



The Owl

"The owl of Minerva takes flight only as the dusk begins to fall."

—Hegel

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Readers' Picks

written and compiled by Chris Poché



For eleven days in August 1992, an armed standoff occurred between a loose coalition of law enforcement agencies led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a single family of apocalyptic Christian survivalists, holed up in their self-made home on Ruby Ridge in the mountains of the Idaho panhandle. The patriarch of the family, Randy Weaver, had been charged with a relatively minor gun crime, but the situation escalated when he refused to show up for his trial. Federal Marshals were tasked with arresting Randy, who was known for his connections to a neo-Nazi organization, his anti-government views, and for his family being armed to the teeth. The government was stumped by how to achieve the arrest of Randy as they feared a violent confrontation that could include his children. The standoff was the immediate consequence of a shootout that occurred when the Weavers discovered a special operations group of Federal Marshals surveilling the Weaver property. Randy's son and one Marshal were shot and killed. Randy retreated to his home, and the full apparatus of the federal government then descended upon the property. Before Randy finally gave himself up, his wife would also be killed.

This tragic sequence of events became a spectacle that drew vociferous local protest and national attention. For those observing at the time, the standoff appeared to be a ridiculously asymmetric confrontation between a family of six who just wanted to be left alone and the forces of the state, which amassed over one hundred personnel with advanced weaponry and armored vehicles as it laid siege to the Weaver property. Of course, the situation was much more complicated than that, and its fallout had consequences for the United States that went beyond the immediate concerns of the two conflicting parties. The full context and effects of the Ruby Ridge standoff are the subjects of Chris Jennings's ***End of Days: Ruby Ridge, the Apocalypse, and the Unmaking of America*** (2026).

Much of this fascinating and disturbing book traces the life of the Weavers before they moved to Idaho and the development of their increasingly extreme beliefs. Randy and his wife Vicki, both born and raised in Iowa, appeared to be a perfect, all-American couple. They were the children of industrious parents and were hardworking themselves. Randy served as a Green Beret during the Vietnam War (though he never saw combat) and returned home to a skilled job at the local John Deere factory. Vicki was a devoted homemaker who read voraciously both for practical household purposes and for enlightenment. Already devout Christians when they married, Randy and Vicki yearned for ever more pure forms of worship. Vicki's reading of the Bible and other Christian literature, including *The Late Great Planet Earth* (the biggest bestseller of the 1970s), inspired their growing conviction that they were living in the final years before the apocalypse.

As they began to have children, Randy and Vicki wanted to find an isolated tract of land where they could build a home and protect themselves from the holy violence that was to come. They learned how to preserve food and other survival skills so that they could live with complete independence. They also armed themselves, amassing a sizable arsenal of weapons and ammunition, and taught their children how to use them.

When they settled in Idaho in the 1980s, the Weavers found a population of many conservative and radical stripes, including fundamentalist and apocalyptic Christians such as themselves but also anti-government groups, such as the Posse Comitatus, and neo-Nazis. They began to attend retreats at the compound of the Aryan Nations, and their beliefs took on a white supremacist cast. The Aryan Nations preached an ideology known as Christian Identity, which holds that Anglo-Saxons are the true descendants of Adam and Eve, Jews are the spawn of Satan, and Blacks are a subhuman race.

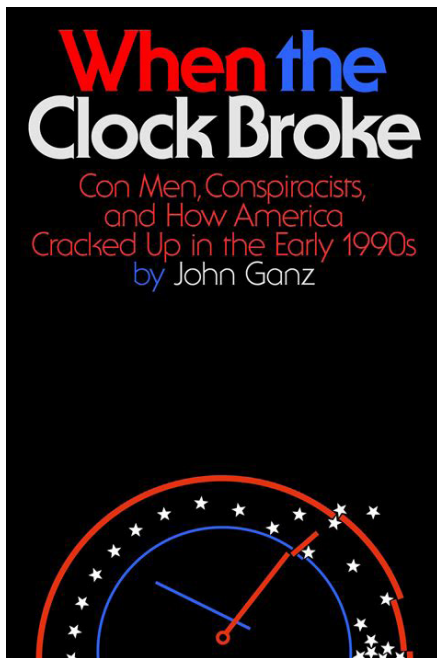
End of Days is especially good at clarifying how the Weavers' beliefs grew out of currents of fundamentalist Christian theology flowing through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth in Great Britain and the United States and then found expression in their own lives, including their community relationships, which unwittingly led to their undoing at Ruby Ridge. For it was their association with the Aryan Nations that brought Randy to the attention of the federal government. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF) had been surveilling the Aryan Nations and attempted to turn Randy into an informant when he sold two sawed-off shotguns to an undercover agent. But Randy refused to cooperate, and so he was hit with the gun charge that eventually led to the standoff.

A major contributing factor to the tragedy of Ruby Ridge was the utter lack of understanding between the two camps. Indeed, the government and the Weavers suspected the worst motivations in each other's actions. On the government's side, the ATF, the Federal Marshals, and the FBI believed the Weavers were dangerous fanatics plotting an anti-government conspiracy. In their view, Randy fit the profile of other violent anti-government extremists in then recent memory, such as Gordon Kahl and Robert Matthews, both of whom had met their deaths in shootouts with the FBI rather than face charges for tax evasion (Kahl) and murder (Matthews).

On the Weavers' side, Randy and Vicki interpreted every action taken by the government as the evil machinations of what they variously called the "New World Order" or the "Zionist Occupied Government," all assumed to be calculated to oppress Christians and part of an inexorable march to the end times. Randy did not help his case by telling a local newspaper that he would not be taken alive. Compounding Randy's defiant comments, Vicki sent letters to the U.S. Attorney in Idaho addressing the government as the "Queen of Babylon" and declaring that "blood will flow" and "whether we live or die, we will not bow to your evil commandments."



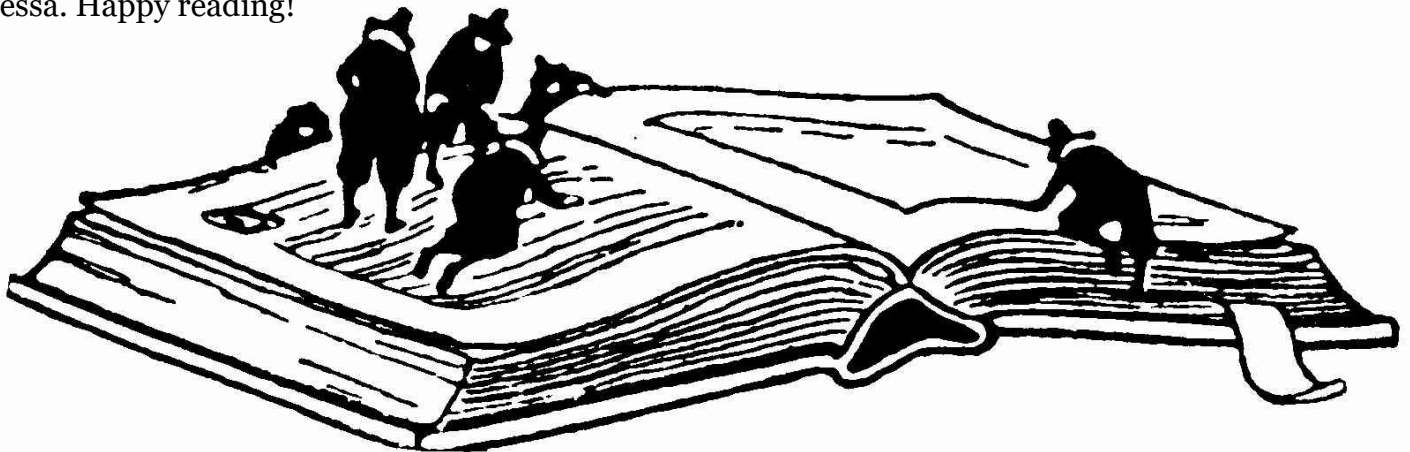
The subtitle of Jennings's book includes the ominous phrase "the unmaking of America." Just what that means is not entirely clear. But Jennings clearly suggests that the Weavers and other extremists like them in the 1980s and 1990s were early exemplars of a style of conspiratorial thinking that has now moved into the mainstream. And there is no doubt that Ruby Ridge galvanized radical reactions, including the rise of the militia movement and the terrorist violence of the Oklahoma City bombing—Timothy McVeigh called the bombing revenge for the government's actions at Ruby Ridge and at Waco.



I am currently reading a book I found referenced in *End of Days*: John Ganz's *When the Clock Broke: Con Men, Conspiracists, and How America Cracked Up in the Early 1990s* (2024). The idea that something disturbing and consequential was happening in 1990s America is clear from the subtitles of the two books. I'm not entirely convinced that the United States has "cracked up" or has been "unmade," but the books nonetheless do an admirable job of connecting the politics of this earlier time to the present. Whatever one may think or feel about what has been happening over the past ten years or so, these books make it clear that almost none of it is completely unprecedented or foreign to the American experience. Ruby Ridge is just one chapter in *When the Clock Broke*. Other chapters cover political and cultural figures and phenomena that all have clear resonances today: the local and near national political success of former Grand Master of the KKK, David Duke; right wing theorists such as Samuel Francis proudly self-identifying themselves as fascists and arguing that politics is merely a contest of power totally unconnected to any concept of the common good; the degradation of

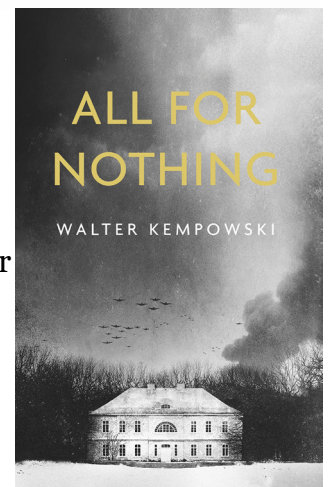
public discourse by radio hosts Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern; large percentages of Americans expressing sympathy for mafia boss John Gotti as he is convicted of a slew of crimes, including murder, and some even suggesting that he should run for political office; Rudy Giuliani cheering on a rowdy NYPD-led protest with racist overtones that verges on becoming a riot and then being elected mayor. The list, depressingly, goes on.

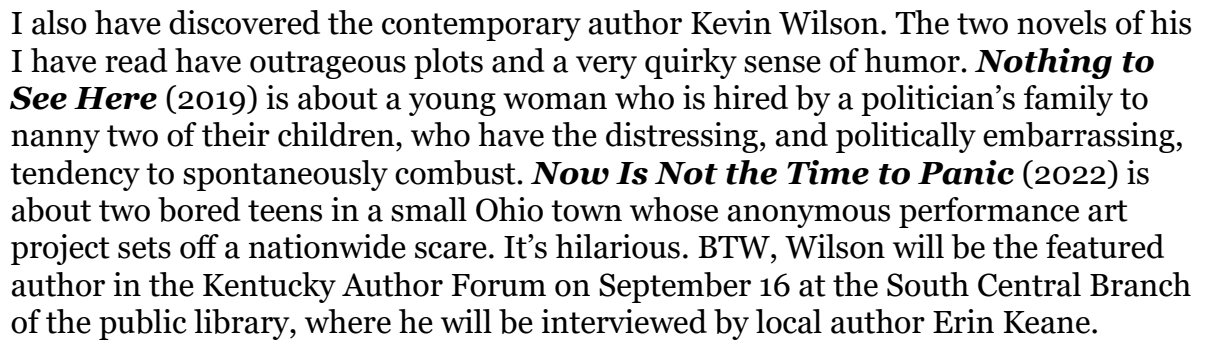
Many thanks to those who have contributed to this column and to my new editors, Kaelyn and Tessa. Happy reading!



Scott Campbell, Law Library

One of the best novels I have read in a long time is *All for Nothing* (2006) by the German author Walter Kempowski. Seemingly inspired by his own experiences as a youth during World War II, this novel is about a family estate that has remained mostly untouched by the war. But that starts to change in 1945 as Germany's fortunes decline and the Russians start advancing ever closer to the house. All manner of refugees start arriving and staying at the house. Meanwhile, how much longer can the family keep their boy out of the Hitler Youth? This book is a sympathetic look at what happens to ordinary Germans as their privileged lives crumble and they start to experience the misery their government and army inflicted on all of their neighboring countries.





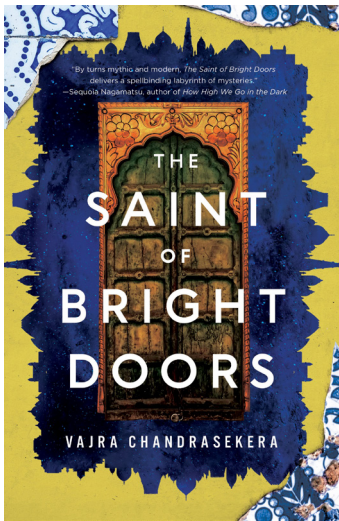
(translated by Idra Novey; 1964)

A detailed black and white illustration of a cockroach, shown from a top-down perspective. It has a segmented body, six legs, and two long antennae. The drawing is positioned to the right of the text 'to' in the first column.

[illegible]

A partial translation of a Japanese text that was intended to “expose” contemporary Zen practice as a farce. Ridiculously, it did nothing to diminish the reputation of Zen. This book contains koans, apparently nonsensical questions that are meant to trigger spiritual realizations via lateral thinking, and their answers, which, absent of understanding, come across as even more obtuse and irrelevant than the questions. Despite being partly removed from its cultural context (and Zen is loaded with millennia of context), much survives the translation process: slapstick abounds, and Chinese poetry is quoted with alacrity.

You could technically read this from start to finish, which might be a koan in itself, though I'm sure many Zen masters would like to smack me for even implying that (knock me back on my ass, see how I get up again!). Includes endnotes with commentary and contextualization by the translator. "The world may ultimately be 'nothing,' but if you say that a table is not a table, you are simply an idiot."

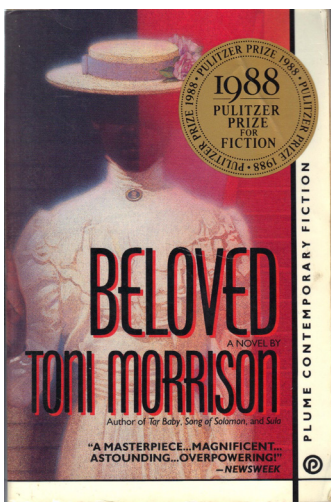
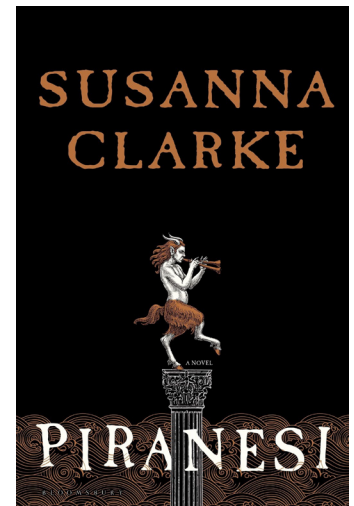


The Saint of Bright Doors by Vajra Chandrasekera (2023)

A fantasy novel of the weird/urban stripe set in an analogue for Sri Lanka and the very southern tip of the Indian subcontinent. The plot concerns a man brought up as an assassin in his mother's vengeful cult, groomed to assassinate his father and bring down his powerful cult. This is prime thriller material, but it slows down quite a bit after the first couple of chapters—not that it doesn't pick back up again. Mostly, though, the thrills of conspiracy are tempered by character exploration and time spent seeing just how weird this book can become. Magic here is matter-of-fact, except when it is completely incomprehensible. The text is deeply politically opinionated, with a preference for revolutionaries, but with no interest in pretending those people are somehow above it all. Contains a really groan-worthy pun about (demonic) possession being nine-tenths of the lore/law but I promise you that's about as overtly clever as it gets.

Piranesi by Susanna Clarke (2020)

This one is a reread, though my previous encounter was long enough ago and done in enough of a haze that it's like I'm reading it for the first time. I described this to my friends as the Backrooms for Jungians, which is reductive, since this book predates the rise of the Backrooms and the "analog horror" trend in mainstream media. Told from the point of view of an eccentric-sounding researcher exploring, or stranded in, a mysterious superstructure filled with statues and containing its own ecosystem, it takes the primary form of a diary. The book is light on plot—though trust me, there is a plot—and most of the worldbuilding and inciting events are either implied or portrayed in flashback. Where it excels is atmosphere and voice, and the page-by-page building of the narrator's innocent, anachronistic persona pays off with the reveal on which the story hinges.



BeLoved by Toni Morrison (1973)

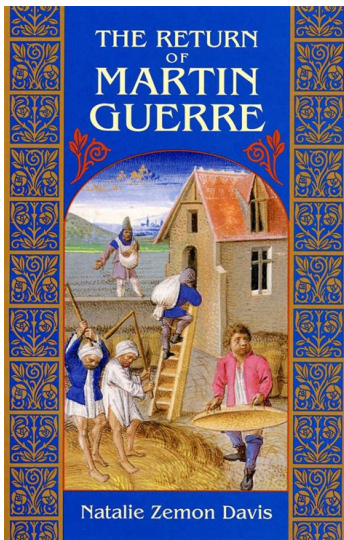
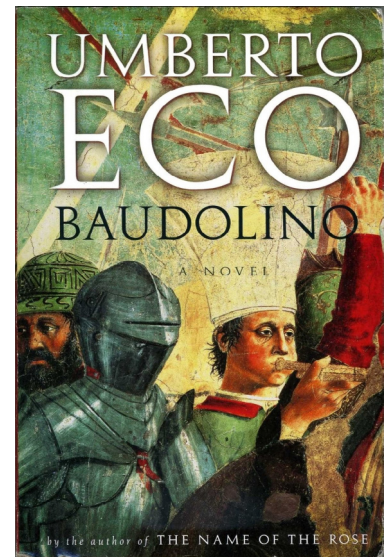
Another reread. I was taught this book in high school, and it has stuck with me in the decades afterward, like I imagine it must with most readers; despite this, it occurred to me that I had forgotten most of it. This time, I availed myself of the audiobook, read by Morrison to great effect. A summary: It is the 1870s. Sethe is an escaped slave living in Cincinnati. She works in a restaurant and lives in a house with her daughter, Denver, her two boys having run off and her mother-in-law having died. The house is haunted. A friend from her past appears and decides to stick around, and then a young woman appears on the stump outside the house. Things get stranger from there.

The content, naturally, is disturbing. At times the book resembles a horror novel, though this is a credit to the potential of horror novels (and, I think, a lamentation on the limits of mainstream literary fiction—put more ghosts in your stories, guys). Every sentence is a jewel and a discovery, and every choice shines with intention, including the shifts in perspective and the descents into nightmarish unreality. This is unquestionably a book about slavery, both as an institution and as a ghost that haunts us all, though some more powerfully than others. I really cannot say anything about this novel that has not already been said.

Matt Goldberg, Ekstrom Library

Baudolino by Umberto Eco (2000)

I've been meaning to read this book for many years, as Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* remains my favorite work of fiction. Just like that masterpiece, *Baudolino* is a fictional work set in medieval Europe, which again allows Eco to demonstrate his knowledge of medieval history, religion, semiotics, and language while taking readers on an incredible journey from northern Italy, to the sack of Constantinople in 1204, and even to the legendary kingdom of Prester John. In my opinion, it doesn't have quite the same depth and nuance as *The Name of the Rose*, but it has some excellent characters, seamlessly blends real history with fictional interpretation and was an excellent read. Additionally, for those who enjoy stories with unreliable narrators, it's an especially great example of that type, mixing actual historical episodes with characters who might have been there and could be telling the truth about their experiences.



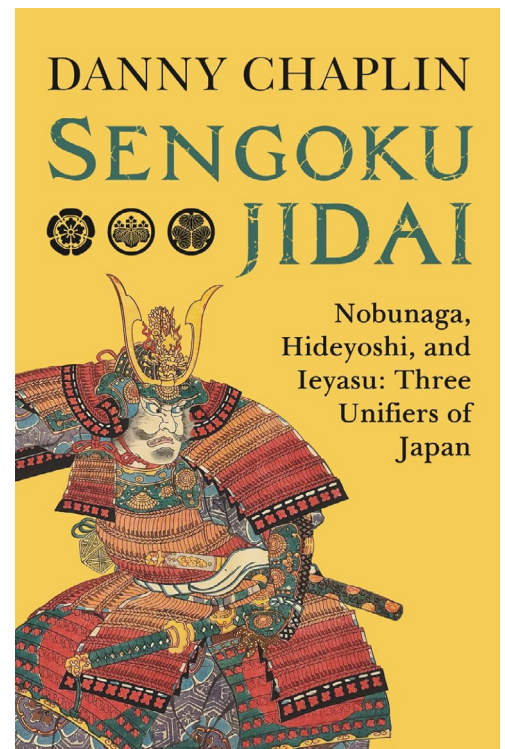
The Return of Martin Guerre by Natalie Zemon Davis (1984)

Another classic I've had on my list for quite some time, *The Return of Martin Guerre* examines a strange and interesting historical court case that occurred in southwestern France in the mid-sixteenth century. The case involved a woman whose husband (Martin) left their village without explanation one day and the man who returned eight years later claiming his place in the family and marriage bed. Part historical legal study, part examination of women's rights in medieval France, the book is a fascinating window into village life and feudal land tenure. Davis's microhistory remains highly acclaimed and well worth reading. The story was also turned into a critically praised film starring Gérard Depardieu and Nathalie Baye in 1983.



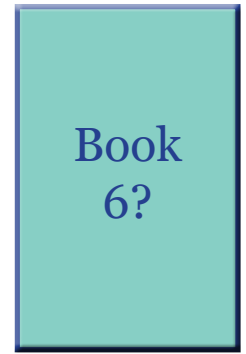
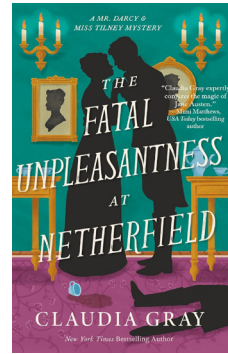
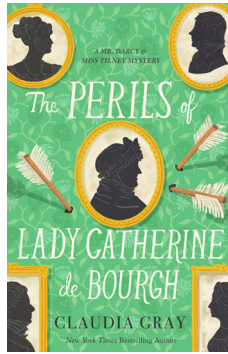
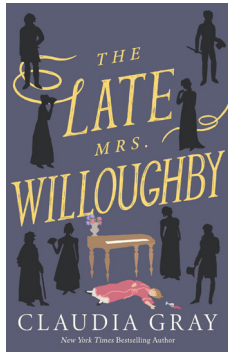
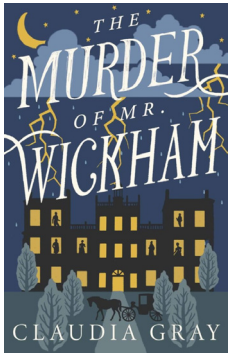
Sengoku Jidai. Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu: Three Unifiers of Japan by Danny Chaplin (2018)

I tend to read European history, so this work, on the Japanese Warring States Period (fifteenth to seventeenth centuries), was a great departure from my usual area. Examining the three military and political leaders in the title, Chaplin does an outstanding job tracing the collapse of the Japanese state in the late fifteenth century, the rise of feudal daimyos (warlords), and the career of each unifier whose work would eventually end the period of anarchy and chaos. In addition to this outstanding historical narrative were several fascinating chapters woven into the work discussing the Japanese medieval social system, the introduction of Christianity into the country, technological and cultural transfers from abroad, and why the end of the Sengoku Period ushered in a "closing" of the country in 1614 that would last until Matthew Perry steamed into Edo Bay in 1854.



Kaelyn Harris, Ekstrom Library

Mr. Darcy & Miss Tilney Mysteries by Claudia Gray (2022 - 2026)



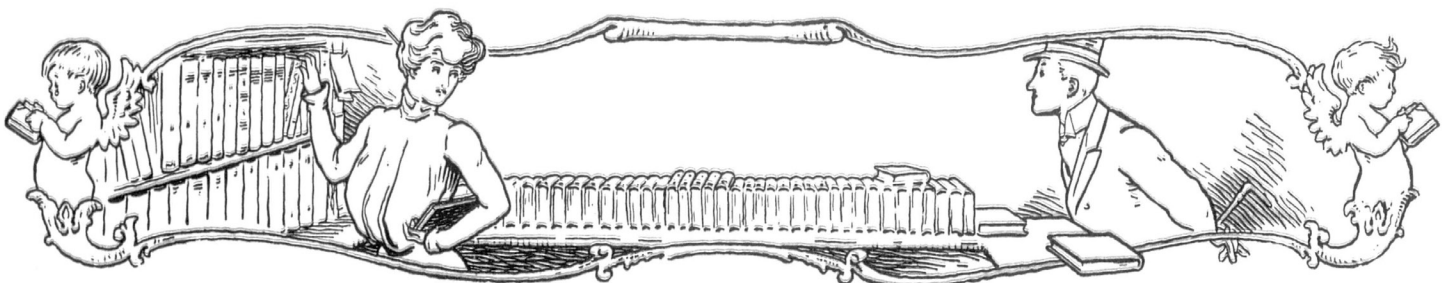
If you are a Jane Austen fan, then you need this book series on your to-be-read list ASAP. Beginning with ***The Murder of Mr. Wickham***, Mr. Jonathan Darcy (eldest son of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet) and Miss Juliet Tilney (eldest daughter of Henry Tilney and Catherine Moreland) take it upon themselves to solve a most gruesome murder at the world's most awkward summer house party hosted by Emma and Mr. Knightley. Through a series of coincidences and scheduling mishaps, all the major couples of Austen's novels have arrived at Donwell Abbey, including the horrendous Mr. Wickham, who has unsavory ties to all of them. It is no wonder that he is found dead in the portrait gallery.

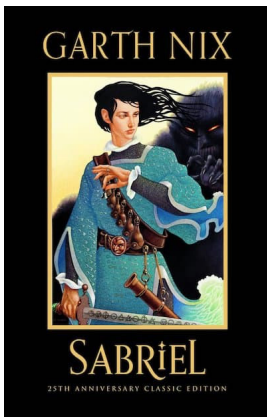
As satisfying as it is to see Mr. Wickham get his comeuppance, it's even more satisfying to sink into an Agatha Christie-worthy mystery. Gray's prose evokes the sense of reading Jane Austen without actually reading Austen herself. The series continues with ***The Late Mrs. Willoughby***, ***The Perils of Lady Catherine de Bourgh***, ***The Rushworth Family Plot***, and ***The Fatal Unpleasantness at Netherfield***. One can't help but cheer on Claudia Gray as she summarily kills off the villains of Austen's novels in a most satisfying manner, or root for Jonathan and Juliet to overcome their own families' pride and prejudice to get their happily-ever-after amidst murder, scandal, and social ruin. There's some speculation there might be a sixth book on the way to truly wrap up the series and having finished the fifth book, I really hope so! By my count, there are a few more Austen villains left alive...



This Story Might Save Your Life by Tiffany Crum (2026)

For me, no summer reading list is complete without a good thriller and this book delivered. This one is eerily modern, which enhances the creep factor, as it is set post-2020. The main characters are a podcasting duo, Benny and Joy, whose show goes over the wildest survival stories the Internet can provide. The book alternates between excerpts from Joy's memoir draft and Benny's present-day point of view as he attempts to solve Joy's terrifying disappearance/possible murder. The twists are twisty, the characters compelling, and the villains appropriately evil without being cliché. 10/10, highly recommend.



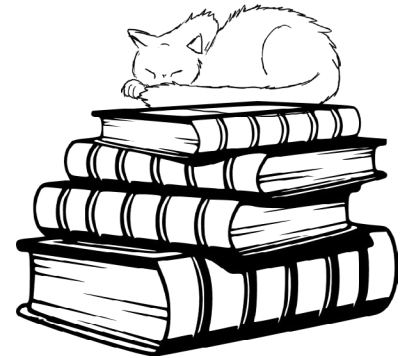


***Sabriel* by Garth Nix (1995)**

Lots of childhood books don't hold up, but *Sabriel* is still strong 31 years after publication. It brought back feelings of reading Ursula LeGuin, Diana Wynne Jones, Diane Duane, and David Eddings on hot summer afternoons, curled up in a squashy armchair and taking my own form of summer vacation. It is the first in a trilogy set in the Old Kingdom and Ancelstierre, an alternate pre-WWI England. *Sabriel* unexpectedly becomes the Abhorsen (a necromancer in service to the Old Kingdom who guards it against hordes of the dead), which begins her quest to discover not only what happened to her father, the previous Abhorsen, but also to determine the latest threat to the Old Kingdom and its inhabitants.

The worldbuilding and magic system are what drew me in the most. The Abhorsen uses a bandolier of bells to affect whoever or whatever is in hearing range, sometimes with dangerous consequences for the wielder. The larger world's magic rests in a magical contract of sorts called the Great Charter, woven by a variety of magical beings at the beginning of time. It's the kind of magic system you want to linger in and discover all the secrets it holds.

And did I mention there's a snarky magical cat?



Courtney Shareef, Ekstrom Library

I didn't realize until right before submitting these that both of my recommendations have to do with women's health and reproductive rights in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

***These Heathens* by Mia McKenzie (2025)**

"One thing needs clearing up right off: Reverend King was not the father. That was a rumor, started by crazy people and repeated by heathens."

So begins this hilarious but sharp historical fiction novel about a country teenager living in 1960s Georgia who spends a weekend in big city Atlanta, hoping to get an abortion. This book was not on my list of things to read. Someone posted on social media a page from the middle of the story, a scene with Doris, the protagonist, and Coretta Scott King. I hadn't heard of the book before then, or the author, but suddenly had to check it out.

In summary, Doris stays the weekend with a friend of a friend and gets the opportunity to see many of Atlanta's leaders and legends up close and personal in intimate spaces like restrooms, living rooms, and late-night cookouts. What she glimpses makes her wonder if everyone is a heathen—uncivilized, uncultured, unbelieving in some way. But when she looks closer, she questions what makes a heathen or a legend.



I recommend this book for anyone who loves historical fiction, female friendships, Black womanism, and/or stories that humanize people of mythic proportions. It's also a great read for anyone trying to decide what they owe themselves and what they owe others (family, friends, previous, and future generations).

The Birth of the Pill: How Four Crusaders Reinvented Sex and Launched a Revolution by Jonathan Eig (2014)

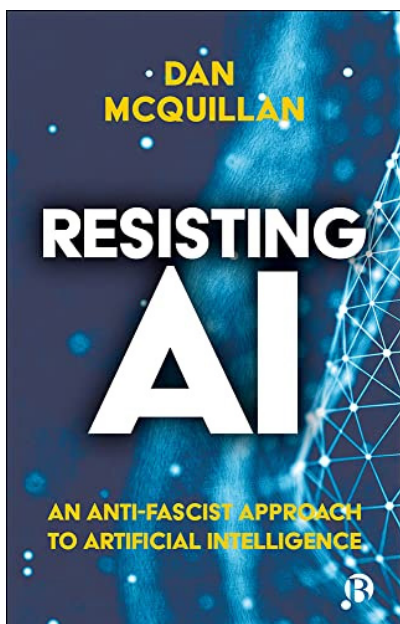
When I think of having a “favorite author,” I often think of fiction authors first, followed by poets and essayists. Until I discovered Jonathan Eig, I don’t think I’ve ever considered a biographer among my favorites. Although I’m only 70% of the way through this book, I’ll round up and say I’ve read three of Eig’s biographies (beginning with the 2024 Pulitzer Prize-winning *King: A Life*). And at this point, he’s a favorite.

In *The Birth of the Pill*, Eig weaves four biographies into one: women’s rights leader Margaret Sanger (with whom I was familiar), along with philanthropist Katharine McCormick, scientist/academic researcher Gregory Pincus, and OB-GYN/fertility researcher Dr. John Rock (all of whom I knew nothing about). I’d also add a fifth biography to this mix, the history of birth control, which predates these individuals and expands beyond the pill.

The story of how we came to better understand women’s reproductive health is complicated and controversial. Pincus’s first national scientific achievement came in the 1930s with the in-vitro fertilization of rabbits. The breakthrough was ahead of its time and poorly received. The bad press associated with the research is rumored to be the reason why Harvard denied Pincus tenure and let him go. But it’s also what first put him on Sanger’s radar. Eventually, Pincus connects with Sanger, McCormick, and Rock. And twenty years later, the science of fertility was in vogue—but with a catch. In the 1950s, *contraception* was illegal in some states, like Massachusetts. But it was legal to treat married couples seeking to conceive. With support from Sanger and McCormick, and some research reframing for the public’s sake, Pincus and Rock (*these heathens!*) experimented with the hormones they suspected impacted both.

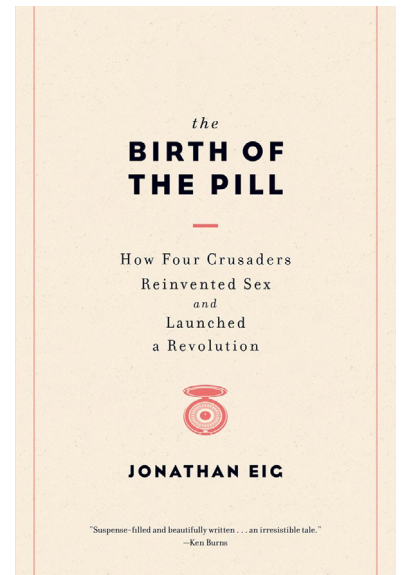
I recommend this book for anyone who likes a good narrative biography, is interested in the history of women’s health or medical research, wants to gawk at how far we’ve come (and, in some cases, reverted), or is curious about lived experiences within the scientific research process.

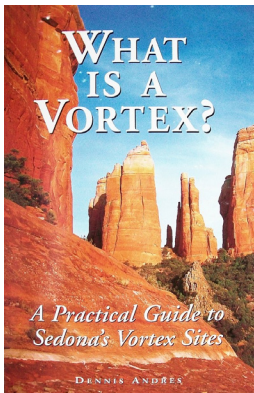
Tessa Withorn, Ekstrom Library



Resisting AI: An Anti-Fascist Approach to Artificial Intelligence by Dan McQuillan (2022)

I read only a handful of non-fiction books every year, but this one was particularly impactful. Writing around the time of ChatGPT spurring the onset of widespread Generative AI use, McQuillan traces the origins of AI to statistics and therefore eugenics, calling attention to the inherent bias of algorithms. Drawing on feminist and science and technology studies, McQuillan unveils many of the issues with AI and how it is used to foster fascist solutions to social problems. I particularly appreciated his concluding call to form workers’ councils to dismantle the use of AI as techno solutionism.





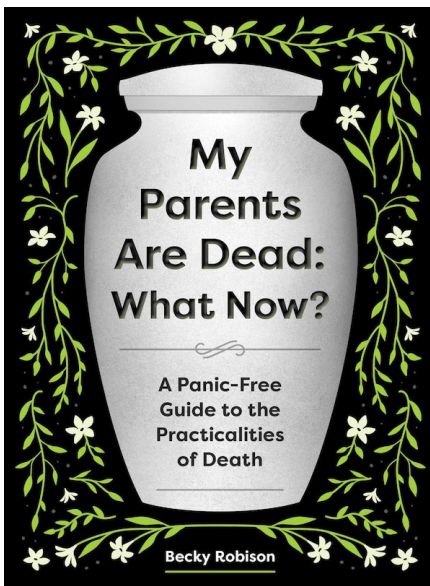
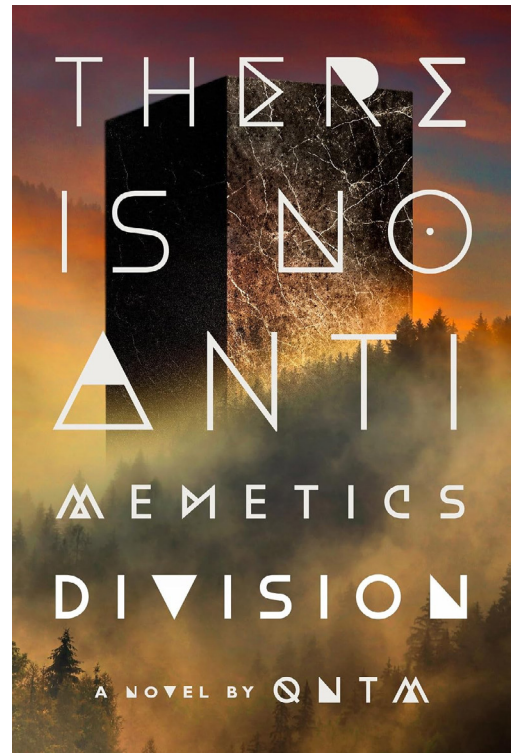
What Is a Vortex? A Practical Guide to Sedona's Vortex Sites by Dennis Andres (2022)

I had to mention this short booklet about the beautiful and mysterious energy vortexes in Sedona, Arizona. I was fortunate to go on a trip with Alex Howard in February for her birthday, and this book was on the bedside in my guest room at her aunt and uncle's house where we stayed. It sufficiently hyped us up for our visit to the vortexes, which Andres describes as places where many people feel a noticeable shift in energy, but it can also permeant the landscape. I found that the clarifying smell of cypress and juniper trees transported me to a different plane of existence.

Martina Junod, Kornhauser Library

There is No Antimemetics Division by qntm (2020)

This novel was handed to me by a wonderful saleswoman at Carmichael's bookstore. I had told her how I missed the strange psychological setting that the Apple TV show *Severance* had immersed me in once I finished all the seasons. *Severance* plays with the idea of splitting the self and thereby splitting one's own consciousness and memories. Similarly, qntm's novel will keep you guessing as the premise is that every character could be having their memories altered or wiped by anomalies, AKA "Unknowns," pretty much every day at work. Shoutout to my favorite Unknown, nicknamed Sunshine. As you read, you may find yourself feeling maternal over supernatural entities beyond human comprehension. Wikipedia calls this work a "science fiction-horror," and I would agree. It actually began as a web series about ten years ago. If you are someone who likes to get deep into the lore of novels, this one comes with an online community (<https://scp-wiki.wikidot.com/>) that has been stewing up more short stories and theories based on qntm's memory-altering characters and concepts. I can't explain too much of the plot because I want you to see it for yourself; but also, I think a sneaky Unknown wiped some of my memories of it already. Here is my favorite quote of the novel: "But an idea can end a world. An idea is alive. It can mutate, it can replicate, it can predate on other ideas ... and it can hide."



Ansley Stuart, Kornhauser Library

My Parents Are Dead: What Now? A Panic-Free Guide to the Practicalities of Death by Becky Robison (2026)

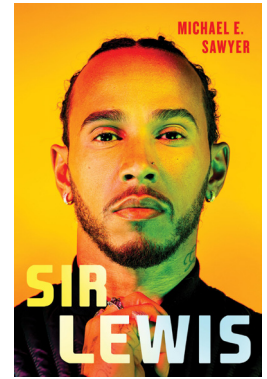
Death comes for us all. Highly recommend! A thorough and humorous guide about the practicalities of death-related responsibilities written by a local Louisville author.



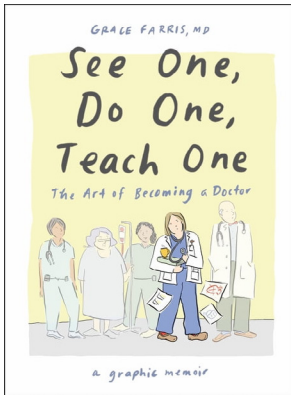
Victoria Trezona, Kornhauser Library

Sir Lewis by Michael E. Sawyer (2025)

This is a biography of Lewis Hamilton, who has become the winningest F1 driver in history all while using his platform for advocacy beyond the racetrack. Historian Michael E. Sawyer discusses the ascent of his career in riveting detail, from his initial karting career, to winning multiple F1 world championships. I would recommend this book not only to F1 fans but also anyone interested in social justice history and success in extremely technical sports.



See One, Do One, Teach One: The Art of Becoming a Doctor: A Graphic Memoir by Grace Farris (2026)



This is a great book for learning more about the experience of going through medical school, choosing a specialty, and becoming a doctor. Dr. Farris chronicles issues of work-family balance and discrimination in healthcare. She writes in rich, accessible language that humanizes both patients and medical professionals. The minimalist style of the cartoon almost served as a foil to the profundity of her interactions with patients. While this is a cartoon, there are graphic depictions of surgery.

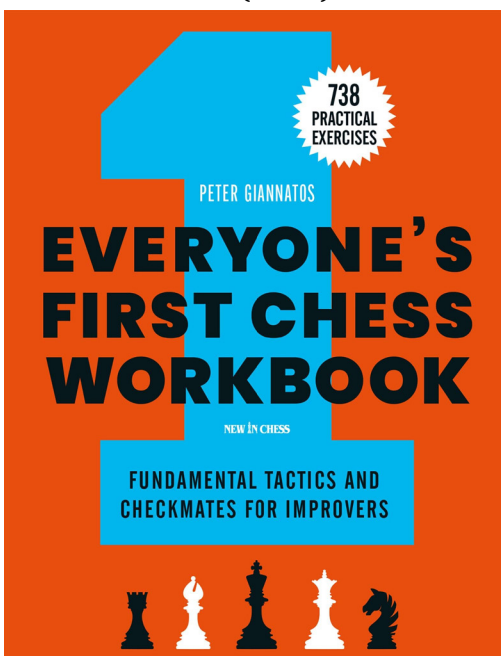


Why Fascism Is on the Rise in France: From Macron to Le Pen by Ugo Palheta (2025)

If you have an idealistic view of France, this is not the book for you (watch *Ratatouille* instead). Palheta writes a concise, comprehensive history of the rise of the far right in France following World War II and about the future of French politics. This is an informative book about the current political landscape of France and how Macron's policies have shaped the popularization of right-wing ideology. This book is saturated with anticipatory grief as France approaches its 2027 election.

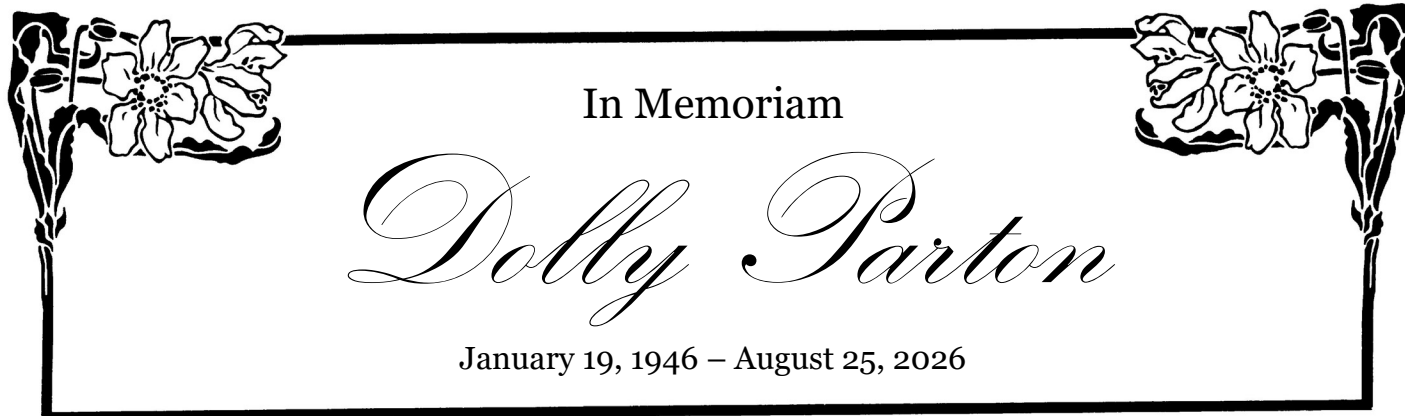


Everyone's First Chess Book: Fundamental Tactics and Checkmates for Improvers by Peter Giannatos (2021)



Ok, this is not my first chess book, and there is still so much I do not understand. This is a great chess workbook for beginners, or anyone who is interested in improving tactical thinking. It is fun to consider the strategic reasoning behind each move in such an unpredictable game. This book deemphasizes rote memorization of openings and endgames, focusing instead on pattern recognition and spatial orientation. If you often make the same mistakes in chess, like me, this is a great place to start.





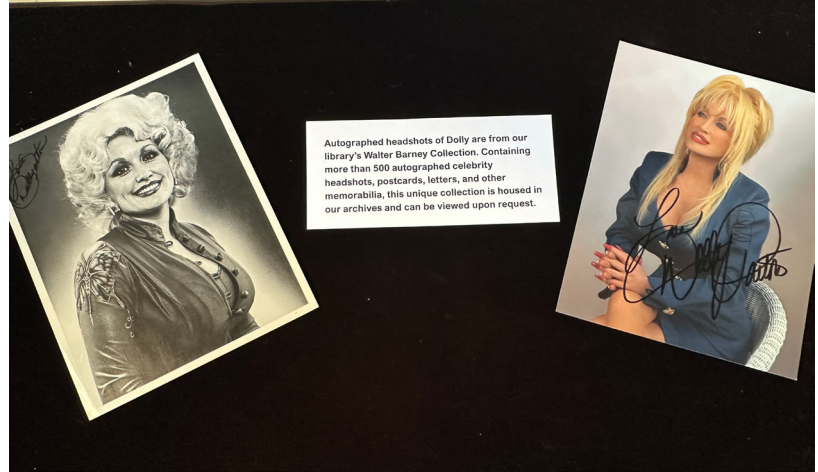
Moss, B. [Photographer]. (May 5, 1977). "Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton at the Phillip Morris Calvacade of Stars at Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center." Barry Bingham Jr. Courier-Journal Photograph Collection, Archives & Special Collections, University of Louisville. Louisville, KY.

Archives & Special Collections - Chad Kamen

To librarians and archivists across Kentucky, Dolly Parton has long been a friend and an inspiration. As a storyteller, Dolly wove complex and caring tales of our region's people and history through song. As a lover of learning herself, Dolly worked tirelessly to ensure the access to read to children across all 120 counties of the Commonwealth. In many ways, both personal and collective, she has helped us to find meaning and value in our words and how we choose to share them.

In grief and in celebration of her life, we share these never-before-seen photos taken by Bryan Moss during her 1977 concert with Kenny Rogers at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center. These images, along with many others, are part of the Barry Bingham Jr. Courier-Journal Photograph Collection in Archives & Special Collections. When fully processed, it will provide researchers unprecedented access to Louisville history and the folks, like Dolly, who have lit up our stages and hearts.

Continued on next page →



Left: A display of CDs and books arranged in remembrance of Dolly Parton at the Music Library.

Dolly Parton

WHAT'S NEW IN THE LIBRARIES?

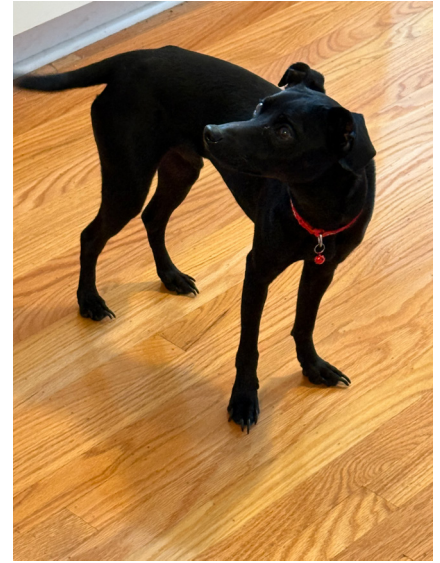
Archives & Special Collections

Carrie's New Dogs

Carrie Daniels welcomed two new dogs into her home in May: Walter and Lu! They are both about two years old. Lu's DNA has been tested, and she is mostly Chihuahua, with some miniature pinscher and a few other things thrown in. Walter has so far declined to be tested. He prefers to remain somewhat mysterious. They are both 100% adorable, anyway.

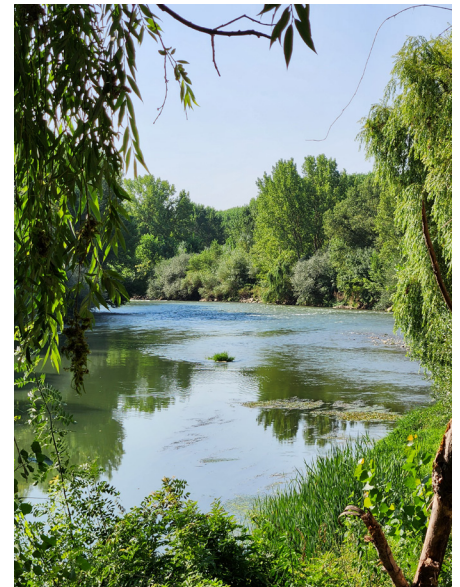
Left: Lu, mostly Chihuahua, stares soulfully into the camera.

Right: Walter stares off-camera, ears at attention.



ASC Jets Around the World

Kevin Bailey managed to squeak in a 10-day excursion with family to Spain just before the start of the semester. The trip was split between three locales: the medieval city of Salamanca with its sandstone cathedrals and university buildings, the wine-making town of Haro in the north of the Rioja region, and the bustling metropolis of Madrid. Highlights of the trip included ascending the Old and New Cathedrals of Salamanca, hiking along the Ebro river, witnessing a total eclipse at the edge of a sunflower field, and visiting Madrid's "Golden Triangle of Art" of the Prado, Reina Sofia and Thyssen art museums.



Top left: Kevin Bailey at the Archivo Provincial Biblioteca in Palacio de la Salina.

Top right: The Tiron feeds into the Ebro.

Bottom left: Eclipse over a field in Haro.

Bottom right: A lakeside view of a Salamanca cathedral.





Emma Beck had a wide range of adventures and family time this summer. The highlight, though, was in June when she spent a long weekend on an island national wildlife refuge off the coast of Georgia. The island is an animal's paradise. She saw alligators, dolphins, birds, snakes, sharks, and even loggerhead sea turtles digging their nests! (Images were taken under red lights with permits). It wasn't all paradise for humans though; the mosquitoes were out in full force, and the house didn't have AC ,which was very noticeable in June in Georgia.

Above left: Emma Beck strolls a sandy path towards the sunset.

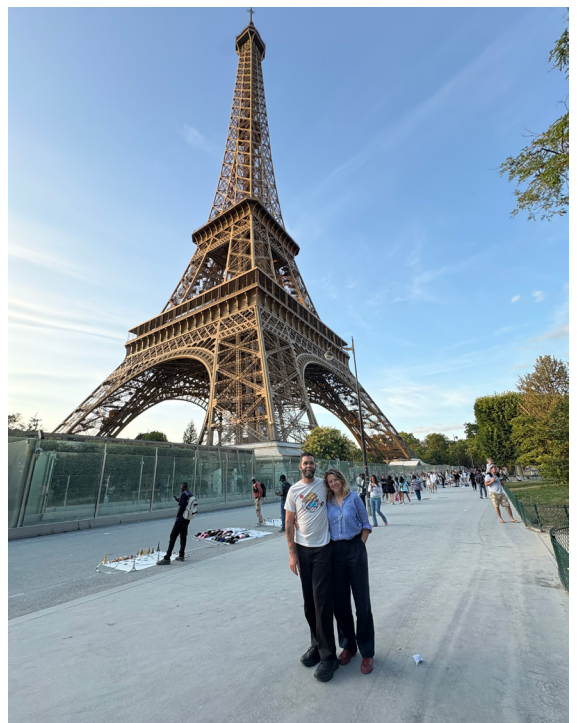
Above right: Emma and her family members kneel beside a loggerhead sea turtle in the sand.

Right: Trees laden with Spanish moss line a dirt path through a national wildlife refuge.



Heather Fox traveled with her husband to France and Scotland for the last two weeks of July. She spent six days in Paris working on a non-work-related research trip, then traveled four hours southwest to the village of Epenede to visit one of her oldest friends who moved there in 2024. Miraculously, the heatwave broke for the duration of their visit, but they did not escape the impact of wildfires and had to travel back to Paris to fly to Glasgow.

In Glasgow they visited with some Louisville friends who are getting their master's degrees in digital preservation. From Glasgow, they took a 3-hour bus ride, a 45-minute ferry ride, an hour-and-a-half bus ride and then a 6-minute ferry ride to the [Isle of Iona](#) off the coast of Mull in the Inner Hebrides, also known as HEAVEN ON EARTH. (Heather was inspired to visit the Hebrides after watching the film "I Know Where I'm Going" by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, available on Criterion or the [Internet Archive](#)). From Iona they took a 35-minute ferry ride to the Isle of Staffa where they saw [Fingal's cave](#) and encountered PUFFINS! They can't wait to go back.



Heather Fox and husband pose in front of the Eiffel Tower.



A view of an isle with craggy rocks and rolling hills.



Colorful fishing boats dot a teal body of water.



A stone cottage sits peacefully by the water.

Cassidy Meurer traveled to three different destinations across the country during the final weeks of summer: Chicago, New Orleans, and Cumberland Falls in Kentucky. She spent a lot of time in varying bodies of water with friends, enjoying art at museums and galleries wherever possible, and finding some much-needed respite in nature. High points included the steak and potato dinner at Port of Call in the French Quarter and spotting a wild bald eagle on the Cumberland River.



Left: A view of Cumberland Falls through foliage.

Center: The moon over New Orleans.

Top: Sunset through a screen.



Access and User Services

An Unexpected Guest



Research Assistance and Instruction

A Visit to the Fly-brary

In July of this year, Tessa Withorn traveled to her alma mater of IU Bloomington for the Great Lakes Science Bootcamp. This conference could be described as a professional sleepaway camp where STEM librarians stay in dorms on campus, attend lectures, and tour facilities. Talks by local scientists are always engaging, with topics such as how gold and silver came from the stars, how composers use ocean pollution as data points in their opus, and where the origins of sanitation (and poop) intersect with public health.

However, the highlight of the trip was a tour of the *Drosophila* Stock Center, one of three facilities in the world to supply fruit flies and their variants to scientists. The director of the center showed the group shelves of over 100,000 flies stored in glass vials with corn meal food at the bottom, and yes, most of them were live and a few had escaped their confines to circle the room.

Notably, one variant they have is referred to as “[white 1](#)” or the same kind of fruit fly that Thomas Hunt Morgan used to discover the role of chromosomes in heredity, winning him the 1933 Noble Prize.

New OER on Critical Information Literacy from UofL Librarians

This summer, Tessa Withorn and Amber Willenborg wrote and published an Open Educational Resource (OER), or free online textbook, called [Critical AI Literacy for College Students](#). While AI literacy typically teaches students how to effectively use AI with ethics in mind, critical AI literacy does not necessarily mean criticizing AI or thinking AI is bad (though there are certainly harmful consequences), but rather asks who benefits, who is harmed, and what might happen as a result of widespread AI use. Several professors have already expressed interest in using the textbook and associated lesson plans in their classes, and the book may reach a broader audience of librarians and professors at other institutions.



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