed with action and hilarity.



Featuring "Chomp-O-Rama," a brand-new song, a monstrous Mighty Mite -- and so much more than ever before! IT'S HEROIC, IT'S EPIC!

Check out some of these Best of 2023 picks available through any ORLA location!

Also Available on Libby

THE ONE AND ONLY RUBY



KATHERINE APPLGATE



BEST
KIDS
FICTION

From beloved powerhouse author Katherine Applegate comes *The One and Only Ruby*, starring the adorable baby elephant from the Newbery Medal-winning modern classic *The One and Only Ivan* and its bestselling sequel, *The One and Only Bob*. Ruby's story picks up a few months after the events of *The One and Only Bob*. Now living in a wildlife sanctuary, Ruby's caretaker from the elephant orphanage in Africa where she grew

up is visiting. Seeing him again brings back a flood of memories both happy and sad of her life before the circus, and she recounts the time she spent in the African savannah to Ivan and Bob. In the timeless way that only Katherine Applegate could craft, this highly anticipated novel in verse is the perfect mix of heartfelt and humorous, poignant and sweet. Artist Patricia Castelao returns to the world of Ivan and his friends with gorgeous black-and-white interior illustrations to complete the story.

CURSED



MARISSA MEYER



BEST
YOUNG
ADULT

Adalheid Castle is in chaos. Following a shocking turn of events, Serilda finds herself ensnared in a deadly game of make-believe with the Erlking, who is determined to propel her deeper into the castle's lies. Meanwhile, Serilda is determined to work with Gild to help him solve the mystery of his forgotten name and past. But soon it becomes clear that the Erlking

doesn't only want to use Serilda to bring back his one true love. He also seeks vengeance against the seven gods who have long trapped the Dark Ones behind the veil. If the Erlking succeeds, it could change the mortal realm forever. Can Serilda find a way to use her storytelling gifts for good—once and for all? And can Serilda and Gild break the spells that tether their spirits to the castle before the Endless Moon finds them truly cursed?

THE SOUR GRAPE



JORY JOHN AND PETE OSWALD



BEST
PICTURE
BOOK

The Sour Grape holds grudges for every reason under the sun. Lime never returned a scarf they borrowed. **Grudge!** Orange never called back. **Grudge!** But when a friend holds a grudge against the Sour Grape without listening to an explanation, the Sour Grape realizes how unfair grudges can be. Could a bunch of forgiveness and compassion be enough to turn a sour grape sweet? Jory John and Pete Oswald serve up another heaping plate of laughs and lessons with this empowering, witty, and charming addition to their #1 New York Times bestselling series!

THANK YOU

We're so happy to give these books the recognition they deserve. Did your favorite of 2023 not make the cut? Submit a book review so that it can be featured in a future issue!



2024 PUZZLE CHALLENGE

SATURDAY JAN. 27TH



The Puzzle Challenge is back for a third year! Teams will race against the clock to see who can finish their jigsaw puzzle in the fastest time.

TOURNAMENT/TEAM INFO

The 2024 Puzzle Challenge is open to up to 10 teams per division with up to 4 participants per team. Teams will have 4 hours to complete their puzzle. The team who **finishes their puzzle first** will be the winner. If no team finishes their puzzle in the allotted time, the team with **the most pieces put together** will win.

Please have Team Name and all Team Member names submitted no later than January 22, 2024.

DAY OF PUZZLE CHALLENGE

Doors open at 11:00AM. Teams should arrive by 11:45AM for opening remarks and a run down of the rules. The clock starts at 12:00PM sharp!

There will be scheduled breaks during which all work on puzzles **must stop**. These breaks are to allow teams to use the restroom, get concessions, etc.

The Puzzle Challenge will run until 4:30PM. If the winner is determined before the clock runs out, other teams are encouraged to keep working until the 4 hours are up to set their own team record!

Sorting bins and extra lighting are allowed.

Concessions will be available for sale, provided by the Belles Lettres Club.

including...

 **BASKET RAFFLE**

 **PUZZLE SWAP**

 **50/50 RAFFLE**

REGISTER YOUR TEAM TODAY!

Pick up a registration form for your team at the Oil City Library. There is a \$20 registration fee per team (which includes the puzzle that your team will get to keep). You'll also get to choose which division you'd like to participate in: 500-piece puzzle or 1000-piece puzzle.



Holiday Happenings at Cooperstown Public Library

We saw over 150 people at the Cooperstown Public Library for our Tree Decorating Contest! Community members were encouraged to bring in their small decorated trees in December to be voted on at Light Up Night in Cooperstown. Prizes were awarded & refreshments were provided. Thanks to everyone that stopped by and said hello while enjoying Light Up Night!

We also had a full house for our Gingerbread House Decorating Contest at the Cooperstown Public Library! Participants did a fantastic job decorating and had a lot of fun!



THE 4TH ANNUAL
**WINTER OF
READING**

read. track. win.

**JANUARY 8
THROUGH
FEBRUARY 17**

The next ORLA-wide reading challenge is almost here! Last year, we read 95,109 minutes. Can you help us beat our record?

Use our app, **ReaderZone**, to track how many minutes you read this winter for a chance to win some cool prizes!

 **Reader Zone**
Use code **4b37c**



LIBRARY LOTT

2024 Library Lotto tickets
are AVAILABLE NOW! Inquire
at your local ORLA branch for
more details.



DECEMBER WINNERS!



RENEE C.
OIL CITY, PA



JULIE G.
OIL CITY, PA



ANN R.
FRANKLIN, PA

A total of 36 winners will be
determined by the **Pennsylvania
Daily Pick 3** evening drawing at
7:00PM on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd
days of each month in 2024.



ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

Thank you so much for your ongoing support of your libraries! As we attempt to raise \$30,000 in much-needed operational support, we wanted to provide you with some updates about the services we offer and our current standing within the community.

Recognition

Once again, our employees and services have been recognized regionally in 2023. ORLA was awarded the 2022 Partner in Business of the Year by the Venango Area Chamber of Commerce! This is further evidence that our impact extends well beyond the leisurely reading habits of a few individuals. Instead, the Chamber recognizes our contributions to general education, economic development, recreational offerings and community connections for the entire area. Amanda Barker, ORLA Branch Manager, was recognized as a graduating member of the most recent LeadershipVenango class and Kelsey Harrah became the 6th ORLA member we've sent for participation. Investing our employees in these efforts allows us to better serve and connect visitors to our local community resources.

Updates to Spaces

Whether it's our collections, buildings or décor, I'm sure you've noticed some new pieces and updates to our spaces! The Franklin Public Library continues to work through a multi-year effort making significant upgrades to the building. The focus in 2023 was on foundation work and a brand new circulation desk. We're looking to repair missing/broken cornices under the main roof next. The Cooperstown Public Library replaced old, broken pieces of siding and our newest employee, Deb, has been hard at work updating the décor inside! The Oil City Library partnered with the Arc of Clarion and Venango Counties to provide patrons with new recreational materials for check-out including bocce ball, cornhole, sleds and more! Additionally, Oil City also launched a separate fundraising campaign to restore the 2nd floor theater space. To date, more than \$300,000 has been raised out of the roughly \$800,000 needed to fully restore it. These updates have been made with you at the forefront of our thoughts. We need to ensure you have access to safe, secure buildings housing resources that meet your expectations and needs!

Community Standing

Our libraries are in demand and appreciated by many people in our community as evidenced by our recent awards, current database of over 9,500 library card holders checking out over 100,000 items, and thousands of annual visitors for a myriad of other purposes. We've had private groups and individuals step up to fund new programs such as Adulting 101 and Books on Wheels. These donors value the critical adulting skills and reading materials for youth participants who otherwise may not have the opportunity. Unfortunately, that vision and support doesn't necessarily resonate with our public budget makers. Overall, our municipal and school district dollars are lucky to remain flat-funded at best. At level funding, our services are stretched thinner as costs increase. Sadly, the reality has often been reduced funding highlighted by a 40% reduction in local government support over the past 10 years. These cuts have directly led to reductions in library staffing and services at a time when demand is as high as it's ever been. Non-funding may be a larger issue given that roughly half of the County municipalities and our County government combine for \$0. This means 10,000 residents have to pay directly for library access and additional State Aid money being redirected to other PA libraries supported by their local leaders.

Support Us

Not everyone may be able to support our cause financially, but we thank each of you who can. All of us are able to help in other ways. Please, help us spread the message about the services and connections offered through your libraries. Let people know how technology has aided library services, how we've extended beyond the (still very important!) book, and how our services reflect an ongoing commitment to community. Please, notify your elected officials about the importance of funding your local libraries. Consider a personal donation to help us reach our \$30,000 goal. Encourage County leaders to fund our services so that all residents may freely qualify for access.

Sincerely,

Dan Flaherty
Executive Director

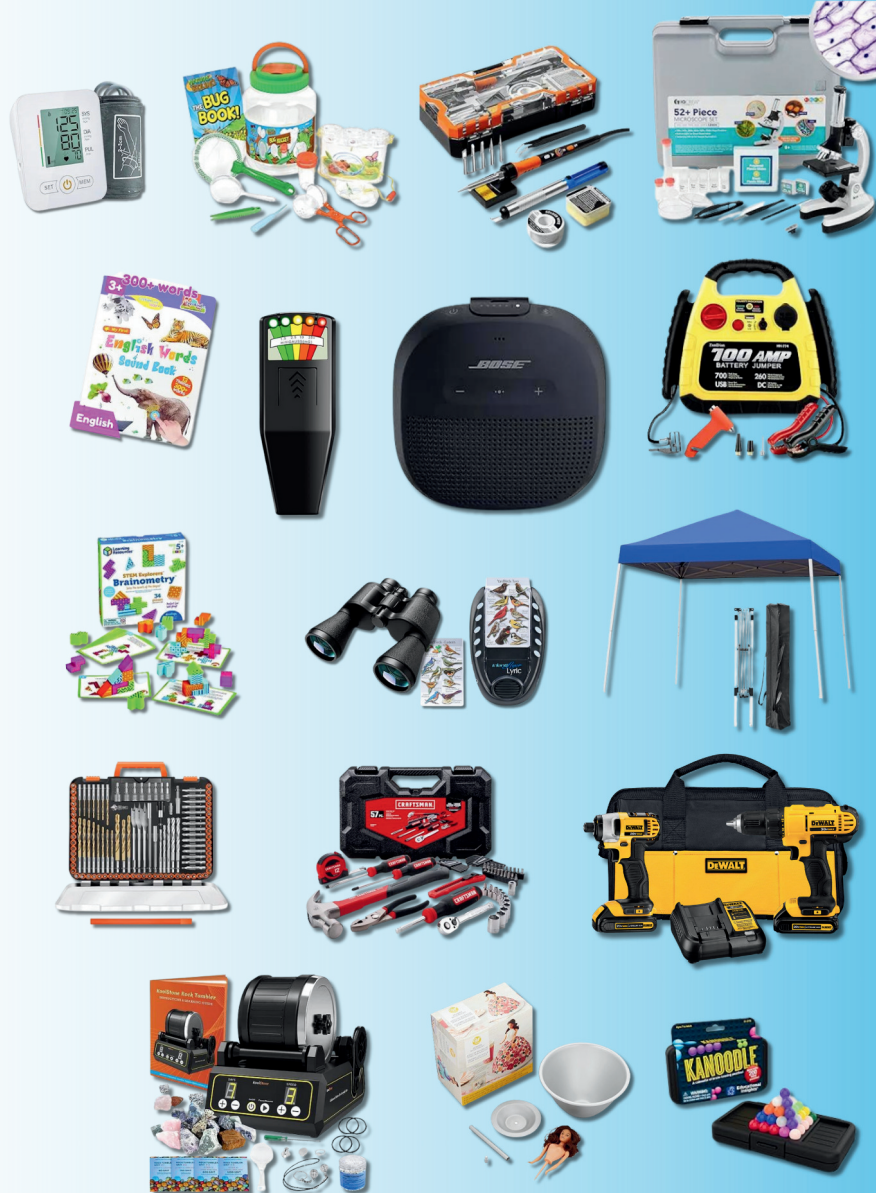
Board of Directors
Jessica Rudegear, **Chair**
Sarah Margherio, **Vice Chair**
Deb Rosen, **Treasurer**
David Mayer, **Secretary**

Judy Etzel
Paula McElhaney
Cinda Richards
Jessica Struthers
Sarah Merkel

Franklin Library Adds New Items to Collection

The Franklin Public Library recently added several new items to their borrowable collection, many of which are tools, games, kits & more! Items recently added include:

- Craftsman 57-piece toolset
- 10x10 pop-up canopy tent
- 4-in-1 battery jumper & air compressor
- DeWALT cordless drill & impact driver
- Bird watching kit
- Soldering iron kit
- Drill bit set
- 52-piece microscope set
- Prepared microscope slides
- Carbon monoxide meter
- EMF reader
- Digital blood pressure monitor
- Air quality meter
- Digital camera
- Brainometry STEM kit
- Bug catcher kit
- Kanoodle puzzle game
- Soil tester
- Bose bluetooth speaker
- Scrabble lawn game
- Spanish language talking book
- English language talking book
- Rock tumbler
- & more!



Upcoming Workshops



STRESS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP
OIL CITY LIBRARY
3PM - 4PM
FREE



STRESS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP
FRANKLIN PUBLIC LIBRARY
3PM - 4PM
FREE

Join us at the Oil City Library on Tuesday, January 2nd at 3PM for a **Stress Management Workshop**, courtesy of Pennsylvania CareerLink! This workshop aims to teach you short term and long term techniques to deal with stress, create more peaceful environments, and calm your life. This workshop is free & open to anyone. Register at the Oil City Library or by calling (814) 678-3072. Walk-ins are okay too!

Join us at the Franklin Public Library on Tuesday, January 9th at 3PM for a **Stress Management Workshop**, courtesy of Pennsylvania CareerLink! This workshop aims to teach you short term and long term techniques to deal with stress, create more peaceful environments, and calm your life. This workshop is free & open to anyone. Register at the Franklin Public Library or by calling (814) 432-5062. Walk-ins are okay too!


FEATURED RESOURCES



Most Read in 2023

These titles checked out more than most last year!

HOME TOOLS



Working on a home repair project? We've got you covered! Oil Region Libraries offer many different home tools to check out for FREE with your library card, such as:

- Drills
- Impact Drivers
- Drill Bits
- Laser Level
- Air Compressor
- Soldering Iron
- Thermal Leak Detector
- Air Quality Monitors
- Stud Finder
- Electrical Outlet Tester
- Reeled Extension Cord
- & More!

Most Watched OF 2023



Your Favorite Films of the Year

kanopy




Oil City Library

2 Central Ave.
Oil City, PA 16301
(814) 678-3072

Monday	8:30am-8:30pm
Tuesday	8:30am-8:30pm
Wednesday	8:30am-8:30pm
Thursday	8:30am-5:00pm
Friday	8:30am-5:00pm
Saturday	8:30am-3:30pm
Sunday	CLOSED

Franklin Public Library

421 12th St.
Franklin, PA 16323
(814) 432-5062

Monday	12:00pm-5:00pm
Tuesday	10:00am-6:00pm
Wednesday	10:00am-6:00pm
Thursday	10:00am-6:00pm
Friday	12:00pm-5:00pm
Saturday	10:00am-3:00pm
Sunday	CLOSED

Cooperstown Public Library

182 N. Main St.
Cooperstown, PA 16317
(814) 374-4605

Monday	2:00pm-7:00pm
Tuesday	10:00am-4:00pm
Wednesday	CLOSED
Thursday	2:00pm-7:00pm
Friday	10:00am-4:00pm
Saturday	CLOSED
Sunday	CLOSED

FIND US ONLINE

oilregionlibraries.org



Libby, home tools, & Kanopy are available to you for FREE with your library card at oilregionlibraries.org