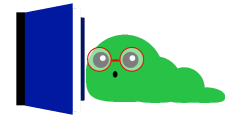


THE BOOKWORMS

BOOK CLUB



Free Public Library of Monroe Township
713 Marsha Ave, Williamstown NJ
856-629-1212

2026 Book Club Reading List

The Bookworms meet on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 1pm, except for December. All adults are invited to read along with us and join our monthly discussions held in the library meeting room.

For more information, call 856-629-1212 ext. 206.

January 21 : Becoming Madam Secretary by Stephanie Dray (F DRA)

Raised on tales of her revolutionary ancestors, Frances Perkins arrives in New York City at the turn of the century, armed with her trusty parasol and an unyielding determination to make a difference. When she's not working with children in the crowded tenements in Hell's Kitchen, Frances throws herself into the social scene in Greenwich Village, befriending an eclectic group of politicians, artists, and activists. But when Frances meets a young lawyer named Franklin Delano Roosevelt at a tea dance, sparks fly in all the wrong directions. Neither knows it yet, but over the next twenty years, they will form a historic partnership that will carry them both to the White House. Frances is destined to rise in a political world dominated by men, facing down the Great Depression as FDR's most trusted lieutenant. And when vicious political attacks mount and personal tragedies threaten to derail her ambitions, she must decide what she's willing to do to save a nation.

February 18: The Jackal's Mistress by Chris Bohjalian (F BOH)

Virginia, 1864—Libby Steadman's husband has been away for so long that she can barely conjure his voice in her dreams. While she longs for him in the night, fearing him dead in a Union prison camp, her days are spent running a gristmill; all the grain they can produce requisitioned by the Confederate Army. It's an uneasy life in the Shenandoah Valley, the territory frequently changing hands, control swinging back and forth like a pendulum between North and South, and Libby awakens every morning expecting to see her land a battlefield. And then she finds a gravely injured Union officer left for dead in a neighbor's house, the bones of his hand and leg shattered. Captain Jonathan Weybridge of the Vermont Brigade is her enemy – but he's also a human being, and Libby must make a terrible decision: Does she leave him to die alone? Or does she risk treason and try to nurse him back to health? And if she succeeds, does she try to secretly bring him across Union lines, where she might negotiate a trade for news of her own husband?

March 18: The Stolen Life of Colette Marceau by Kristin Harmel (F HAR)

Colette Marceau has been stealing jewels for nearly as long as she can remember, following the centuries-old code of honor instilled in her by her mother, take only from the cruel and unkind, and give to those in need. Never was their family tradition more important than seven decades earlier, during the Second World War, when Annabel and Colette worked side by side in Paris to fund the French Resistance. But one night in 1942, it all went wrong. Annabel was arrested by the Germans, and Colette's four-year-old sister, Liliane, disappeared in the chaos of the raid, along with an exquisite diamond bracelet sewn into the hem of her nightgown for safekeeping. Soon after, Annabel was executed, and Liliane's body was found floating in the Seine—but the bracelet was nowhere to be found. Seventy years later, Colette has done her best to put her tragic past behind her, but her life begins to unravel when the long-missing bracelet suddenly turns up in a museum exhibit in Boston. If Colette can discover where it has been all this time—and who owns it now—she may finally learn the truth about what happened to her sister.

April 15: American Bandstand by John A. Jackson (791.45 JAC)

"I don't make culture, I sell it" Dick Clark once remarked. Indeed, the man who reigned as host of American Bandstand for nearly four decades may not have invented rock 'n' roll, but he sold it to the American public better than anyone before or since. Before Clark, rock 'n' roll was the step child of radio--which took to playing records as a cost-saving measure after television siphoned off radios most lucrative sponsors. But it was network television--and specifically Clarks Bandstand--that ultimately legitimized what was then viewed by most adults as vulgar, low-class music, broadcasting a sanitized vision of rock 'n' roll straight into Americas living rooms five afternoons a week. Here is the first book to tell the full story of what happened in front of--and behind--the cameras on Dick Clark's American Bandstand, providing both a history of this landmark show and of the changing styles of rock 'n' roll over four decades.

May 20: The Secret Life of Sunflowers by Marta Molnar (F MOL)

When Hollywood auctioneer Emsley Wilson finds her famous grandmother's diary while cleaning out her New York brownstone, the pages are full of surprises. The first surprise is, the diary isn't her grandmother's. It belongs to Johanna Bonger, Vincent van Gogh's sister-in-law. Johanna inherited Vincent van Gogh's paintings. They were all she had, and they weren't worth anything. She was a 28 year old widow with a baby in the 1800s, without any means of supporting herself, living in Paris where she barely spoke the language. Yet she managed to introduce Vincent's legacy to the world. The inspiration couldn't come at a better time for Emsley. With her business failing, an unexpected love turning up in her life, and family secrets unraveling, can she find answers in the past?

June 17: Three Days in June by Anne Tyler (F TYL)

Gail Baines is having a bad day. To start, she loses her job—or quits, depending on whom you ask. Tomorrow her daughter, Debbie, is getting married, and she hasn't even been invited to the spa day organized by the mother of the groom. Then, Gail's ex-husband, Max, arrives unannounced on her doorstep, carrying a cat, without a place to stay, and without even a suit. But the true crisis lands when Debbie shares with her parents a secret she has just learned about her husband to be. It will not only throw the wedding into question but also stir up Gail and Max's past.

July 15: Swindled by Bee Wilson (363.19 WIL)

Bad food has a history. Swindled tells it. Through a fascinating mixture of cultural and scientific history, food politics, and culinary detective work, Bee Wilson uncovers the many ways swindlers have cheapened, falsified, and even poisoned our food throughout history. In the hands of people and corporations who have prized profits above the health of consumers, food and drink have been tampered with in often horrifying ways--padded, diluted, contaminated, substituted, mislabeled, misnamed, or otherwise faked. Swindled gives a panoramic view of this history, from the leaded wine of the ancient Romans to today's food frauds--such as fake organics and the scandal of Chinese babies being fed bogus milk powder. Arguing that industrialization, laissez-faire politics, and globalization have all hurt the quality of food, but also that food swindlers have always been helped by consumer ignorance, Swindled ultimately calls for both governments and individuals to be more vigilant. In fact, Wilson suggests, one of our best protections is simply to reeducate ourselves about the joys of food and cooking.

August 19: The Measure by Nikki Erlick (F ERL)

Eight ordinary people. One extraordinary choice. It seems like any other day. You wake up, drink a cup of coffee, and head out. But today, when you open your front door, waiting for you is a small wooden box. The contents of this mysterious box tells you the exact number of years you will live. From suburban doorsteps to desert tents, every person on every continent receives the same box. In an instant, the world is thrust into a collective frenzy. Where did these boxes come from? What do they mean? Is there truth to what they promise? As society comes together and pulls apart, everyone faces the same shocking choice: Do they wish to know how long they'll live? And, if so, what will they do with that knowledge?

September 16: The Bird Hotel by Joyce Maynard (F MAY)

After a childhood filled with heartbreak, Irene, a talented artist, finds herself in a small Central American village where she checks into a beautiful but decaying lakefront hotel called La Llorona at the base of a volcano. The Bird Hotel tells the story of this young American who, after suffering tragedy, restores and runs La Llorona. Along the way we meet a rich assortment of characters who live in the village or come to stay at the hotel. With a mystery at its center and filled with warmth, drama, romance, humor, pop culture, and a little magic realism, The Bird Hotel has all the hallmarks of a Joyce Maynard novel that have made her a leading voice of her generation

October 21: The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman (M OSM)

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet up once a week to investigate unsolved murders. But when a brutal killing takes place on their very doorstep, the Thursday Murder Club find themselves in the middle of their first live case. Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim and Ron might be pushing eighty but they still have a few tricks up their sleeves. Can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer before it's too late?

November 18: How Did it Begin? by Rudolph Brasch (398.3 BRA)

"How Did It Begin?" is an entertaining look at why we do and say the things we do. — With his trademark curiosity and delight, Dr. Rudi Brasch delves into the forgotten meanings and fascinating origins of our customs, traditions, superstitions, and phrases. — Divided into themes like courtship and marriage, table manners, and drinking customs, right through to the extraordinary rituals connected with the armed services, medicine and the law, "How Did It Begin?" is wide-ranging, idiosyncratic, erudite and engaging.

No meeting in December