

# WOMONSCAPE TIMES

~A monthly publication by the Womonscape Center Inc.~



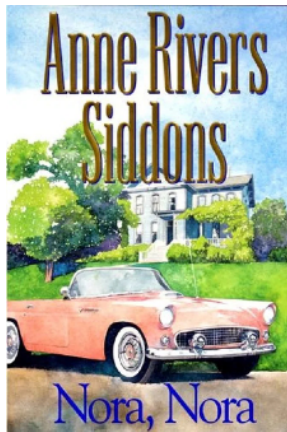
## W O M O N S C A P E C E N T E R

### NO-RULES BOOK GROUP (NRBG)

The *No Rules Book Group* (NRBG) met as usual on the third Thursday of July, for a lively discussion of books and other media. Take a look below for a summary.

Our next *No-Rules Book Group* Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 17 at 10:30 a.m. We'll meet at the Richland County Courthouse, near the lower lobby elevators, and walk to our meeting room. If we've started already, come to Conference Room #1.

### JULY BOOK SELECTIONS



**NORA NORA**  
by Anne Rivers Siddons

Siddons was a popular novelist who often focused on small town life in the American South during the 1960s. This book centers on Peyton, a withdrawn adolescent girl who lives with her widowed father and has few friends her own age; choosing, instead, to hang out regularly with a group of town misfits who call themselves The Losers Club. Her life changes completely when her mother's Cousin Nora comes to town unexpectedly and decides to stay.

**I KNOW WHAT YOU DID**  
by Cayce Osborne

Set in New York City and Madison, Wisconsin, Wisconsin-born author Cayce Osborne writes about what she knows. Local readers will identify with many of the setting locations such as West High School, Culver's Restaurant, and Bagels Forever Bakery. At the beginning of this thriller, protagonist Petal Woznewski checks out an anonymously-written bestselling novel that fictionalizes the death of Petal's childhood best friend. The bestseller contains this ominous dedication: *I know what you did, Petal Woznewski. And now everyone else will, too.* To find the author and clear her name—and her conscience—Petal returns to Madison to uncover secrets buried thirty years ago.

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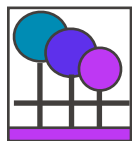
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LOCAL AUTHOR





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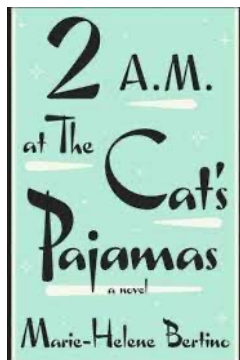
**NO-RULES BOOK GROUP**

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**2 AM AT THE CAT'S PAJAMAS**

by Marie-Helene Bertino

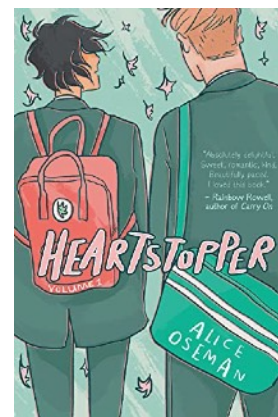


Like Nora, Nora, reviewed above, this cleverly crafted novel also features a girl living with her widowed father. But the similarities stop there. Nine-year-old Madeline is determined to be a jazz singer, and will let absolutely nothing and no one get in her way. The story is set in modern Philadelphia during a 24 hour period between December 23 and 24, and follows the lives of Madeline and her neighbors, with all of their conflicts and joys and fears. A series of events brings most of the characters together at, you guessed it, a jazz club called *The Cat's Pajamas*, at 2 am.

**HEARTSTOPPER**

by Alice Oseman

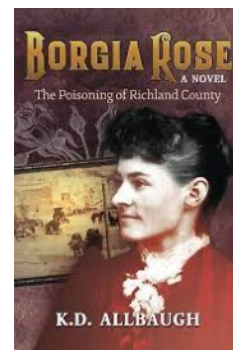
Heartstopper began as a series of graphic novels about Charlie Spring, an openly-gay British high school student who attends an all-boys school. Charlie has a supportive family and a solid group of friends, but is often picked on or dismissed because of his sexuality by many of his classmates. In one class he is seated next to a star rugby player, Nick Nelson, and they strike up a friendship. But is it more than an ordinary friendship? Read the book or watch the acclaimed, family-friendly Netflix series to find out.



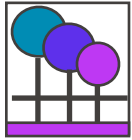
**BORGIA ROSE: THE POISONING OF RICHLAND COUNTY**

by K. D. Allbaugh

Inspired by true events, this book tells the story of a woman who came to Richland Center, Wisconsin, to escape a life of poverty and tragedy. She rose to a respectable position in society as the companion and nanny of Laura Mitchell, the sickly wife of the city's most prestigious doctor. All seemed well for Rose until Laura died and other women started dating the handsome Dr. Mitchell. Then one of these women died of strychnine poisoning. Was Rose at fault? Wisconsin author Allbaugh sets out the facts so that readers may draw their own conclusions.



LOCAL AUTHOR



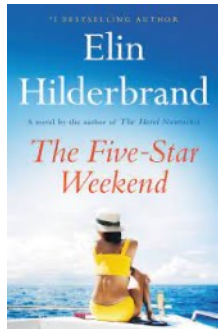
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**NO-RULES BOOK GROUP**

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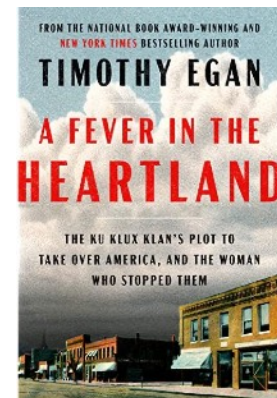
### **THE FIVE STAR WEEKEND, by Elin Hilderbrand**



Hilderbrand is arguably the queen of beach novels. In her latest offering, a successful food blogger named Hollis Shaw is in the middle of several life-changing personal crises. In an effort to cope, she organizes a “five star weekend” for herself. This means inviting a best friend from each phase of her life: her teenage years, her twenties, her thirties, and midlife. The setting for the weekend will be Nantucket. Unfortunately, the beautiful setting is no guarantee that the weekend will be pleasant. Friendships, assumptions, and alliances are all tested as Hollis tries to regain control of her life.

### **A FEVER IN THE HEARTLAND, by Timothy Egan**

This is a historical account of the rise of the Ku Klux Klan from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s. It is also the incredible story of the journalists and Black and Jewish leaders who worked tirelessly to stop the exponential growth of this organization and to take down its leader. It is also a disturbing warning for the present and future, as many of the fundamental issues that fueled the rise of this organization are still around today.

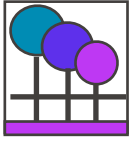


### **THE SNOW HARE, by Paula Lichtarowicz**



The Snow Hare is the story of an older Polish woman who is coming to terms with the events of her life. It includes the Soviet takeover of her village and time spent in a Siberian work camp. The novel focuses on her survival and hope despite the death and desolation that impacted so much of her life. The author has set the story against a backdrop of real historical events.





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### ON LIBRARIES

This month, in the next several pages, we decided to pay homage to the librarians of the world as well as review several libraries. In the spirit of our “Do You Know Who This Woman Is?” series, we feature thumbnail biographies of amazing women librarians.

On a recent vacation we spent some time exploring various neighborhood libraries.

You can tell a lot about the general tone of a neighborhood by the kind of library you find there. The saddest, coldest, and most neglected neighborhoods, of course, have no library at all, and must rely on *Little Free Library* boxes or the occasional visit from a Bookmobile for their library needs.

We found that some communities still depend on historic Carnegie libraries, those built during the early 1900s when industrialist Andrew Carnegie funded a system of



Dedicated in 1903, this was the first Carnegie Library as well as the first desegregated public building in Washington DC.

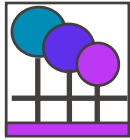
1,689 libraries across the country. As a poor Scottish immigrant, young Andrew had resented the subscription libraries that were available for loaning books before the advent of public libraries—he couldn’t afford the \$2 subscription on his textile mill wages. So he gave away much of his considerable steel mill fortune to the public for libraries. This was more than a little controversial; his steelworkers would have preferred higher wages and better working conditions. “Increase our wages,” the workers demanded. “What good is a book to a man who works 12 hours a day, six days a week?”

Other communities, we noticed, have invested considerable time and money to update their libraries into large, modern, well-lit and well-appointed homes for not only books and other reading materials, but community meeting rooms, technology hubs, cafes, and educational centers. In some communities we visited, the library was the most beautiful building in the area, truly something to boast about.

Oddly, however, the inside tone of even the most beautiful and modern of community libraries did not always match the outside. In one library, for example, the only communication we received from any of the several staff members was to tell us where we were NOT allowed to sit—we were too old for the children or teen section, and could not be registered as guests in the computer section so we were relegated to a couple of scruffy chairs in a dark corner. In another library we were told that we could NOT use the library copier by a librarian that seemed unable to stop looking at her computer screen, and equally unable to tell us where we might find a copier in the neighborhood that we *would* be able to use.

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### ON LIBRARIES

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And then there was the library that had signs taped on its doors notifying unhoused people of when and where to catch the bus to a shelter for the day or night, so that they might not be so tempted to use the library to meet their needs. The overall message we got from these libraries was definitely more “Go away!” than “Welcome to our library.”

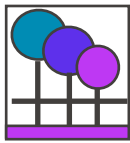
Fortunately we found many libraries that seemed eager to have visitors. One librarian cheerfully greeted us with a map of the large urban library where she was employed, pointing out adult education, job, and housing resource areas with a sense of pride. And then there was the library in the politically conservative town that featured displays celebrating people of different cultures, genders, ethnic groups and LGBTQ+ status. We saw these libraries as oases of support and identity in what could otherwise be a limited or hostile environment.

Recently, we had a chance to talk with some friends about the renovation currently going on at their neighborhood library. They were gracious in their enthusiasm about the construction, but noted that they had not yet been allowed to sit in certain chairs or areas of the new addition, as those places were reserved for other, specific groups. Likewise, they were not members of the group allowed to freely look for books; they could only order specific books for pick-up. This was not an outright complaint, just a wistfulness for a library in which they might spend an afternoon reading, and browse for books as they had done since childhood. We hope that the renovations of the building don't also mean losing the fundamental joy of its use as, well, a library.



This is one of the first Carnegie libraries in Wisconsin that is still in operation today.

We currently live in a rural area that is much too small to support a gas station, let alone a library. This means that we can choose any one of three or four libraries within a twenty- to thirty-minute drive from our home. One of these we no longer patronize. It's a beautiful facility, with a cozy fireplace, large community room, and sunny windows that are especially cheerful on a winter day. But the library staff don't seem to notice when we're there. They are back in an office, out of sight of the front library 'welcoming' desk, and often do not even hear the sound of the bell set out for patrons to ring for service. Not the most welcoming. Instead, we go to a library where there is always an alert, focused staff member available and, believe it or not, several who actually recognize us with a friendly word or nod. We know we're lucky to do so.



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### ON LIBRARIANS

Here are some amazing librarians from all across the world.

#### ALIA MUHAMMAD BAKER



Alia Muhammad Baker was an Iraqi librarian best known for saving over 30,000 books from destruction during the Iraq War. During her 14-year career at the Al Basrah Central Library in Basra she gradually rose to the post of Chief Librarian. When war threatened the safety of the library's book collection, she began smuggling books out of the library. She was able to convince many local business people to help her in her efforts. The library was eventually destroyed but Baker was able to rescue 70% of the library's books. When the library was rebuilt in 2004 Baker was again installed as Chief Librarian. Two children's books were inspired by Baker's amazing rescue of the library books—[Alia's Mission](#) and [The Librarian of Basra](#). Sadly, Baker died of COVID during Iraq's pandemic in 2021.

#### ALICE DUGGED CARY



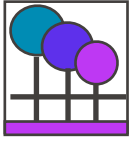
Born in 1859 in Indiana, Alice Dugged began her teaching career in Kansas and became an assistant principal at Lincoln High School in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1884. She married Jefferson Carey Jr. and moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where she began a position as second principal at Morris Brown College. She also became the first principal of the Mitchell Street School, holding both positions at the same time. In 1921 she was appointed first librarian of the Auburn Carnegie Library in Atlanta. This was the first library in the city accessible to African Americans during segregation. Cary died in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1941.

#### SHANTI MISHRA



Shanti Mishra, born in 1938, was the first female Nepali librarian. She was also a writer, translator and lecturer. Mishra received BA and MA degrees in Calcutta, and then began studying library science in the United States. She received her MA degree in library science from Vanderbilt University. Returning to Nepal in 1962, she became Chief Librarian of Tribhuvan University (TU) Central Library. After the British Broadcasting Company visited her library and commented on its uniqueness, the library became a token of pride in the country. Mishra worked for over 30 years at the library. She co-wrote a book on library science and also wrote a memoir and a book on the history of the TU library. Baker held many posts with the United Nations Women's Organization and the Active Women of Nepal. She died in 2019 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

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### ON LIBRARIANS

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#### MARY EMMA ALLISON

Mary Emma Woodruff Allison was a social activist, elementary school teacher, and librarian. In 1950, while working as a school teacher in Philadelphia, she had attended a children's costume parade. At the end of the parade, all of the children (and a cow!) went into Wanamaker's Department Store. While she was in the store, Allison noticed a booth raising funds for UNICEF. Together with her husband, Allison created Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF. Her three children became the original trick-or-treaters, collecting money in empty milk cartons to help raise money to pay for powdered milk to be sent overseas. The first year they collected \$17. Allison died in 2010 at the age of 93. At the time of her death, Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF had raised \$160 million.



#### PRUDENCIANA CRUZ

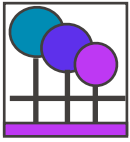


Cruz, born in 1943, is the 16th director of the National Library of the Philippines, a position she began in 2001. She graduated from the University of San Carlos in Cebu City majoring in library science and then completed her graduate studies at the University of the Philippines Dilliman. She started out as chief librarian at Holy Name University and eventually became senior librarian at the Bohol Provincial Library. Since she becoming the National Library Director Cruz also became head of the steering committee in charge of the Philippine eLibrary. Her many awards include Outstanding Librarian Award, Philippine Librarians Association Hall of Fame Award, and ADOC Award for Best e-Practices.

#### RÓISÍN WALSH

Róisín Walsh (1889-1949) was born in Lisnamaghery, Clogher, County Tyrone, Ireland. Since her family was financially well-off, she was able to receive an excellent education, graduating from the University College Dublin with a BA in Irish, French, German and English. She was a teacher and then a lecturer in Irish and English. Unfortunately, because of her involvement in the Nationalist independence movement in Ireland, Walsh was forced to quit teaching. In 1922 she began working as a children's library assistant, eventually working her way to the position of chief librarian in County Dublin. She helped start the modern library service in Dublin city, developing new library buildings in several other cities. She helped secure access to Irish books by Irish authors and worked to increase foreign awareness of Irish literature throughout the United States. Throughout her life, Walsh remained an activist as a political activist and speaker.





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## WOMEN'S SYMBOLS

Continuing with a theme from our July issue, here are an additional pair of lesser-known women's symbols.

### The Lotus Flower



The Lotus Flower is an Ancient Egyptian symbol of creation, rebirth, strength, and power. During childbirth, Egyptian women tended to wear lotus amulets with a picture of Heqet, a goddess of fertility, to help ensure a safe birth. Buddhist and Hindu practitioners in Eastern Asia also use the lotus to represent rebirth, since it rises from the darkness of even the most stagnant water and turns into a beautiful flower: the analogy is that human beings are born from nothing and turn into something complete and beautiful.

### The Tree of Life

The Tree of Life Symbol is found in many cultures throughout the world, including Central Asia and Scandinavia. Many mythologies, folktales and religions have used or adapted this symbol, which makes it one of the most universal concepts of our complex and disjointed world. From a feminist point of view, the Tree of Life represents Mother Earth and the relationship of all life to what sustains them (their roots) and to what encourages them to grow (their branches). In some cultures, the Tree of Life is also known as the Lady of the Sea, She Who Gives Birth, or Mother of the Gods. Specific goddesses were even associated with specific trees. For example, the goddess Athena was represented by an eternally flourishing olive tree; Aphrodite was associated with the myrtle tree. In the ecology movement, the Tree of Life symbol is common on T-shirts and in literature to remind us of Mother Earth as a source of life.

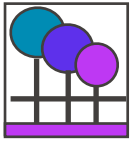



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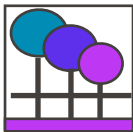
TO:



•WOMONSCAPE  
CENTER, Inc.•  
  
AUGUST 17 – is our  
next scheduled  
*No-Rules Book Group*  
in Richland Center.  
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Times**  
  
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**QUOTES**

~ I have found the most valuable thing  
in my wallet is my library card.

– Laura Bush (librarian and wife of  
George W. Bush)

~ ...revolution by education...for there  
can be no progress until the people  
have been educated first.

– Róisín Walsh (see page 7)

~ Cutting libraries during a recession is like cutting hospitals during a plague.

– Eleanor Crumblehulme (Library assistant, University of British Columbia)

~ Whatever the cost of our libraries, the  
price is cheap compared to that of an  
ignorant nation.

– Walter Cronkite (American Broadcast Journalist)

~ A trained librarian is a powerful search  
engine with a heart.

– Sarah McIntyre (British American  
Illustrator and writer of children's Books)