Classic Book Clubs

Thinking With the Great Thinkers

Erin Hanratty, Dorothy Stoltz, Thomas Vose

MLA/DLA | *May 7, 2026*

OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

MLA • DLA Conference 2026

Don’t Miss!

50/50 RAFFLE

Tickets are **$1** each and can be purchased from **Conni Strittmatter** or **David Dahl**! The winner takes home half the pot.

PUB QUIZ

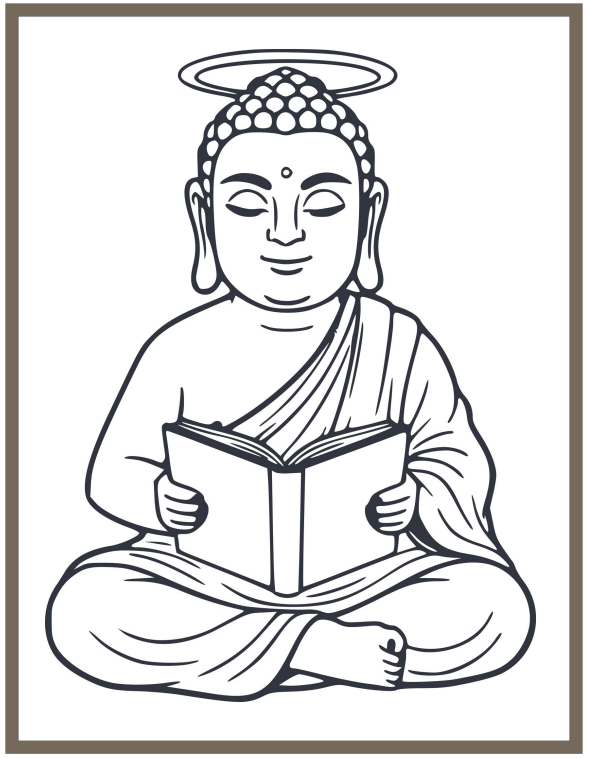
Thursday, May 7
8:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Choptank Ballroom

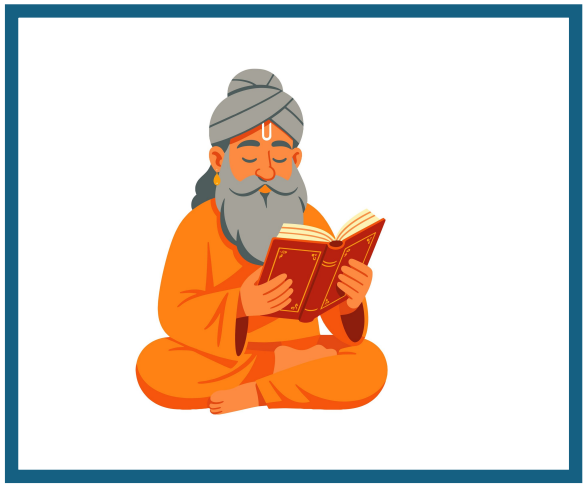
SILENT AUCTION

Visit the Silent Auction in the exhibitor hall to place your bids **before 10:45 a.m. on Friday, May 8th**.

KARAOKE

Thursday, May 7
8:00 – 11:00 p.m.
Windjammer





What counts as a classic, and who decides?

Activity Time

MATCH THE QUOTE FLIPCARDS

Turn the card and guess who each of these famous quotes belongs to.

'Come full circle'

'I love myself when I am laughing.'

'To err is human; to forgive, divine.'

'Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round!'

Powered by genially

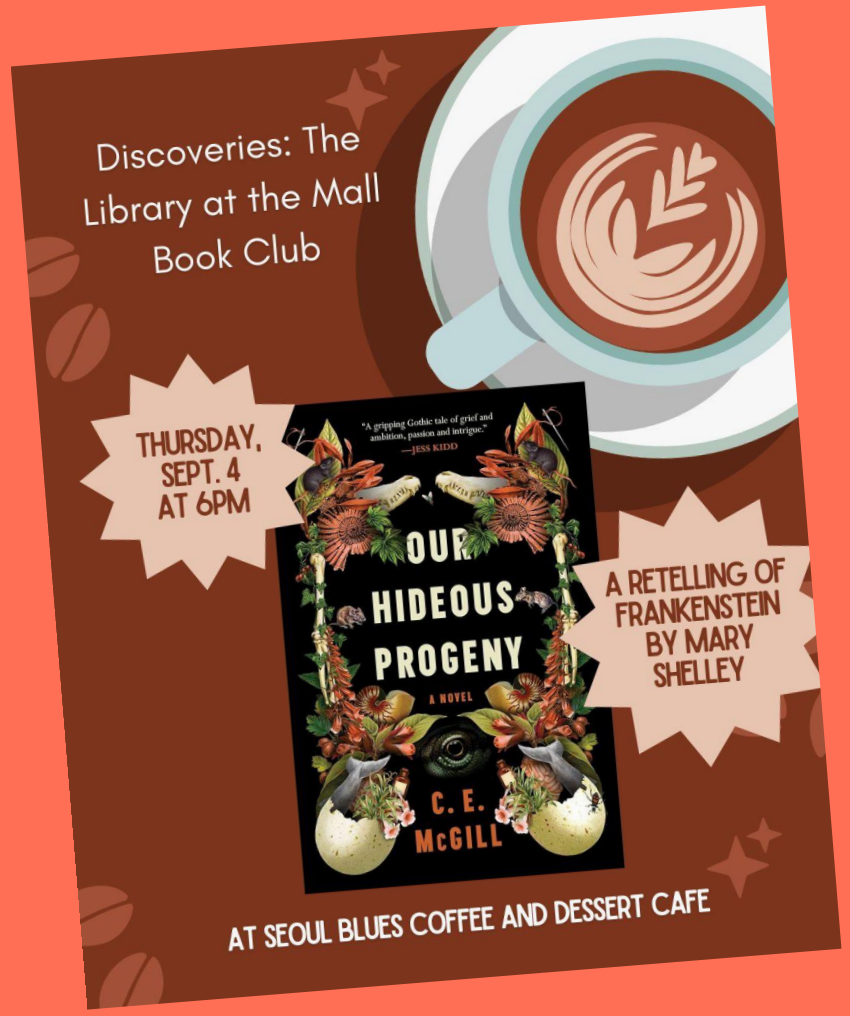
William Shakespeare or Harry Potter	Zora Neale Hurston or Louise May Alcott	Jesse Jackson or Alexander Pope	Taylor Swift or Lewis Carroll

Program Overview

Erin Hanratty

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Books and Brews at Blues: A Retellings Book Club



Benefit

Erin Hanratty

"The book was great and the discussion was engaging."

"Love the community, location, leaders of program."

"The books are challenging and encourage you to think some!"

Survey says:

- "I learned something"
- "I was inspired to try something new"
- "I made a connection with someone at the program"

Strategy

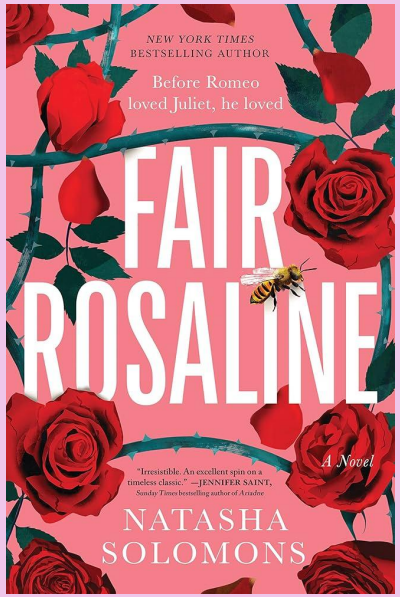
Erin Hanratty

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

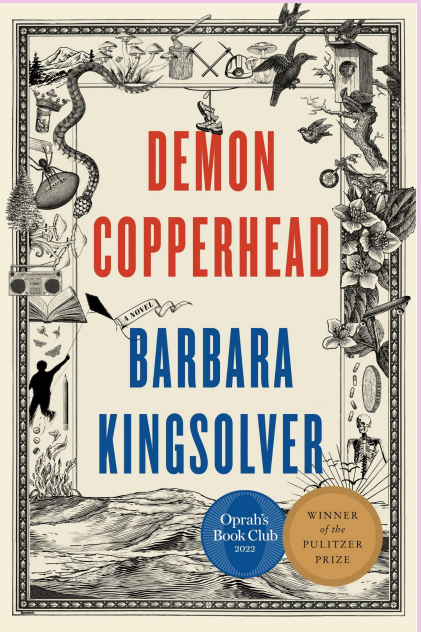
- The logistics:
  - Titles are chosen 3 at a time (seasonal programming cycle)
  - 3 staff rotate hosting duties
  - Partner with an offsite location
- Finding titles:
  - Book blogs, book lists
  - Heritage/Celebration Months (Pride, Hispanic Heritage, etc.)
  - What's trending? Movie/tv show adaptations, seasonal interest
  - Catalog Search - what do we have? How many copies? Variety of formats?
  - Full list of titles

Universal Themes

Erin Hanratty



Gender, Patriarchy, Family Loyalty, Power of Desire/Love



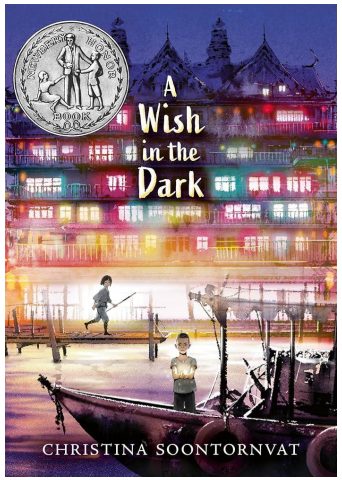
Identity and Class, Systemic Failures

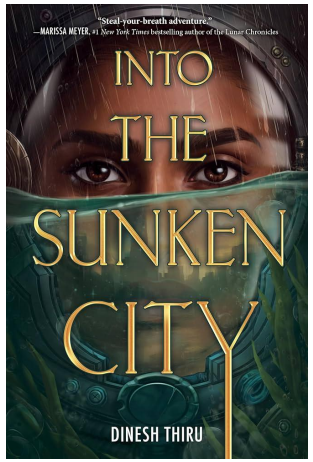
What Would You Do?
Are there discussion questions that don't feel like "literary analysis", that invite attendees to identify with the characters and connect emotionally to their situation?

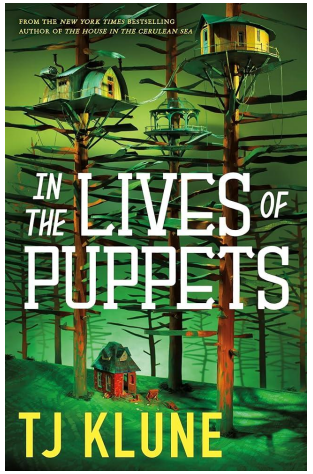
Compare/Contrast
Does the retelling capture the same themes as the original? Does the retelling add to your understanding of the original?

Activity Time

NAME THAT CLASSIC!
What classic is being retold?







a. Alice's Adventures in Wonderland b. Pinocchio c. Les Miserables d. Of Mice and Men e. King Arthur f. Treasure Island

Activity Time

NAME THAT CLASSIC!
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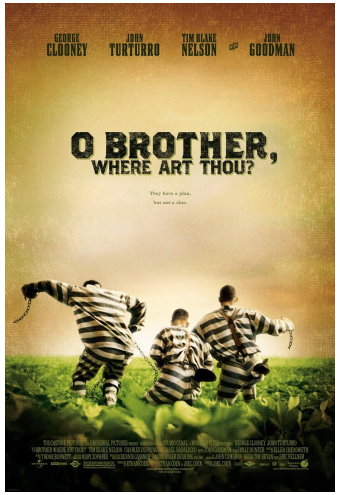

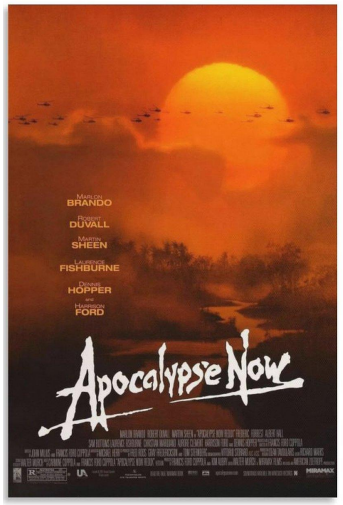

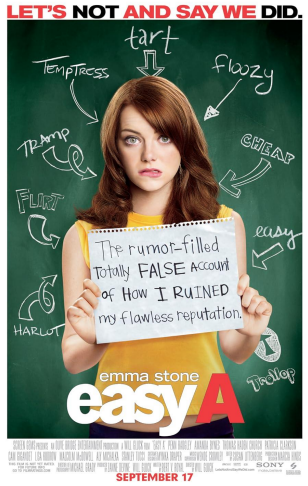

a. Heart of Darkness b. The Taming of the Shrew c. The Odyssey d. Emma e. The Scarlet Letter f. Oliver Twist

Program Overview

The
Ruth Enlow Library
of GARRETT COUNTY

Community + Opportunity

Classics Buttons

EARN A BUTTON

Collect them all!

Check out one of these works of classic literature. Enjoy it! Return it to receive its corresponding button.

Collect 10 buttons to earn a lovely banner for displaying them

Collect 25 buttons to earn a "Silver Reader" pin - amazing work!

Collect 50 buttons to earn a "Gold Reader" pin - you're one of the elite!

Benefit

The
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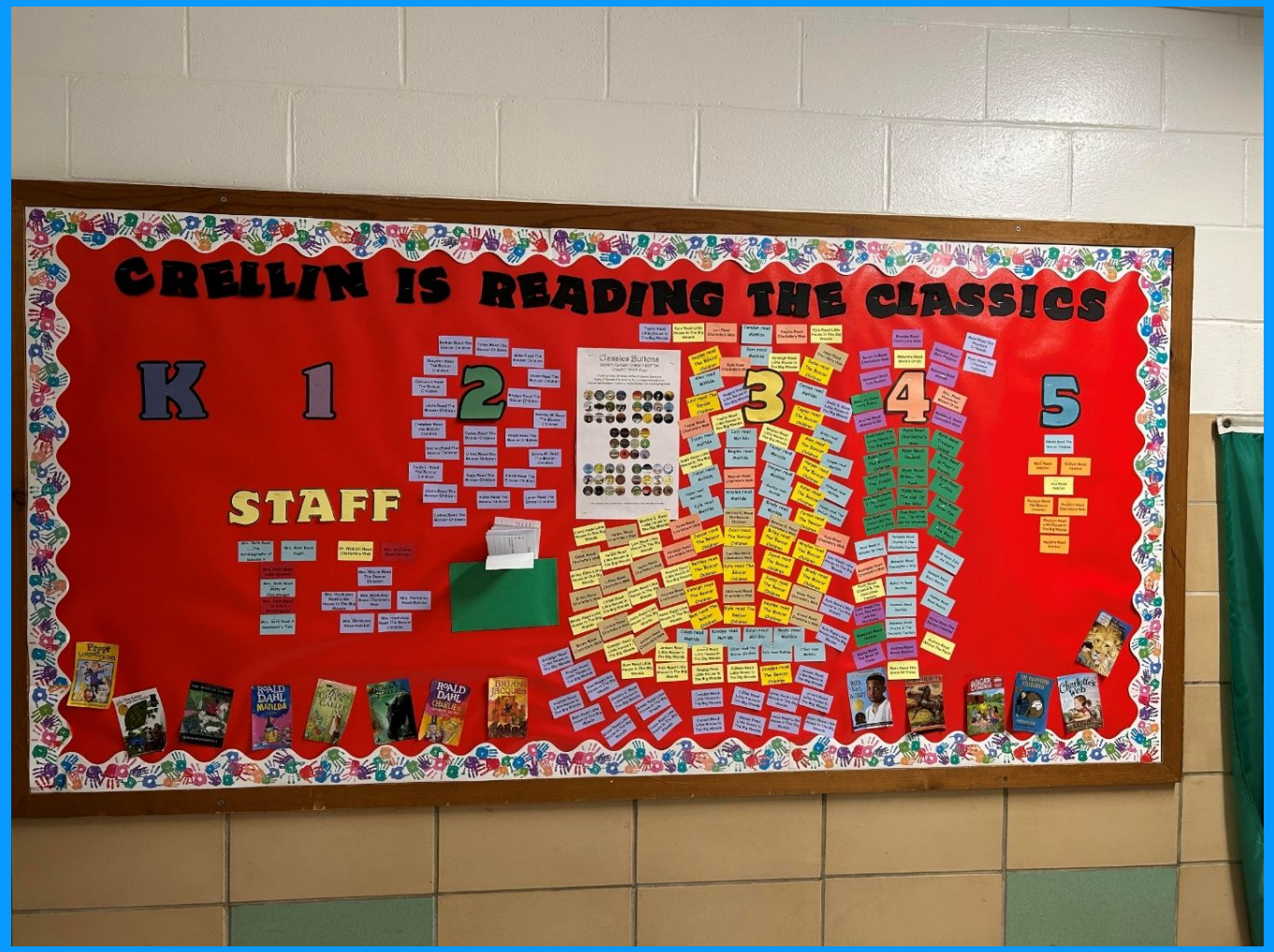
Community + Opportunity



2,348 given out as of 3/12/26

Strategy

The Ruth Enlow Library of GARRETT COUNTY

Community + Opportunity

GAMES & GAMING ROUND TABLE

Universal Themes

The
Ruth Enlow Library
of GARRETT COUNTY

Community + Opportunity

“Manifestación,” Antonio Berni, 1934

Activity Time

Activity Time

Program Overview

Dorothy Stoltz

Waldo Publishers

Let’s Talk Classics
Adults & Teens Together
Ages 16 and Up

- Started with an ALA grant
- Read and discussed adult, teen, and children’s classics

Benefit

Dorothy Stoltz

Waldo Publishers

Reading & discussing classic books activates our *thinking*!

Strategy

- Encourage open-minded engagement
- Create a wide range of classics from around the world, adult and children's books
- Identify with universal themes, such as forgiveness, adaptability, and discernment
- Bring in occasional guest facilitators
- Incorporate a 5 to 10 minute introduction to the author, title, time period, and culture, adding components, such as art and music
- What's out there today that you think will be considered a classic years from now?
- Promote program & collection

https://www.instagram.com/reel/DWPHAFglZ70/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

Dorothy Stoltz

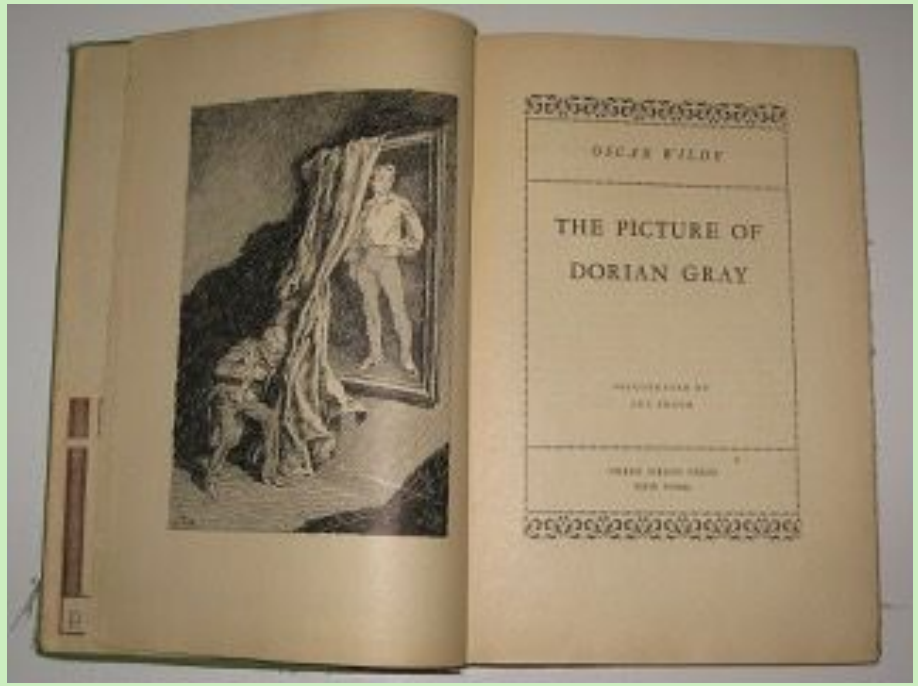
Waldo Publishers

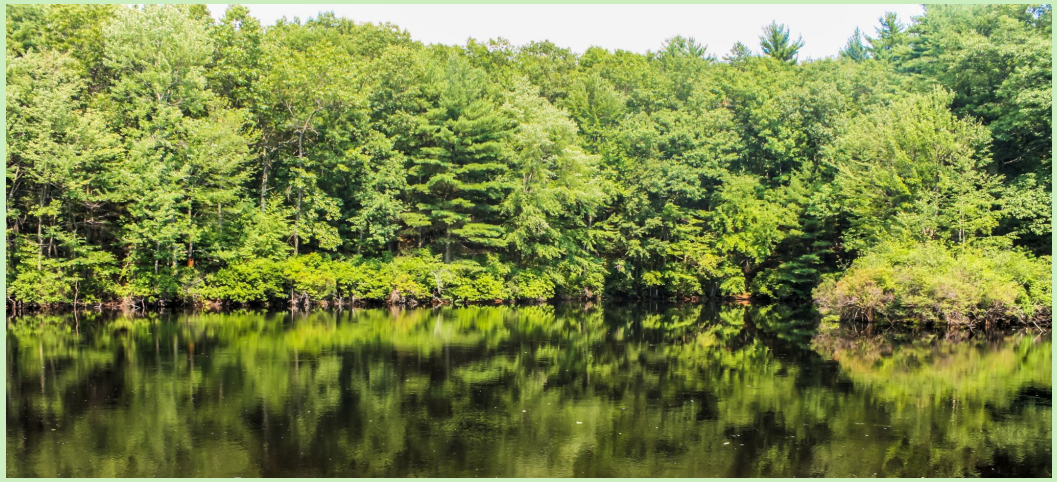
Two Men Contemplating the Moon
Caspar David Friedrich ca. 1825–30 (Wikimedia Commons)

Universal Themes

Dorothy Stoltz

Waldo Publishers





Other Creative Approaches
Making Timeless Books Engaging

Mixed Media

- Emily Dickinson
  - Clark County (NV) high school library
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning
  - Baylor University (TX)

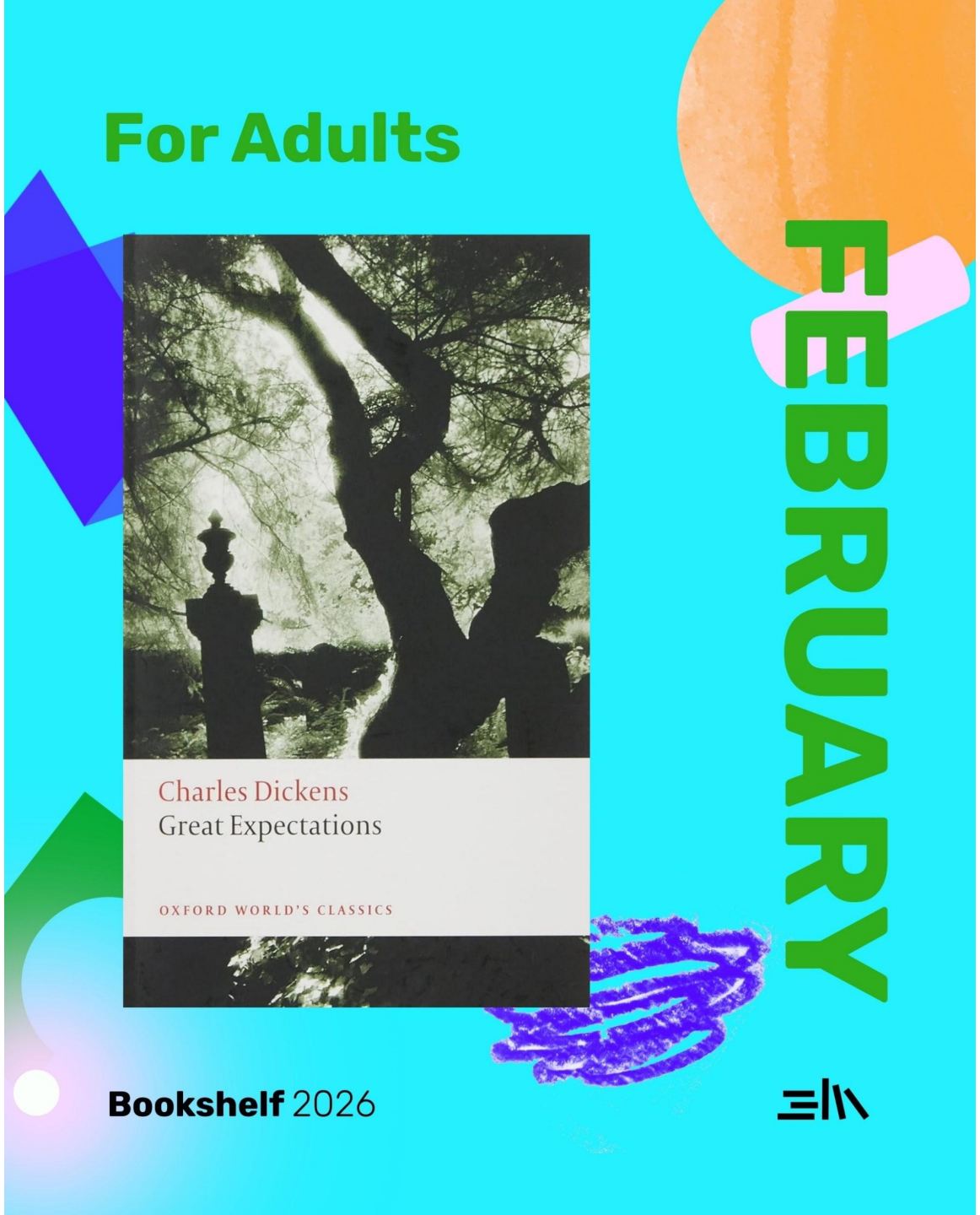
World-Wide Classics

- The Bhagavad Gita
  - Cincinnati Public Library (OH)

Read Aloud

- Elementary Age Classics Book Club
  - Licking County Library (OH)
- The Reader Program: Shared Reading in UK

https://www.educvr.com/howdowelovethee
Dr. Amanda Gardner, Baylor University, Texas



Shared Reading in the UK ...

- **25,000**

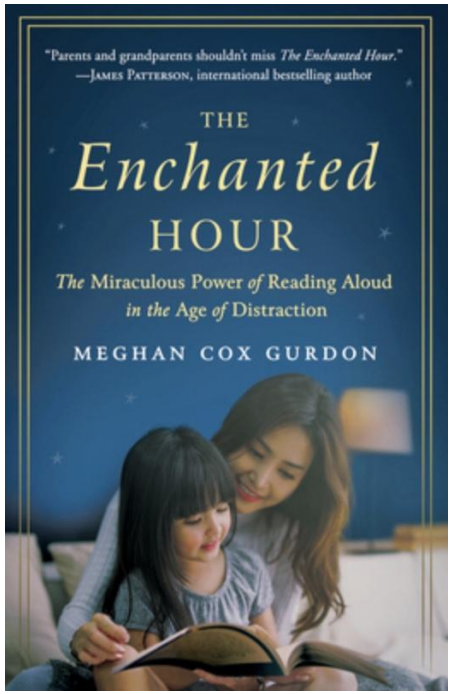
readers a year

- **624+**

volunteers

- **496+**

regular weekly activities



Suggested Reading and Resources

ALA Editions: Book Club Reboot: 71 Creative Twists

Biblio Lifestyle: Classic Books Explained: What Counts & Where to Start

Bureau of Public Secrets: A Guide to Oriental Classics

Everand: 15 Provocative Classic Books That Book Clubs Should Read

Goodreads Top 100 Classic Books for Book Clubs

How Do We Love Thee: Virtual Reality Project: Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Libro Maniacs: The 20 Best Classics for Book Club

The Enchanted Hour: The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction

The Reader: UK's Shared Reading Project

Comments - Questions - Sharing

CALL TO
ACTION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Erin Hanratty
Assistant Branch Manager, Discoveries: The Library at the Mall
Anne Arundel County Public Library
ehanratty@aacpl.net

Dorothy Stoltz
Waldo Publishers, StoltzCreative Consulting
stoltzcreative@gmail.com
Stoltz Creative Consulting Especially for Libraries
Waldo Publishers

Thomas Vose
Director, Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County
thomas@relib.net

Please take a moment to complete the program survey.

SCAN ME!

OUR STORIES, OUR SHELVES

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