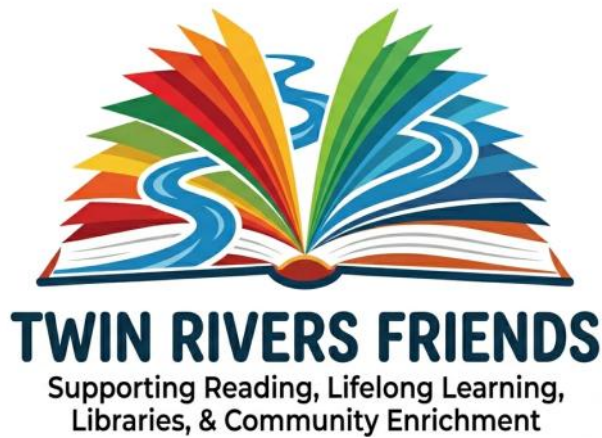




Shelf Life

July 2026

A Message from the TRF President

Dear Friends,

June was a very active month for our Twin Rivers Friends.

- On the 12th board members met for coffee, met author Thomas Renner at the Next Chapter Bookstore, and then enjoyed eating dinner together.
- We had a display, gave away SWAG, and set up a StoryWalk (The True Story of the Three Little Pigs) at Kidsville Playground in partnership with New Bern Parks & Recreation Department's Pop 'N' the Park event on the 13th.
- On the 16th we attended a Local Inter-agency Coordinating Council (LIICC) meeting where the group discussed services for disabled children. We shared some ideas on how we might collaborate.
- Our Executive Board met on the 18th and continued to plan for the balance of our fiscal year.
- And lastly, on the 22nd we held a Volunteer Appreciation Event at The Old Pin-nix Café where we honored those who helped us in our last fiscal year.

Collaborations

During June we connected with several local agencies including the **Craven Literacy Council** (Dr. Dwight Carlblom), the **Twin Rivers Reading Council** (Sue Williams), and **United Sisterhood, Inc** (Volanda Ledon-Neel) to discuss how we might collaborate given that parts of our missions align. We have already identified several possible events where we could share resources.

StoryWalk at Creekside Park

The husband/wife team that had been the stewards of this StoryWalk have had some health issues that preclude them continuing to take care of this StoryWalk, so Secretary Ellie Toombs stepped up to take on this task.

Supporting Trivia at the Library

Our TRF continues to support trivia at the library by fielding a team to compete almost every session. In June we provided snacks and drinks for the competitors, as the library was at the end of its budget year and did not have the funds to do so.

Endowment

The CPRL Board of Trustees have had the acceptance paperwork for the endowment we are trying to set up for the library since April. We just issued a letter with a deadline of August 20, 2026 to sign. Endowments are not complicated so we don't understand why this decision is taking so long. Most entities would jump at the chance of an additional yearly revenue stream.

Southpaws game

Baseball games are a perfect family summer-time activity. Join us on Monday July 13th at 7 PM at Kafer Park (next to the New Bern Police Station)! It is our opportunity to promote our nonprofit. **Still need someone to throw out the 1st pitch.** Know someone who has this on their bucket list? Have a visiting grandchild? [Email Joanne Straight](#). First to contact her gets the gig! Hope to see you at the game!

Yours in Friendship,

Judy Hills, President TRF

Twin Rivers Friends Volunteer Appreciation Event

Celebrating volunteers is essential because it boosts morale, drives retention, and significantly expands community impact. Recognizing unpaid efforts validates their hard work, builds confidence, and actively inspires others to join. Furthermore, engaged volunteers become loyal advocates. While a pat on the back and a "thank you" email is good, a celebratory event has a bigger impact. It also allows volunteers to mingle in a nice setting and get to know each other in more than just a volunteer capacity.

On Monday, June 22nd we held just such an event at The Old Pinnix Café. This small intimate space was the perfect venue. Over twenty attended and enjoyed some interesting and tasty charcuterie boards and mini desserts. We had a cash bar, so those desiring an evening cocktail could do so.

It was wonderful to see everyone engaged in conversation and some even discovered that they had a connection of which they were unaware.

President Judy Hills thanked the volunteers and recognized Joanne Straight for her many years of service to the Friends and for her leadership as President for the past six years. She also recognized Joanne's husband Randy for all his work on the Little Free Libraries and for various other ways he has helped us over the years. We presented them with a gift certificate to the Chelsea Restaurant. Judy closed her remarks with a toast.

All-in-all it was a very lovely event and those that attended had nothing but good things to say.



Volunteer Appreciation Event—Photos by Margot DeLapp



Volunteer Appreciation Event



Art Walk Meet-up on Friday 12 June 2026

Joanne Straight (Director), Rosemary Bricker (Director), Margot DeLapp (VP) and Judy Hills (President) along with Alan Hills, Archie Bricker, and Laura, a friend of Margot's met at New Bern Coffee Roasters café on Middle Street to chitchat prior to Art Walk. While the guys talked boats and carpentry, the gals engaged in wide ranging conversations, including books, of course.

At 5 pm we headed to the nearby Next Chapter Books and Art store to meet local author Thomas Renner who wrote "The Magnificent Marginal Men." "Magnificent Marginal Men" is a nonfiction memoir about the unique, and often wild, life of a long-haul moving man, told in twenty-nine short stories. We were checking Thomas out as a possible author for our February 2027 authors event.

Mr. Renner is just the kind of author we look for. He is engaging and his book is different—think cowboys of old on today's open roads.

Store owner Michele Garren-Flye is a supporter of our organization and her shop, while small, is big in personality. If you have not dropped by recently, we encourage you to do so and meet Derby, the cat.

After we met the author, purchased a few books (including his, which he signed), Margot, Laura, Alan, and Judy headed to Blackbeard's Tavern for a light repast. While we enjoyed the raspberry lemonade at the coffee shop, we enjoyed something a little more spirited at the tavern. All-in-all it was a lovely evening!



Contributed photo. Michelle Flye on L and Thomas Renner on R



Local authors featured in July at The Next Chapter Books & Art

The Next Chapter presents
Meet the Author
Damon Alaric V. Raines
Author of
Dual Fates
July 4, 2026 1-3 p.m.
The Next Chapter Books & Art
320 S. Front St.
New Bern, NC 28560

The Next Chapter presents
Meet the Author
Melissa Collins Harrell
author of
Grounds for Return
July 25, 2026
1-3 p.m.
The Next Chapter Books & Art
320 S. Front St.
New Bern, NC 28560



Pop 'N' the Park 13 June 2026

Our Twin Rivers Friends joined with the New Bern Parks & Recreation Department to stage a "bubble" event at Kidsville Playground at the West New Bern Recreation Center.

The day was incredibly hot with thunderstorms predicted for later that afternoon. We were hopeful that we would be finished, packed up, and on our way home before that weather system arrived—and we were.

Margot DeLapp (VP) and Rosemary Bricker (Director) stopped by to help set up and take pictures. The tent was manned by Cindy Shipley (Director), Joanne Straight (Director), Margot DeLapp, VP, and Judy Hills (President). Alan Hills helped set up and break down the tent. Randy Straight brought us extra ice when ours melted. Thanks, guys!

The P&R Department staff had lots of different kinds of soap bubble making devices for the kids to try. The air was filled with bubbles of all sizes from tiny to giant. The kids (little and big) had lots of fun while the adults hung out in the shade of the shelter.

The P&R staff handed out popsicles to help everyone cool off. Even the adults enjoyed them.

Our TRF had a tent with some promotional material and a tri-fold presentation board that wanted to take flight in the hot breeze. While we talked to the adults, the children got to spin the wheel for a prize. They loved the assortment of trinkets from the Dollar Tree, as well as books. In keeping with the pop theme, we also gave away bubble gum and lollipops, if the parents allowed.

We had set up a temporary StoryWalk, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, but it was so hot that no one ended up viewing it, except in passing.

We also had small bottles of cold water for all. That was much needed on this hot summer day! We gave out our last bottle as the last family headed to the parking lot.

We spoke to the event organizer, Hayley Walden, after the event concluded. She was more than pleased about the turn out given the afternoon temperatures. We estimate about 40 families dropped by. She liked what we did and we agreed that we would look for ways to continue to collaborate. She is thinking of doing a similar event in the fall when it cools off a bit.

These types of events are great for exposing families to our nonprofit.

Pictures by Rosemary & Judy



Pictures from Pop 'N' the Park



VOLUNTEER JOB BOARD

Volunteering offers profound personal, professional, and health benefits, including reduced stress, increased happiness, enhanced skill sets, and deeper community connections. Surely there is something here of interest to you. If you have ideas for programs or projects that you want to pursue that fit with our organization's purpose, [email President Judy Hills](#).

StoryWalk Coordinator

We have a job description. Entails promoting StoryWalks and filling in when team is unavailable, Contact Judy Hills jahnbnc@gmail.com or 262.670.1913

Publicity & Communications Coordinator

We need help spreading the word about our events and fundraisers. Begin by drafting a plan. Contact Judy Hills jahnbnc@gmail.com or 262.670.1913 .

Senior Programs team member

We have a number of programs we offer to facilities including: refreshing libraries, gametime, cards, silent book club, writing for fun, puzzle competition, crafts, Oktoberfest celebration, National Park Tour (4 different sessions,) Cruise to Italy (4 different sessions). Each includes some food/beverages. Some include dinner. Some include prizes. Questions? Contact Judy Hills, Senior Program Coordinator. jahnbnc@gmail.com 252.670.1913

Storage Unit team member

[Click here](#) to sign up to work the storage unit on Signup Genius. Prefer two persons per shift, but one can work alone. You will need an orientation and to work with a buddy for a while. Needed for 1st Saturday of the month and every Tuesday. Hours only 10 to 12. Contact Cindy Shipley cindyshipley@yahoo.com 540.656.8016

Food & Refreshment team member

Sometimes we just need food or desserts prepared for some event we are either hosting or collaborating on (e.g., German desserts for Oktoberfest event at an assisted living facility). We are making a list of those to contact when we need help. Contact Margot DeLapp mdelapp@gmail.com 703.795.9927

Special Events Coordinator

These are one-time happenings (e.g., Pops in the Park at Kidsville June 13th). Organize the event, help man it (not always), and the do an after action report. Or work directly with the person who wants to organize it. Contact Judy Hills jahnbnc@gmail.com or 262.670.1913

Special Events team member

Sometimes we just need help for some event we are either hosting or collaborating on (e.g., Oktoberfest event at an assisted living facility). We are making a list of those to contact when we need help. What skill do you have to contribute? Contact Margot DeLapp mdelapp@gmail.com 703.795.9927

Book Sale Team Member

We need lots of help with the fall book sale the week of October 26th to October 31st. Watch for SignUp Genius link in September. Questions? [Joanne Straight](#) 252.259.3078

Repetitive Reading of Books

"Psychology says people who reread the same comforting books every year aren't stuck, the habit is how their nervous system finds a reliably safe place to rest." [Click here](#) to read the whole article.

Do you have a shelf—or a stack, or a folder on an e-reader—of the same handful of books you return to again and again or a series you have read five, six, ten times, or a novel that you know the ending by heart, but read it anyway? And do you feel guilty doing so thinking that there are so many unread books in the world, and here I am, opening the same one again?

For all your bad thoughts of yourself, scientists say that you are just returning to a safe place in your mind on purpose, because it works. Our brain treats the unknown as a threat by default. To understand why a familiar book soothes, it helps to start with what unfamiliarity does. When we can't predict what's coming, our brains lean "toward caution—and that caution is the seed of stress and anxiety. The stress response is essentially [the body's default reaction to uncertainty](#), easing only once a situation is learned to be safe."

"In other words, 'safe' isn't the starting position. Safe is something the brain has to establish. A brand-new book, for all its pleasures, is a small open question. You don't yet know if it'll wreck you, bore you, or end somewhere you didn't want to go. A book you've read ten times is the opposite. It's a fully solved question—and that's exactly the point."

There's a name for this in the research on familiar media: experiential control. You're deliberately choosing an experience whose emotional outcome you already know, which strips out the uncertainty and lets you simply be inside it.

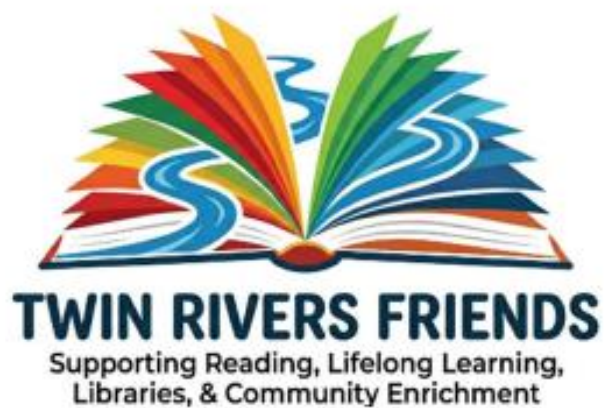
But it can be taken too far, if you are only opening the same three books or series to avoid a new experience. The healthiest version is the balance—a reliable home base to return to, alongside the occasional unfamiliar thing that stretches you a little.

For most people who reread, these comfort books aren't a cage; they are a resting place between the harder, newer things.

"So the next time you reach for the book you've read a dozen times, you can let the guilt go. You're not failing to grow, and you're not out of curiosity—you've just found a place where the ending is kind, the company is familiar, and nothing is going to surprise you. In a world that rarely offers that, knowing exactly where to find it isn't being stuck. It's knowing how to rest."

Judy Hills reports that when she was going through stressful times, she had two series that she read and reread—The Harry Potter books by J.K. Rowling and the Ender series by Orsaon Scott Card. "I did not realize why I was doing it at the time, I just knew I could immerse myself in the books and the rest of the world receded."





Join Twin Rivers Friends at the Ballpark

Monday, July 13 at 7:00 PM



**10% OF TICKET AND
CONCESSION SALES
BENEFIT THE FRIENDS**



Come cheer on the New Bern Southpaws

**Kafer Park
603 George Street New Bern**

2026 Hugo Awards Finalists

The World Science Fiction Society

For you sci-fi fans out there, "the World Science Fiction Society (WSFS) is an unincorporated literary society whose purposes, according to its [rules](#), are as follows: to choose the recipients of the annual Hugo Awards (Science Fiction Achievement Awards), to choose the locations and Committees for the annual World Science Fiction Conventions (the Worldcons), to attend those Worldcons, and to choose the locations and Committees for the occasional North American Science Fiction Conventions (the NASFiCs). (A NASFiC is held in North America in any year when the Worldcon is outside of North America.)"

The 2026 finalists list features award-winning names, and spans the breadth of the genre: from murder mysteries to literary fiction, from medieval knights to alien contact - this is a year of variety. And, yes, the Hugo is voted on by members of the WSFS.

LAcon V, the 84th World Science Fiction Convention, is pleased to announce the finalists for the 2026 Hugo Awards, the most prestigious honors for excellence in science fiction and fantasy.

The members of the 2025 and 2026 World Science Fiction Conventions cast 1,488 valid nominating ballots, including 6 paper ballots, for the 2026 Hugo Awards. The nominators made 23,543 nominations for 4,299 works and individuals across 21 categories.

Six novels were nominated. 1,153 ballots were cast for 555 nominees. The finalists each garnered between 126 and 210 votes each. The 2026 Hugo Awards will be presented on Sunday evening, August 30, 2026 at LAcon V.

The finalist are pictured below. [Click here](#) for more sci-fi award nominees.



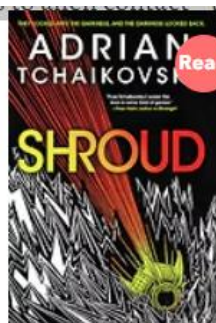
1

A Drop of Corruption
by Robert Jackson Bennett



2

Death of the Author: A Novel
by Nnedi Okorafor



3

Shroud
by Adrian Tchaikovsky



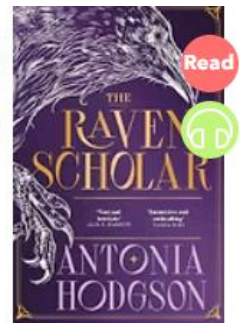
4

The Everlasting
by Alix E. Harrow



5

The Incandescent
by Emily Tesh



6

The Raven Scholar
by Antonia Hodgson

Little Free Libraries

When we first installed Little Free Libraries around town, we had placed this repurposed newspaper box unit inside the Hope Family Center. We did not maintain stewardship, but when we went there for a meeting recently, we noticed that the box is still in their waiting area and that there are children's books in it.

LFL steward Christine Bryon reports that there are three locations that are being heavily used: Kidsville, Union Point Park, and the Charlotte S. Rhone Cultural Center across from Golden Heights Assisted Living Facility. In summer there are generally more children visiting parks, so it

was expected that both Kidsville and UPP would be busy, but we were surprised and pleased that the box at the Rhone Center was being used.

Christine also reports that, "The kids are using the box at the Boys and Girls Club. This young girl found three books. What is amazing is that this is the only box that the kids read the books and then bring them back. That says a lot about character, when everybody else just takes the books and doesn't return them."



New Bern Library Amateur Photo Contest



The focus for this contest is the outside world where dinosaurs may have walked. Think landscapes: trees, mountains, rivers, lakes, ponds, oceans, grassy areas, beaches, valleys, forests, deserts, unpaved trails. There are four age categories: 5-12, 13-17, 18+ and library staff. Check out the form as you must select a category. The contest ends July 31st. There is no limit to the number of photos you can enter, but they must be "family friendly." [Click here](#) to access the entry page on the library's website.

Library Adult Summer Reading Challenge

Take the Summer Reading Challenge and win prizes! Register at your local library or online. Mark your reading log for every 30 minutes of reading. EVERY person who completes their reading log will win a prize! The top readers from each branch will be eligible for the grand prize drawing!

To register, visit your local library branch to receive your goodie bags and registration logs! You can also register online by [clicking here](#) (but you must go in to the library to receive a goodie bag). You **MUST** fill out the CPRL paper reading logs to be eligible for library prizes, but if you are not able to visit the library, you can also participate in the fun with ReadSquared - an app that allows readers to log their reading time to earn digital badges, unlock games, and participate in theme-related challenges. [Click here.](#)

When completed, turn your reading log in at your local library branch, or online by [clicking here](#)! You must pick up your completion prizes from your local library branch, but online reading logs submissions will still make you eligible for prize drawings.

NPR Staffers Pick Favorite Reads

Those of you who are NPR fans, will want to know what novels this discerning crowd reads at night after reporting world news all day. Here are a few of their favorites:

A Bad, Bad Place by Frances Crawford—a girl, her nanny, Sid Vicious the rescue dog, and a dead body in Glasgow, Scotland.

A Perfect Hand by Ayelet Walman—lady's maid falls in love with a valet. The trouble is they work for different employers—who hate each other. They struggle with how to form a perfect union.

Cherry Baby by Rainbow Rowell—husband writes semi-biographical comic about fat wife. He goes on to Hollywood leaving wife and dog behind, Does she fold or does she fight?

Cry Havoc by Rebecca Wait—funny novel that follows a teenage girl in a rundown British boarding school.

Dear Monica Lewinsky by Julia Langbein—a college student's comic summer romp studying abroad, falling in love with one of her teachers. You may think you know where this is headed, but you might be wrong.

Discipline by Larissa Pham—an artist and her lecherous older professor have an astounding confrontation.

Enemies to Lovers by Alisha Rai—romance and high jinks abound when an unlikely duo team up to solve a disappearance. "Pairs well with popcorn."

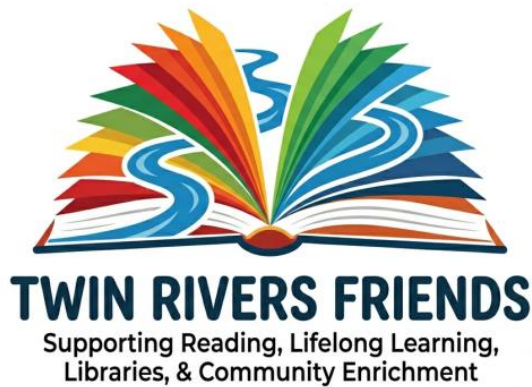
This House Will Feed by Maria Tureaud—And for the horror fans out there in reader land, this novel incorporates Irish folklore and the supernatural.



2026 STORYWALK SCHEDULE FOR PARKS

BEGIN	END	TITLE	LOCATION
Saturday, May 9, 2026	Friday July 10, 2026	This Farm is a Family	Martin Marietta
		Giraffes Can't Dance	Creekside
Saturday July 11, 1016	Friday, September 11, 2026	Leo the Late Bloomer	Martin Marietta
		Rainbow Fish	Creekside
Saturday, September 12, 2026	Friday, November 13, 2026	Big Pumpkin	Martin Marietta
		A Fall Ball for All	Creekside
Saturday, November 14, 2026	Friday, January 8, 2026	Walter the Farting Dog	Martin Marietta
		Bear Stays Up for Christmas	Creekside

Creekside Park Steward: Ellie Toombs
Martin Marietta Park Stewards: Bruce & Krystal Simel



Twin Rivers Friends
P.O. Box 808
New Bern, NC 28563-0808

[TRF email](#)

[TRF Website](#)

[TRF Facebook](#)

Board of Directors 2026-2028

President [Judy Hills](#)
Vice President [Margot DeLapp](#)
Secretary [Ellie Toombs](#)
Treasurer [Jenny Miller](#)

Director [Joanne Straight](#)
Director [Cindy Shipley](#)
Director Rosemary Bricker
Director [Joy Hepler](#)

Newsletter [Judy Hills](#)
Website [Judy Hills](#)
Facebook [Margot DeLapp](#)

The purpose of this organization shall be to: maintain an association that advocates for the freedom to read; support the development of library resources and services; develop and support a community of readers and lifelong learners; and collaborate with other organizations to enrich our community and achieve these purposes.

Formed in 1968, the "Friends" is organized for charitable, educational and literary purposes including making distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, or corresponding provisions of any future Federal tax legislation. The Friends are also incorporated as a nonprofit in the state of North Carolina and have a current NC Charitable License Exemption.

ESTBLISHED IN 1968

Calendar of Noteworthy Events

July

- 4 Independence Day 250th
- 13 Southpaw Baseball game— TRF will be featured and we get 10% of the gate and concession so do attend!
- 16 TRF Board meeting 2 PM.
- 25 Deadline to submit material for the newsletter
- 31 Summer Reading Program reading logs due!

August

- 4 National Night Out at Union Point Park 5 to 8 PM— sharing space with the Craven Literacy Council
- 20 TRF Board meeting 2 PM.
- 25 Deadline to submit material for the newsletter
- 29 Havelock Anime-Fest at Havelock Tourist Center 10 to 5

September

- 7 Labor Day
- 11 National Day of Service
- 17 TRF Board meeting 2 PM.
- 25 Deadline to submit material for the newsletter

