



FRADL Newsletter – May 2026

Friends of Roscommon Area District Library
“A strong library for a stronger community”

2026 Officers:

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Jim Engelhard
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Sue Glover
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Bobbie Werle
Trustee & Member at Large:
Beverly Emery

Next Meeting: June 9,
2026, 1:00
Pre-meeting social half
hour w/ snacks at 12:30 PM

Have you paid your dues yet?

It is only \$5.00 per year, or \$100.00 for a lifetime membership.
(Lifetime is only about 27¢ per day)

97 Paid Members, 16 Life Members

Thank You for your Continued Support!

Library will be closed May 23 in remembrance of Memorial Day



President's Message

With our local schools winding down for the summer and warm weather creeping in, we look forward to a variety of fun and interesting Library activities. The summer reading program and author visits are always well attended and are well supported by FRADL.

In addition to the library's summer programs, Friends will have a table at the Roscommon Art Festival the Saturday after the fourth of July and our volunteers will continue accepting books for our big "used book" sale in October.

FRADL is continuing to increase our membership and find new ways to contribute to our library and community. Our monthly membership meetings, held the second Tuesday of every month at the Roscommon Library, continue to grow. Attending these meetings, which are open to all members, provides FRADL with an opportunity to enjoy camaraderie and share ideas to help make our great library even better.

Here's hoping all members have a safe and happy summer.

See you soon,

Jim Engelhard

Good News Stories:

[The Lost Joy of Receiving Real Letters](#)

[Meet the French Literary Club Breaking Stereotypes](#)

[This 105-Year-Old Woman Just Renewed Her Library Card](#)

[This Book Club Meets in Pubs and Turns Reading Into Real Camaraderie Among Men](#)

Membership Meetings:

Second Tuesday: 1:00, all year long
Pre-meeting social half hour with snacks at 12:30 PM

Leadership Meetings:

Last Tuesday of the Month: 1:30

Reader's Corner: by Joe Battocletti

You could probably spend the rest of your reading life with only books about America's greatest national cataclysm: the Civil War that broke out in Year 85 of our independence.

Two recent volumes bookend the War Between the States. Erik Larson's [Demon of Unrest](#) covers the months leading up to the attack on Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston Harbor which triggered the 4 years of carnage that followed. It matches Larsen's other historical works for exacting scholarship wrapped around exciting novelistic narrative. We meet the Virginia secessionist fire-eater who has the "honor" of firing the war's very first shot. So much subsequently happened that the stunning effect of the Fort Sumter attack was overshadowed. Larsen shows us that it resembled how Americans reacted to Pearl Harbor or the 911 terrorism. And he relays the Southern predictions that the war would end quickly with barely "a thimbleful of blood" shed.

At the other end of the war's chronology is [Midnight on the Potomac](#) by Scott Ellsworth. Like Larsen, he digs up diaries, letters, and other long-forgotten sources to paint a riveting portrait of the war's last year and the Lincoln assassination. Ellsworth challenges the conventional wisdom that John Wilkes Booth was a deranged B-list ham actor obsessed with killing the president. Ellsworth shows that Booth was a bigger star than history gives him credit for, and more significantly, why Ellsworth believes that the Confederate secret service used Booth to carry out a well-planned murder mission, and then painted Booth as a lone wolf in order to cover up the scope of the conspiracy. [Midnight on the Potomac](#) wraps its history into a fast-paced adventure story. The power of both books is that, while we know how each story turned out, we still feel suspense as the narratives unfold.

Add a book I've talked about before...John Strausbaugh's [City of Sedition](#), and you have an academic semester's worth of erudition about the Civil War wrapped into several hours' worth of entertaining reading.

I found the storyline of [Demon of Unrest](#) reflected in a fun-read mystery by John Dunning titled [The Bookman's Promise](#). It's one of Dunning's Cliff Janeway mysteries. Dunning's book is strictly fiction, as Janeway...former cop turned rare book dealer...chases an elusive diary that might fill a historical gap in the Ft Sumter attack story. All the Janeway novels overflow with the life of a bookseller specializing in first editions and high-value printed rarities, which is what Dunning does when he's not writing. His opinions of other authors are often pungent, and he relays a lot of useful info if you're ever tempted to invest in rare books.

Dunning also wrote an excellent historical thriller about enemy espionage in New Jersey during World War II titled [Two O'Clock Eastern Wartime](#). Along with an exciting plot, it showcases Dunning's other expertise: old-time "Golden Age" American radio.

One of the people who helped push the USA into Civil War was erstwhile Vice-President John Calhoun. Calhoun was one of the loudest defenders of slavery, and Robert Elder's [Calhoun: American Heretic](#) explains this leading force behind Southern secession without defending him. But Elder does remind us that America still lacks a mechanism to effectively reconcile the viewpoint of a large minority of citizens with the majority policies they detest.

One man who did not fight in the Civil War was President Grover Cleveland. He hired a substitute to go to battle in his place while Cleveland pursued the political career that took him from Mayor of Buffalo, NY to the White House in just 3 and a half years. He was also the first President to win 2 non-consecutive terms in office, and his picture graced the old \$1,000 bill. Cleveland's story is very well told in [An Honest President](#) by H. Paul Jeffers. What jumped out at me was Cleveland's relationship with the press. His frequent tirades about dishonest reporters creating fake news could come from today, showing again how little about America's national life is truly new.

You could devote at least a year or two reading only books about Theodore Roosevelt but if you don't have that much time, pick up [Theodore Rex](#) by Edmund Morris. It's the middle book of Morris's trilogy of volumes about the 26th President's life. "Teddy" (he hated that nickname) Roosevelt is an essential figure in understanding America's 20th Century. Reflecting how history tends to resonate, Morris quotes the message sent back to Paris by the French Ambassador following a getting to know you session with the new U.S. leader: "I fear that the American President is insane." I find myself cracking open a new Theodore Roosevelt book about every 6 months.

Sports fans will love [The Big Scrum: How Teddy Roosevelt Saved Football](#) by John J. Miller. Alarmed by the rising death toll of players during games 120 years ago, Roosevelt summoned the sport's rules makers to the White House in 1906 and ordered them to legalize the forward pass to reduce the catastrophic injuries and deaths caused by mass line smashes and pile-ups. Otherwise, the President threatened to ban football entirely. Constitutionally, he couldn't do that of course. But no one wanted to challenge Roosevelt in the court of American public opinion, so teams began to throw the pigskin instead of only running it.

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Treat yourself, if you already haven't, by immersing yourself in Kevin Starr's fabulous 8 "California Dream" histories. Starting with Americans and the California Dream Starr tells our national story through the prism of how it has played out in our most populous state. Inventing the Dream, Material Dreams, Endangered Dreams, The Dream Endures, Embattled Dreams, Golden Dreams, and Coast of Dreams cover the decades from the start of California settlement to the early 21st Century. They are engagingly written and filled with facts and information that are a joy to encounter.

Find something in today's "Book Reporting" that you disagree with, or that you want to applaud and amplify? Please write an article and send it to newsletter editor Wilma Barber at wilmabarber55@gmail.com. A great book recommendation lasts for the lifetime of the reader you inspired.

And keep in mind that you needn't stretch your budget for any of these volumes. They're all available through library interloan..."MelCat" by name. If you aren't using it, your helpful RADL librarian will show you how. You'll read more and spend much less.

The Friends of the Roscommon Area District Library

Accepting Book Donations!

Hardcovers,
paperbacks,
audio books,
DVDs



Please, no
text books, magazines,
encyclopedias, LPs,
Time-Life Sets, VHS
tapes, musty or
damaged items.

The Friends will be taking donations at RADL:

- Fridays and Saturdays in May and June
- Fridays, 2 pm - 4 pm
- Saturdays, 10 am - 12 pm [Ⓜ](No collection 5/23 - RADL closed)

Please bring only 1-2 bags or boxes per visit
More details:

Pick up a donation guidelines flyer at circulation desk
or contact The Friends at friendsofradl@gmail.com.

Candle Painting



Derby Day!



Friends of the RADL Mission:

To promote the development of excellent library services for all patrons through fundraising, advocacy and volunteerism.

Membership Year: September 1 to August 31

Dues: \$5.00 per member, per year
\$100.00 Lifetime dues

Make check out to:
Friends of RADL
PO 311
Roscommon, MI 48653
Or deliver to RADL desk

Contact Us!

friendsofradl@gmail.com

Like us on Facebook

Library website:

<http://www.roscommonlibrary.org>

Roscommon Area District Library

106 Lake Street
P.O. Box 888
Roscommon, MI 48653
989-281-1305

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 10:00-7:00

Friday: 10:00-5:00

Saturday: 10:00-3:00

Lyon Township Branch Library

7851 West Higgins Lake Dr.
Higgins Lake, MI 48627
989-821-9111

Tuesday through Friday: 10:00—3:00
(times are subject to change)

Notes from May 12 meeting:

Art in the Park: July 11th, need volunteers to work the table.

Used book donations: need volunteers to take in books at library, Fridays & Saturdays in May and June.

Contact Sue Glover if you can help with either.

Discussion was held on whether to purchase book bags. Do we want to sell them or give them away. The cost has gone up considerably since the last purchase. Beth Myers and Allison will work with Cora to design a logo, and decide a good color, and they will check a few other places. More information at next month's meeting.

Attendees for our events:

Wool Felting with Brenda: 13 attendees

Author Ron Rademacher: 18

SOS Mobile Office: 15

Adult candle wax painting: 15

Mystery Book Club: 10

Bingo for Books: 32

Used Book Sale News:

On May 12, intrepid book wranglers invested 90 minutes in the depths of RADL sorting and organizing boxes of donated books. What an amazing crew! Applause goes to Judy Voorhees, Anne Chase, Kathy Lawrence, Beth Myers, Lisa Sutton, Linda Brick, Jim Englehard and Chuck Brick.

We are off to a great beginning. Please help spread the word that we are accepting used books for an October sale.

And if you have books to donate, please bring them to RADL on Fridays, 2 - 4 pm or Saturdays, 10am - 12pm. (Note: RADL is closed on 5/23.) We certainly won't turn them down if you bring them to a Friends' meeting!

Check out new arrivals at RADL

Click on book

