



**the ORLA
newsletter.**

APRIL 2026

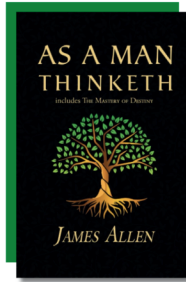
Celebrate
**NATIONAL
LIBRARY
WEEK**

April 19-25, 2026



WHAT WE'RE READING

 Available on Libby

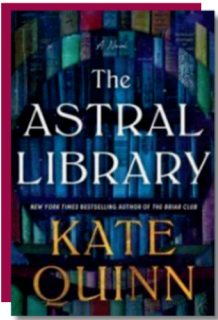


AS A MAN THINKETH ★★★★★

JAMES ALLEN 

Even more important in modern times, with a myriad of forces distracting us from achieving a fulfilled life, *As a Man Thinketh* reveals the hidden powers & possibilities within yourself by expounding on the importance of thought. Your own thoughts shape your character, circumstance, & destiny, & the control of your own thoughts liberates us from undesirable experiences. In our never-ending pilgrimage to a deeper understanding of life, there is no better prescription than the mastery of the mind.

“A must-read for anyone in search of understanding the power of positive thought. Poignant & relevant for all generations, this short read is easy to finish in one sitting, & just as easy to annotate & mark for future reference. Another excellent resource for the local Oil Region Veteran - sometimes a short positive mental nudge is all that is needed. I read this one as an eBook via Libby - stop in & see your local librarian if you need assistance with access.” Joseph T., ORLA Volunteer



THE ASTRAL LIBRARY ★★★★★

KATE QUINN

Alexandria 'Alix' Watson has learned one lesson from her barren childhood in the foster-care system: unlike people, books will never let you down. Working three dead-end jobs to make ends meet and knowing college is a pipe dream, Alix takes nightly refuge in the high-vaulted reading room at the Boston Public Library, escaping into her favorite fantasy novels and dreaming of far-off lands. Until the day she stumbles through a hidden door and meets the Librarian: the ageless, acerbic guardian of a hidden library where the desperate and the lost escape to new lives--inside their favorite books. The Librarian takes a dazzled Alix under her wing. Still, before she can escape into the pages of her new life, a shadowy enemy emerges to threaten everyone the Astral Library has ever helped protect.

“A love letter to books, libraries, and fantasy. This was an easy read, despite the important themes of book banning and threats to libraries in our current world. I prefer Kate Quinn’s historical fiction to this, but would recommend this to those who read widely and appreciate fantasy.” Annie Welsh, ORLA Assistant Director & Youth Services Coordinator

★★★★★ MAGNOLIA FLOWER

ZORA NEALE HURSTON; ADAPTED BY IBRAM X. KENDI



From beloved African American folklorist Zora Neale Hurston comes a moving adaptation by National Book Award winner and #1 New York Times bestselling author of *How to Be an Antiracist* and *Antiracist Baby*, Ibram X. Kendi. *Magnolia Flower* follows a young Afro-Indigenous girl who longs for freedom and is gorgeously illustrated by Loveis Wise. Born to parents who fled slavery and the Trail of Tears, Magnolia Flower is a girl with a vibrant spirit. Not to be deterred by the rigid ways of the world, she longs to connect with others who also long for freedom. She finds this in a young man of letters whom her father disapproves of. In her quest to be free, Magnolia must make a choice & set off on a journey that will prove just how brave one can be when leading with one's heart. The acclaimed writer of several American classics, Zora Neale Hurston, wrote this stirring folktale brimming with poetic prose, culture, and history. It was first published as a short story in *The Spokesman* in 1925 and later in her collection *Hitting a Straight Lick with a Crooked Stick* (2020). Tenderly retold by #1 New York Times bestselling and National Book Award-winning author Ibram X. Kendi, *Magnolia Flower* is a story of a transformative and radical devotion between generations of Indigenous and Black people in America.

“I loved this inspiring story about resilience and hope. The illustrations were beautiful, and the story made me reflect on history and courage. I would recommend it to anyone, young or old, who wants a story of strength and heritage.” Olivia B., ORLA Volunteer

News From the Beekeeper



I, too, am anxious to get a batch of bees into the Franklin & Oil City libraries! But they can't be rushed & still be expected to do a great job on display. Depending on the weather over April & May, I hope to install the hives in early June. Hopefully earlier, if possible, especially if I'm able to capture a swarm or two. If you see a catchable swarm, the place to report it to is www.beeswarned.org. They will contact local beekeepers who can then try to collect it. As I write this in late-March, my girls (& they are all girls, this year's drones haven't been born yet) are bringing in pollens colored from light tan to dark yellow. This is mostly skunk cabbage & maple tree pollen. Later, when the dandelions are blooming, they will bring in lots of bright orange saddlebags. See you soon!

- The Beekeeper 

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CHILDREN'S COORDINATOR

We're excited to welcome a new employee to ORLA! Megan Britten has joined the Franklin Public Library's staff as Franklin's new Children's Coordinator. Megan is excited to continue Franklin's Bouncing Babies & Storytime programs. If you see her around, make sure to give her a warm welcome!

As a reminder, Franklin Public Library's Bouncing Babies & Storytime programs are scheduled as follows:

Bouncing Babies - Tuesdays at 10:30 AM
Best for ages birth through 3, but all are welcome!

Storytime - Wednesdays at 10:30 AM
All ages are welcome!



PICTURE THIS

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.



A man dips his hands into the East End Fountain in Oil City in this 1960's photo. Across the street from the fountain is the Lilly and Rudolph Quaker State Service Station which was purchased by Harold Lilly and Vernon Rudolph in 1946. Today, you will find the same building, just under a different name. Bob Fry purchased the property in 2005 and turned it into Short Street Motor Cars.



THEN & NOW



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

Celebrate **NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK**

April 19–25, 2026

What brings you joy? Whether it's cozying up with a new story, learning a new skill, gathering with community, or something else, you can find your joy at your local library.

National Library Week, April 19–25, 2026, is a time to celebrate the many ways libraries bring people together, spark imagination, & support lifelong learning. From books & digital resources to job assistance & creative programming, libraries are essential to thriving communities.

At Oil Region Libraries, we invite everyone to join the celebration! Whether you're a longtime patron, a new neighbor, or haven't visited in a while, now is the perfect time to explore all the library has to offer. Our libraries offer WiFi Hotspots, outdoor recreation items, eBook & eAudiobook collections, streaming services, makerspaces, career development resources, & several monthly programs for all ages, ensuring that everyone has access to resources that educate, inspire, & connect.

Whatever brings you joy, the library has something for everyone. Whether you're preparing for a career change, launching a business, raising a family, or embracing retirement, Oil Region Libraries are here to support your journey. Libraries serve as hubs for learning, creativity, & connection, helping people of all ages explore new ideas & opportunities.

Place a Memorial or Honorarium

Monetary contributions can be submitted in memory or in honor of an individual or group. The library will include a placard, plate, or some other form of identification in memory/honor of them.

Volunteer at Your Library

The library has plenty of volunteering opportunities, including shelving library materials, cleaning, organizing & writing book reviews.

Ways You Can Support Your Library

Learn more about how you can get involved at
oilregionlibraries.org/support-us

Adopt a Magazine

Your library subscribes to several magazines & each can be adopted in your name, the name of your business, or a loved one. These adoptions help offset the costs to the library.

Become a Friend of the Library

Friends of the Library groups help to fundraise for the library by holding annual bake sales, book sales, raffle drawings, & more.



NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK



events

Check out these special events at your library for National Library Week! We hope to see you throughout the week & appreciate your support.

Monday 4/20

Little's & Big Yoga | \$ FREE

Franklin Public Library | 4:30-5:00 PM

Little's! Grab your grown-up and join us for a fun, beginner-friendly yoga workshop where you'll stretch, laugh, and connect while discovering the joy of movement together.



Tuesday 4/21

Cheers Day | Bella Cucina Restaurant | All Day

10% of all proceeds from meals & drinks at Bella Cucina Restaurant in Franklin will be donated to Oil Region Libraries. Grab a meal with a friend while supporting your library! Bella Cucina is located at 1234 Liberty St., Franklin.



Wednesday 4/22

Family Movie Night - Dog Man | \$ FREE

Oil City's Library Hall | 6:30-8:00 PM

Families are invited to join us in Oil City's Library Hall for a free screening of the canine crime-fighting film adaptation of Dav Pilkey's literary phenomenon: Dog Man. Part dog, part man, all hero! Free popcorn provided to all participants.



Thursday 4/23

Family NERF Night | \$ FREE

Oil City Library | 6:30-8:00 PM



The library transforms into a Nerf Battleground for this all-ages, after-hours event! Drop in anytime from 6:30 - 8:00 PM. The library will have one section dedicated to freeplay (best for little's!) & one section for strategy play (best for those looking for a challenge!). You can bring your own Nerf gun, or we can provide you with one.

! No Rival or Mega Guns - only guns that require normal-sized darts, please!

Friday 4/24

Library Attic Sale

Franklin Public Library | 1:00-5:00 PM

Score amazing deals on hidden treasures at our Library Attic Sale! Browse furniture & more in the library's unfinished third-floor space. Arrive early so you don't miss any great finds, while also catching a glimpse of the potential in this unique area of the library.



Saturday 4/25

Open Mic Poetry & Jazz Night | \$5 Cover

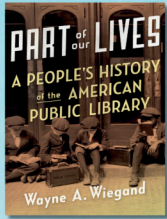
Oil City's Library Hall | 6:00-9:00 PM

Poets of all experience levels are invited to step up to the mic & share their work. The evening will also feature live music from the jazz band Catro, light refreshments, & raffles. Join us for an inspiring evening of poetry & jazz!



books about books

Celebrate National Library Week with these hand-picked titles all about books, reading & libraries.



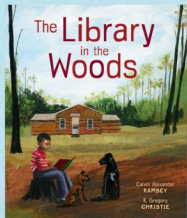
Part of Our Lives: a People's History of the American Public Library *Wayne A. Wiegand*

This nonfiction history explores American public libraries through the voices of everyday users rather than institutions or officials. Drawing on personal accounts & historical records, it shows how libraries have served as vital community spaces & adapted over time to meet changing social needs.



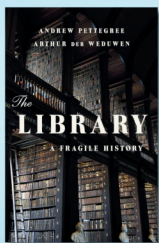
The Library of Amorlin *Kalyn Josephson*

Set in a magical world, this fantasy follows a young woman drawn into a mysterious library tied to powerful secrets & ancient magic. As she uncovers hidden knowledge, she must navigate danger, identity, & the responsibility that comes with controlling stories & history.



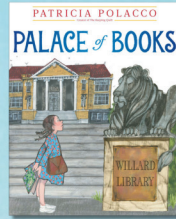
The Library in the Woods *Calvin Alexander Ramsey*

Based on true history, this children's book follows a young boy who discovers a hidden library created to serve Black readers during segregation. It highlights resilience, access to knowledge, & the transformative power of books in marginalized communities.



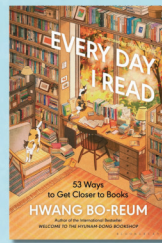
The Library: a Fragile History *Andrew Pettegree*

This nonfiction work traces the evolution of libraries across centuries, revealing how they have preserved knowledge while constantly facing threats—from war & censorship to neglect. It underscores both the resilience & vulnerability of libraries as cultural institutions.



Palace of Books *Patricia Polacco*

Inspired by real events, this picture book tells the story of a beloved library & the community that rallies to protect it. Through Polacco's signature storytelling, it celebrates the emotional & cultural importance of libraries in people's lives.



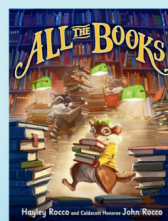
Every Day I Read: 53 Ways to Get Closer to Books *Hwang Bo-Reum*

Hwang Bo-reum reflects on the deeper meaning of reading. Through a series of thoughtful essays, she explores how reading shapes identity, creativity, & daily life, from choosing books to connecting with characters & ideas. The book invites readers to slow down, reflect, & embrace reading as a meaningful, fulfilling way of living.



The Astral Library *Kate Quinn*

A struggling young woman discovers a hidden magical library where readers can step inside their favorite books & live new lives. As she begins to imagine a different future, a mysterious threat emerges that endangers both the library & everyone it protects, forcing her into a perilous, reality-spanning adventure.



All the Books *Hayley Rocco*

This playful picture book explores the many kinds of books that exist & the joy of discovering them. It encourages curiosity & celebrates reading as an adventure filled with endless possibilities.

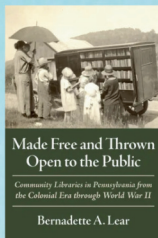




The Library at Mount Char

Scott Hawkins

When a mysterious, godlike figure known as Father disappears, the group of orphans he raised—each trained in a different branch of forbidden knowledge—begin a deadly struggle for control of his vast, reality-shaping library. At the center is Carolyn, whose secret plans set off a violent & surreal battle that could determine the fate of the universe. Blending dark fantasy, horror, & dark humor, the novel explores power, identity, & what it means to remain human in the face of godlike knowledge.



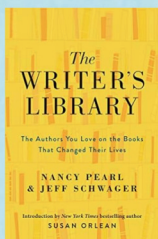
Made Free and Thrown Open to the Public

Community Libraries in Pennsylvania from the Colonial Era Through World War II

Bernadette A. Lear

This nonfiction history traces the evolution of public libraries in PA, from early subscription-based collections to free, community-centered institutions.

Drawing on extensive archival research, it highlights how libraries expanded access to women, children, & working-class readers while shaping the social fabric of their communities. The book ultimately emphasizes the role of collaboration between librarians, activists, & the public in building strong, lasting libraries.

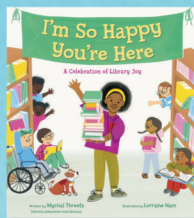


The Writer's Library

the Authors You Love on the Books That Changed Their Lives

Nancy Pearl & Jeff Schwager

This engaging nonfiction collection features interviews with dozens of acclaimed authors about the books that shaped their lives & inspired their writing. Through these conversations, readers gain insight into the creative process, personal reading habits, & literary influences behind some of today's most celebrated voices. Ultimately, the book serves as a love letter to reading, highlighting how stories connect us & spark imagination.



I'm So Happy You're Here

Michael Threets

This joyful picture book invites young readers into the welcoming world of libraries, celebrating them as places of belonging, imagination, & discovery. Through a warm, affirming tone, it reassures children that libraries are for everyone & full of stories, activities, & connection.



Our Incredible Library Book

and the Wonderful Journeys It Took

Caroline Crowe

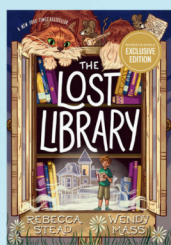
This charming picture book follows a single library book as it passes from reader to reader, collecting memories—and a few smudges & tears—along the way. Each child who borrows it adds to its story, showing how books connect people & travel through many lives. Through playful, rhyming text, it celebrates the shared joy of reading & the well-loved journey of a library book.



Books Make Good Friends

Jane Mount

This heartfelt picture book follows Lotti, a shy girl who finds comfort & confidence in the stories she reads. As she begins to see how books can help her understand the world—and the people in it—she slowly learns how to connect with others & form real friendships. Celebrating the magic of reading, it shows how books can be both companions & bridges to new relationships.



The Lost Library

Rebecca Stead & Wendy Mass

When a mysterious little free library appears in a small town, a young boy named Evan discovers its books are tied to a long-lost library destroyed years earlier. As he investigates, he uncovers buried secrets that connect his family & community to the past. Blending mystery, magic, & heart, the story celebrates the power of books to heal, connect, & reveal the truth.

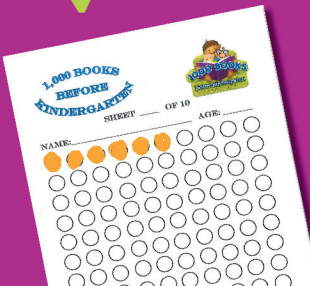
 Also Available on Libby



Keep track of the books you read with the library's easy color-the-shapes log!



 These readers hit milestones recently!



Why Participate?

There's no better time to lay the groundwork for independent learning than early childhood. Reading 1,000 books before kindergarten is a low pressure way to close the vocabulary gap & develop the early literacy skills so crucial to success in school. Any child can participate as long as they are not yet in kindergarten.

Register your child in person at your library or online at www.oilregionlibraries.org/youth/1000-books-before-kindergarten/

LIBRARY LOTT

2026 tickets are
available NOW!

EACH TICKET
\$20
ONLY 1000 SOLD

MARCH WINNERS!



NO WINNER

THIS COULD BE YOU NEXT
MONTH! GET YOUR TICKET
TODAY AT YOUR LIBRARY!



NO WINNER

THIS COULD BE YOU NEXT
MONTH! GET YOUR TICKET
TODAY AT YOUR LIBRARY!



NO WINNER

THIS COULD BE YOU NEXT
MONTH! GET YOUR TICKET
TODAY AT YOUR LIBRARY!

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 2026.

COMMUNITY Baby & Family Shower

For expecting parents & caregivers of children up to age 2

This free event for expecting parents and caregivers of children up to age 2 offers a variety of resources, educational materials, and essential supplies to support you and your little ones. Connect with local organizations, gather helpful information, and take home useful items for your family!

FRI. APR. 10 | 1:00-4:00PM

OIL CITY LIBRARY



RSVP to Keirstin Gregory
(814) 518-2055
gregoryk5@upmc.edu

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Spring 2026



Ocean Slime

April 15
4:00PM | FRANKLIN
PUBLIC LIBRARY

April 27
5:00PM | OIL CITY
LIBRARY

April 29
5:00PM | OIL CITY
LIBRARY

at Oil City & Franklin Libraries!

Join us this Spring for more Adult Craft Club! This month, we are making Ocean Slime. All sessions are free to attend & all materials will be provided.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW!

Oil City has two dates to choose from, and both programs will be held at 5:00 PM. Franklin's program will be held at 4:00 PM. Visit or call the Franklin Public Library (814-432-5062) or the Oil City Library (814-678-3072) to register today!



Libby.
The library reading app

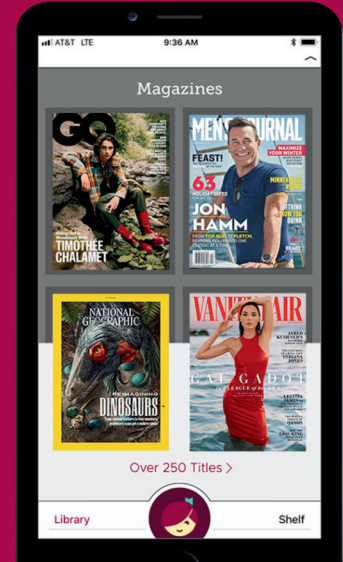


TIP OF THE MONTH

Reading Magazines

When it seems like we're all short on time in an information-obsessed world, magazines indulge us with well-crafted content that immerses us in any topic under the sun.

From recipes and advice to the latest news and trends, there's a magazine for every subject, hobby and interest. Readers love flipping through for inspiration or to learn something new, and they can take the experience digital by swiping to their heart's content in the Libby app. With thousands to choose from, digital magazines are free in Libby, and there's never any holds or waiting on your favorite subscriptions. You can also opt to receive an in-app notification when the latest issue is released.



Next Month's **BOOK CLUB** Selections

MAY 2026

Oil City Library Book Club

Oil City Library

Meets First Thursday
of the Month at 10:30 AM



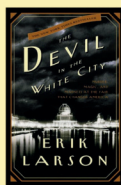
**We Were the
Lucky Ones**
Georgia Hunter

 Also Available
on Libby!

The Bookmarkers Book Club

Franklin Public Library

Meets Second Tuesday
of the Month at 12:00 PM



**The Devil in the
White City**
Erik Larson

 Also Available
on Libby!

Thursday Evening Book Club

Franklin Public Library

Meets Third Thursday
of the Month at 5:00 PM



**The Heaven &
Earth Grocery
Store**
James McBride

 Also Available
on Libby!



The Friends of the Franklin Public Library are cooking up something new—a themed food sale on May 8—and they need your help!

Many readers may not realize that some of their favorite novels include recipes tucked right into the story. Authors like Joanne Fluke and Susan Wittig Albert are well known for it, but there are plenty more to discover. Stop by the Franklin Public Library front desk for a short list of inspiration!

The Friends are inviting volunteers to choose a book, author, or recipe, prepare a dish, & donate it to the sale. Whether it's an entrée, salad, dessert, or even a non-alcoholic beverage, all contributions are welcome. For best results, items that can be safely kept at room temperature are preferred.

Interested in participating? Contact Debra at the Franklin Public Library to sign up or learn more by calling (814) 432-5062.

FEATURED RESOURCES

libby
The library reading app.

Bookish Titles

Books about books, reading & libraries on Libby.



Oil City Library

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

Monday	9:00am-7:00pm
Tuesday	9:00am-7:00pm
Wednesday	9:00am-7:00pm
Thursday	9:00am-5:00pm
Friday	9:00am-5:00pm
Saturday	9:00am-3:00pm
Sunday	CLOSED

Mometrix eLibrary



Mometrix eLibrary offers study materials for over 1,500 standardized exams, including college entrance, graduate school, finance, nursing & medical, civil service, K-12, teacher certification exams, & many more!



Franklin Public Library

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

Monday	10:00am-6:00pm
Tuesday	10:00am-6:00pm
Wednesday	10:00am-6:00pm
Thursday	10:00am-6:00pm
Friday	10:00am-6:00pm
Saturday	11:00am-4:00pm
Sunday	CLOSED

the ultimate
LITERARY WATCHLIST

Movies & Documentaries on all things books this month on

kanopy

FIND US ONLINE

oilregionlibraries.org



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