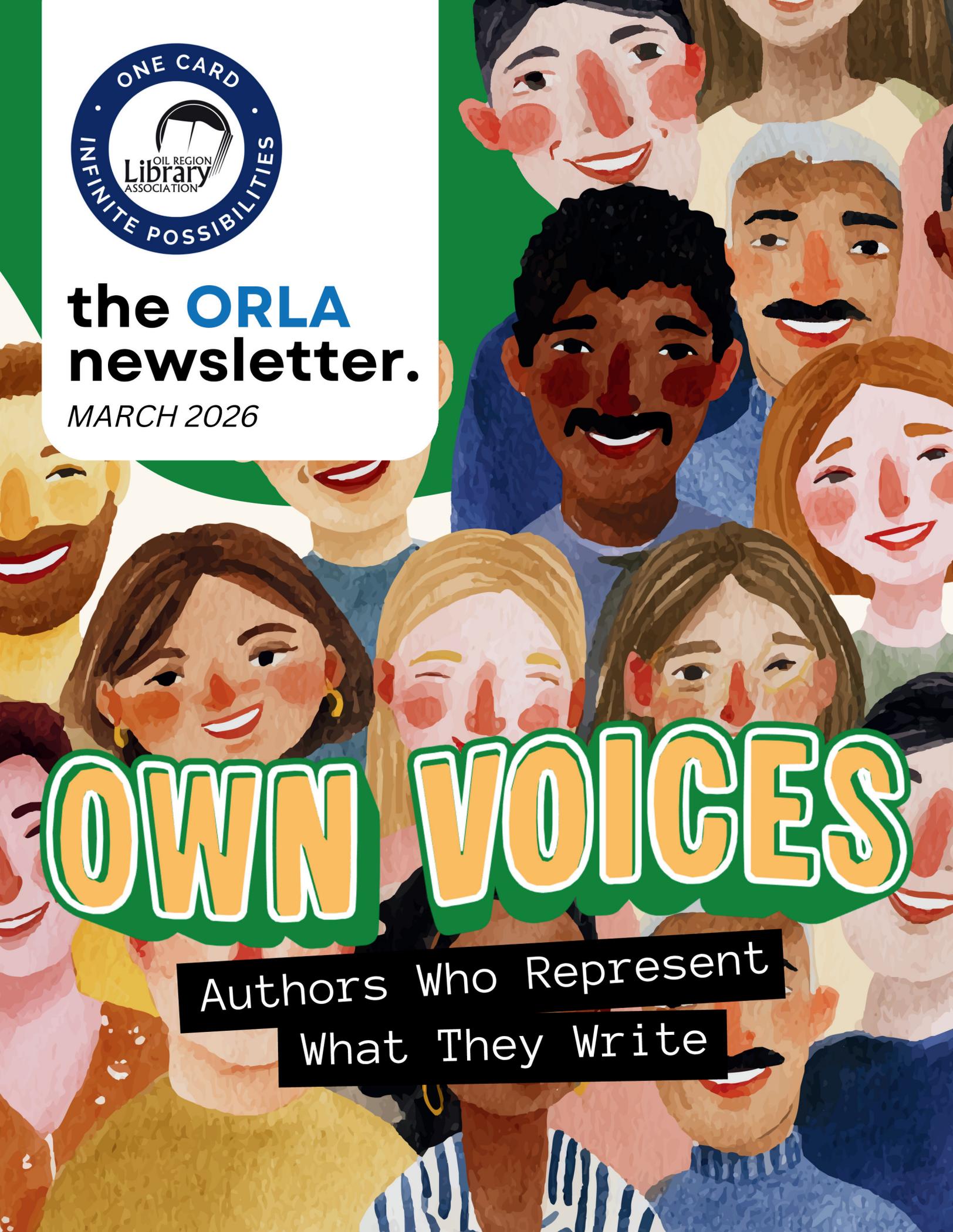




**the ORLA  
newsletter.**

MARCH 2026



# OWN VOICES

Authors Who Represent  
What They Write

# WHAT WE'RE READING

 Available on Libby



## CLAY: A HUMAN HISTORY

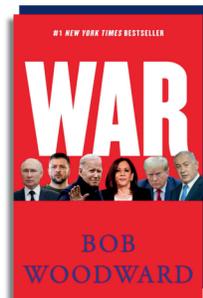
JENNIFER LUCY ALLAN

A history of humanity told through clay – & how it has shaped us from ancient times to the present day. This book is a love letter to clay, the material at the beginning, middle & end of all our lives; that contains within it the eternal, the elemental & the everyday. People have been taking handfuls of earth & forming them into their own image since human history began. Human forms are found everywhere there was a ceramic tradition, & there is a ceramic tradition everywhere there was human activity. The clay these figures are made from was formed in deep geological time. It is the material that God, cast as the potter, uses to form Adam in Genesis. Tomb paintings in Egypt show the god Khum at a potter's wheel, throwing a human. Humans first recorded our own history on clay tablets; the shape of the characters was influenced by the clay itself. The first love poem was inscribed in a clay tablet, from a Sumerian bride to her king more than 4000 years ago. Born out of a desire to know & understand the mysteries of this material, the spiritual & practical applications of clay in both its micro & macro histories, *Clay* is a book of wonder & insight, a hybrid of archaeology, history & lived experience as an amateur potter.

**“This collection of essays on clay bounces around quite a bit, but ends up being a fascinating look into a substance that, in the end, is just dirt. I found myself having to stop & research more into the topics the author brought up because she touches on them just enough to catch my interest & then moves on to the next. A good, if slow, read. I learned a lot!”** Amanda Barker, Franklin Public Library Branch Manager

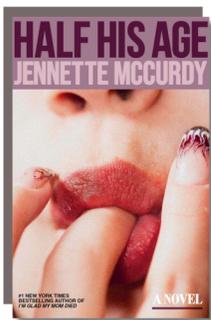
## WAR

BOB WOODWARD



War is a harrowing, riveting account of one of the most tumultuous periods in presidential politics in American history. We see President Joe Biden & his top advisers in tense conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, & Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. We also see Donald Trump conducting a shadow presidency & seeking to regain political power ahead of the 2024 elections. With unrivaled, inside-the-room reporting, Woodward shows President Biden's approach to managing the war in Ukraine, the most significant land war in Europe since World War II, & his tortured path to contain the bloody Middle East conflict between Israel & the terrorist groups Hamas & Hezbollah. Woodward reveals the extraordinary complexity & consequence of wartime back-channel diplomacy & decision-making to deter the use of nuclear weapons & a rapid slide into World War III. The raw cage-fight of politics accelerates, leading up to the presidential election in 2024, starting between President Biden & Trump, & ending with the unexpected elevation of Vice President Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee for president. War provides an unvarnished examination of the Vice President as she tries to embrace the Biden legacy & policies while beginning to chart a path of her own as a presidential candidate. Woodward's reporting once again sets the standard for journalism at its most authoritative & illuminating.

**“This book was fascinating & detailed about leadership decisions during wartime. I appreciated the insight into strategy, accountability, & the pressures leaders face. I would recommend it to anyone interested in politics, history, or national security.”** Olivia B., ORLA Volunteer



## HALF HIS AGE

JENNETTE MCCURDY

Waldo is ravenous. Horny. Blunt. Naive. Wise. Impulsive. Lonely. Angry. Forceful. Hurting. Perceptive. Endlessly wanting. And the thing she wants most of all: Mr. Korgy, her creative writing teacher with the wife and the kid & the mortgage & the bills, with the dead dreams & the atrophied looks & the growing paunch. She doesn't know why she wants him. Is it his passion? His life experience? The fact that he knows books & films and things that she doesn't? Or is it purer than that, rooted in their unlikely connection, their kindred spirits, the similar filter with which they each take in the world around them? Or, perhaps, it's just enough that he sees her when no one else does. Startlingly perceptive, mordantly funny, & keenly poignant, *Half His Age* is a rich character study of a yearning 17-year-old who disregards all obstacles—or attempts to overcome them—in her effort to be seen, to be desired, to be loved.

**“It's an interesting feeling being hooked to a book, but not feeling like you can finish it. This novel follows a situation that can be very tough to digest as a reader, and has unfortunately become all too real in the lives of our youth. It's been a while since a book made me feel so much anguish, but I am glad I stayed with it to the end. The writing was funny, witty, deeply emotional & enticing. I appreciated the ending – it was satisfying & ultimately was what made me decide to give this novel 4 stars.”** Natalie Whitling, ORLA Marketing Coordinator



# TEEN EGGVENT 2026

AT THE FRANKLIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

## SATURDAY MARCH 28TH FROM 12-2 PM

WIN PRIZES  
+ ENTRY  
INTO BIKE  
RAFFLE!

Saturday, March 28th will be Franklin Public Library's 4th Annual Teen Eggvent. Years ago, the library noticed the lack of inclusion for older ages in local egg hunts. We were able to fix this problem with the help of the Elks Club & Friends of the Franklin Public Library by introducing the area's very first teen egg hunt! It was such a success that we've continued to host it every year since. There will be 2 age categories, 11-14 & 15-18. This year, you will once again be able to win lots of great prizes & will be entered into our bike raffle! This FREE event does have limited spots, so make sure to register no later than March 21st by calling (814) 432-5062 or stopping in to the Franklin Public Library!

**REGISTER BY MARCH 21**

## Holiday Closures Next Month

ORLA locations will be closed this month on the following dates in observance of the Easter holiday:

- Friday, April 3rd.....CLOSED
- Saturday, April 4th.....CLOSED

Locations will reopen for normal business hours on Monday, April 6th.



# 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.



This photo dated ca. 1898 is of a beer delivery wagon belonging to Peter Stubler. The three unidentified men posed with the wagon along Front Street in Oil City with the city's North Side on full display in the background. Peter Stubler opened his business in 1878 and sold fine wine, liquor and cigars. You can still drive-thru this nearly 150 year old business today on East 2nd Street!



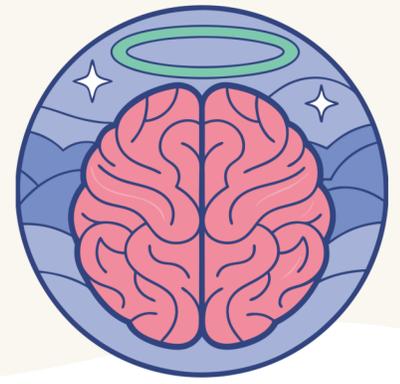
## THEN

## NOW



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

# Boosting Prayer with Mindful Breathing & Simple Movements



a free program

No, it's not a "new age" thing! For centuries, religions, including Christianity, have incorporated bodily actions into their faith practices – and for good reason. Come learn some simple techniques that will deepen your prayer experience.

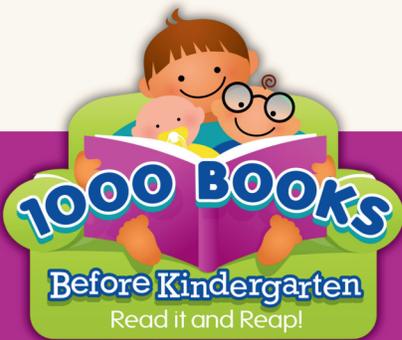
## Topics We'll Cover

- Expressive scripture reading
- Silence & worship
- Directed meditation
- The coming paradigm quake
- Expanding the Intercession Experience
- Music & healing
- Quantum reality and the UAP phenomenon

**Wednesday, March 4th  
at 6:00 PM | Oil City Library**

## WITH REV. REG RICE

Rev. Reg Rice is a former Penn State faculty member, retired United Church of Christ Pastor and contributor to "The Upper Room" devotional series.



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

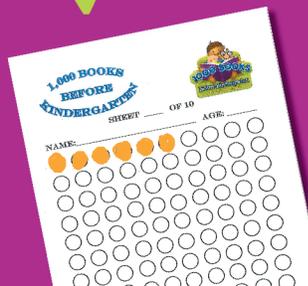


 These readers hit milestones recently!

## 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/](http://www.oilregionlibraries.org/youth/1000-books-before-kindergarten/)



# LIBRARY LOTT

2026 tickets are  
available NOW!

EACH TICKET  
**\$20**  
ONLY 1000 SOLD

## FEBRUARY WINNERS!



**ANGELA E.**  
PENN HILLS, PA



**KEN P.**  
PITTSBURGH, PA



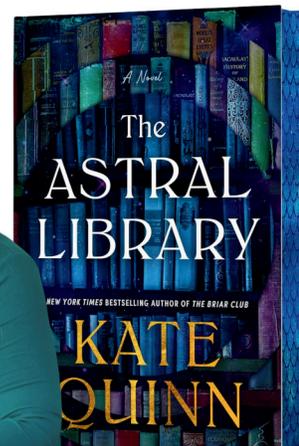
**NO WINNER**

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.

# Book Portals & Journeys of Literary Magic with KATE QUINN

You're invited to join us for a virtual conversation with acclaimed author Kate Quinn about her latest fantastical work, *The Astral Library*, which poses the question: Have you ever wished you could live inside a book? Welcome to the Astral Library, where books are not just objects, but doors to new worlds, new lives, and new futures.



Thursday, March 12th  
7:00 PM

Register now to hear more about *The Astral Library* & ask the author questions on Thursday, March 12th at 7 PM via digital live-stream in partnership with Oil Region Library Association.

Watch LIVE Online From Home  
OR  
Join Us at the Oil City Library  
In-Person for a Watch Party\*!

\*Doors Open at 6:30 PM at the Oil City Library

Register & submit your questions to the author here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ORLAKateQuinn>



# Spring 2026



### Mini Tin Shadow Boxes

March 20  
4:00PM | FRANKLIN  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

March 23  
5:00PM | OIL CITY  
LIBRARY

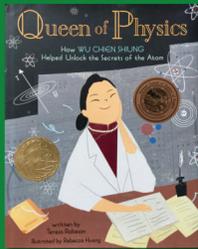
March 25  
5:00PM | OIL CITY  
LIBRARY

## at Oil City & Franklin Libraries!

Join us this Spring for more Adult Craft Club! This month, we are making Mini Tin Shadow Boxes. 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!



## Queen of Physics

Teresa Robeson; illustrated by Rebecca Huang

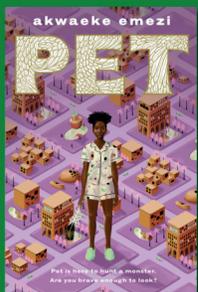
When Wu Chien Shiung was born in China 100 years ago, most girls did not attend school; no one considered them as smart as boys. But her parents felt differently. Giving her a name meaning "Courageous Hero," they encouraged her love of learning & science. This engaging picture book biography follows Wu Chien Shiung as she battles sexism & racism to become the "Queen of Physics" for her work on beta decay.



## Internment

Samira Ahmed

Set in a horrifying near-future United States, 17-year-old Layla Amin & her parents are forced into an internment camp for Muslim American citizens. With the help of newly made friends also trapped within the internment camp, her boyfriend on the outside, & an unexpected alliance, Layla begins a journey to fight for freedom, leading a revolution against the camp's Director & his guards. Heart-racing & emotional, Internment challenges readers to fight the complicit silence that exists in our society today.



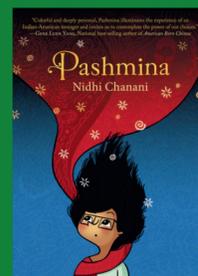
## Pet

Akwaeke Emezi

There are no monsters anymore. In the city of Lucille, Jam & her best friend, Redemption, have grown up with this lesson all their lives. Then Jam meets Pet, a creature made of horns and colors and claws, who emerges from one of her mother's paintings & a drop of Jam's blood. Pet has come to hunt a monster – & the shadow of something grim lurks in Redemption's house. How do you save the world from monsters if no one will admit they exist?

# OWN VOICES

refers to books by an author or illustrator from a marginalized or underrepresented group that write about their own experiences & perspectives, rather than from an outside perspective.



## Pashmina

Nidhi Chanani

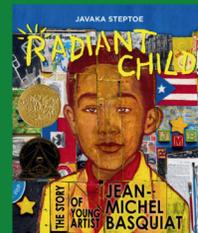
When Priyanka finds a mysterious pashmina in her house, she is transported to an India which may or may not be real, & goes in search of the reason why her mother left her homeland and the father she has never met.



## Sal & Gabi Break the Universe

Carlos Hernandez

In order to heal after his mother's death, Sal learned how to meditate. But no one expected him to be able to take it further & 'relax' things into existence. Turns out he can reach into time & space to retrieve things from other universes. A sassy entropy sweeper, a documentary about wedgies, a principal who wears a Venetian bauta mask, & heaping platefuls of Cuban food are just some of the delights that await in this mind-blowing novel gift-wrapped in love & laughter.

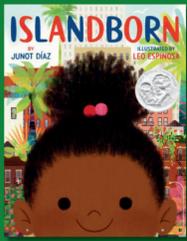


## Radiant Child: the Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat

Javaka Steptoe

Jean-Michel Basquiat & his unique, collage-style paintings rocketed to fame in the 1980s as a cultural phenomenon unlike anything the art world had ever seen. But before that, he was a little boy who saw art everywhere: in poetry books and museums, in games and in the words that we speak, and in the pulsing energy of New York City. Now, award-winning illustrator Javaka Steptoe's vivid text and bold artwork echoing Basquiat's own introduce young readers to the powerful message that art doesn't always have to be neat or clean – and definitely not inside the lines! – to be beautiful.

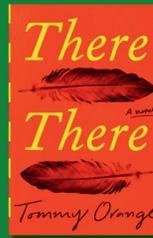




## Islandborn

Junot Díaz; illustrated by Leo Espinosa

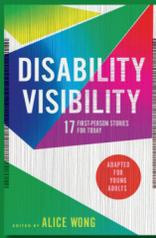
Lola was just a baby when her family left the Island, so when she has to draw it for a school assignment, she asks her family, friends, & neighbors about their memories of her homeland...and in the process, comes up with a new way of understanding her own heritage.



## There There

Tommy Orange

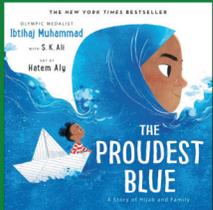
12 Native Americans came to the Big Oakland Powwow for different reasons. Jacquie Red Feather is newly sober & trying to make it back to the family she left behind in shame. Dene Oxendene is pulling his life together after his uncle's death & has come to work the powwow & to honor his uncle's memory. Edwin Frank has come to find his true father. Bobby Big Medicine has come to drum the Grand Entry. Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shield has come to watch her nephew, Orvil Red Feather. Orvil has taught himself Indian dance through YouTube videos, & he has come to the powwow to dance in public for the very first time. Tony Loneman is a young Native American boy whose future seems destined to be as bleak as his past, & he has come to the Powwow with darker intentions – intentions that will destroy the lives of everyone in his path.



## Disability Visibility

edited by Alice Wong

The 17 eye-opening essays in Disability Visibility, all written by disabled people, offer keen insight into the complex & rich disability experience, examining life's ableism & inequality, its challenges & losses, & celebrating its wisdom, passion, & joy. The accounts in this collection ask readers to think about disabled people not as individuals who need to be "fixed," but as members of a community with its own history, culture, & movements. They offer diverse perspectives that speak to past, present, & future generations.



## The Proudest Blue

Ibtihaj Muhammad with S.K. Ali

With her new backpack & light-up shoes, Faizah knows the first day of school is going to be special. It's the start of a brand-new year &, best of all, it's her older sister Asiya's first day of hijab – a hijab of beautiful blue fabric, like the ocean waving to the sky. But not everyone sees hijab as beautiful, & in the face of hurtful, confusing words, Faizah will find new ways to be strong.



## The Reason I Jump

Naoki Higashida

Written by Naoki Higashida, a very smart, very self-aware, & very charming 13-year-old boy with autism, it is a one-of-a-kind memoir that demonstrates how an autistic mind thinks, feels, perceives, & responds in ways few of us can imagine. Parents & family members who never thought they could get inside the head of their autistic loved one at last have a way to break through to the curious, subtle, & complex life within.



## The Sun is Also a Star

Nicola Yoon

Natasha, whose family is hours away from being deported, & Daniel, a first-generation Korean American who strives to live up to his parents' expectations, unexpectedly fall in love and must determine which path they will choose in order to be together.



## El Deafo

Cece Bell

In this funny, poignant graphic novel memoir, author/illustrator Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at a young age & her subsequent experiences with the Phonic Ear, a very powerful – and very awkward – hearing aid. The Phonic Ear gives Cece the ability to hear – sometimes things she shouldn't – but also isolates her from her classmates. She really just wants to fit in & find a true friend, someone who appreciates her as she is. After some trouble, she is finally able to harness the power of the Phonic Ear & become "El Deafo, Listener for All." And more importantly, declare a place for herself in the world & find the friend she's longed for.



Why should we read

# OWN VOICES

books?

Own Voices books matter because they are written by authors who share the same identity or lived experience as their characters. That authenticity brings depth, nuance, & cultural accuracy that can be difficult to replicate from the outside. When stories about marginalized communities are told by people within those communities, they're less likely to rely on stereotypes or harmful assumptions. Instead, they reflect the complexity, joy, struggle, humor, & everyday realities of real lives. Readers from those backgrounds can see themselves represented honestly, while other readers gain a more genuine understanding of experiences different from their own. Own Voices stories also help shift publishing toward greater equity by amplifying writers whose perspectives have historically been overlooked. They promote authenticity, empathy, & representation—on & off the page.



**Libby.**  
The library reading app



**TIP OF THE MONTH**

# Skip Between Chapters

Most Libby users are familiar with the option to adjust audiobook playback speed, making it easy to slow down & savor a narrator's performance or speed things up to move through a long listening list. This flexible feature allows you to customize your experience based on your schedule, listening preferences, or even the tone of the story.

Another helpful tool you may not be using is the ability to skip between chapters. With just a tap, you can move forward or backward in the book. Some listeners appreciate this feature for revisiting favorite moments or skipping sections, while others find it especially useful after dozing off with the sleep timer on. Instead of guessing where you left off, you can quickly navigate through chapters until you're back on track.

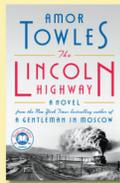


## Next Month's **BOOK CLUB** Selections

APRIL 2026

**Oil City Library  
Book Club**  
*Oil City Library*

Meets First Thursday  
of the Month at 10:30 AM

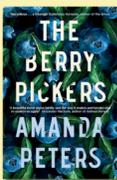


**The Lincoln Highway**  
Amor Towles



**The Bookmarkers  
Book Club**

*Franklin Public Library*  
Meets Second Tuesday  
of the Month at 12:00 PM



**The Berry Pickers**  
Amanda Peters

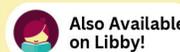


**Thursday Evening  
Book Club**

*Franklin Public Library*  
Meets Third Thursday  
of the Month at 5:00 PM



**To the Bright Edge of the World**  
Eowyn Ivey



## Are You Experiencing Libby Disruptions?

Due to the recent closure of the Cooperstown Public Library, many former Cooperstown patrons have been experiencing disruptions in their Libby service. This is because your home library location has been auto-assigned to "Franklin".

**Due to the location update, you may experience login issues for some of our digital resources, notably Libby (eBooks, digital audiobooks).**

**Here's how to fix that:**

- You'll want to delete your current library card for Oil Creek Library District & for our partner libraries (Erie, Crawford, & Seneca).
- Complete the process to "add a library" using your same card number. This time, select "Franklin" as your home library to regain access. Please stop in or call ahead if you'd like it to be Oil City instead.
- **If you'd like your former data (reading history, active holds, & checkouts) to carry over to your updated account, please let us know so we can merge them.**
- This will NOT impact your Free Library of Philadelphia card if you are one of the many users who have registered for one of their cards. To register or troubleshoot any issues with that card, visit [www.freelibrary.org](http://www.freelibrary.org)

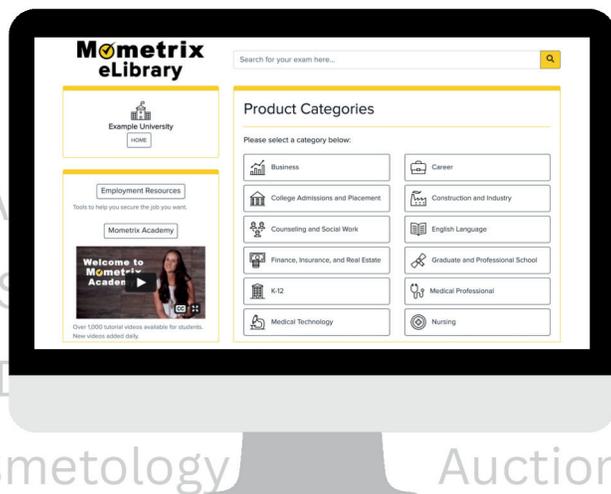
# Mometrix eLibrary

is now available  
**FOR FREE** with  
your library card!



## 1,500+ Exams Covered

Through Mometrix eLibrary, your library now offers thousands of study materials, including study guides, practice tests & flashcards, for free with your library card!



## Access Anywhere, Anytime

The cloud-based web application provides access to the entire database of test preparation materials. Study materials are available anywhere, anytime with unlimited simultaneous access.



## Get Started Today

Visit [oilregionlibraries.org/digital-resources/](https://oilregionlibraries.org/digital-resources/) to start using Mometrix eLibrary for free with your library card!

# FEATURED RESOURCES

**libby**  
The library reading app.

**Dragon Appreciation**  
Children's Titles Featuring Dragons 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



## 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

**Calling All Creatives!**

Craftsy is an online resource for all creative makers, where you can find everything you need – from basic instruction to advanced techniques. It's a community of enthusiastic makers, from quilters and sewers, to cake decorators and painters, wanting to create beautiful things and express their creativity.

Find it in Libby

**Magical REALISM**

Films That Blur the Lines Between Speculation & Reality

**kanopy**

Movie posters on film strip: The Annihilation of Fish, Sorry to Bother You, The Life of Chuck, Beautiful Fantastic, Border, Stranger than Fiction, Colossal, Men.

# FIND US ONLINE

[oilregionlibraries.org](http://oilregionlibraries.org)



Libby, Craftsy & Kanopy are available to you for FREE with your library card at [oilregionlibraries.org](http://oilregionlibraries.org)