

Local librarians share their favorite books of 2018

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FULL TEXT

Who knows more about the best books of 2018 than your local librarians? Here are our recommendations:

Appleton Public Library Director Colleen Rortved's favorite is "King Zeno" by Nathaniel Rich. The novel is set in 1918 New Orleans weaving together national and local events. New Orleans' natural and man-made landmarks are prominent in Rich's novel, as well as its corrupt history and decadent music. The jazz scenes evoke the sense of excitement and hysteria that unfamiliar music inspired at the time. The audiobook in particular brings these scenes to life.

Ashley Thiem-Menning, Assistant Director of the Kaukauna Public Library, picked "There There," a novel by Tommy Orange. This haunting book shares the stories of 12 urban Indians living in Oakland, California. As we learn about the characters' histories and experiences, triumphs and failures, the author weaves each story together to end in one life-altering event. The audiobook is read by a cast of four people, which enhances the experience of the book. The book was nominated for multiple awards.

Kimberly-Little Chute Librarian Aubrey Laux recommends "Social Creature" by Tara Isabella Burton, a dark story that sucks the reader in revealing the obsessions we have with social media, glamour and being liked. She also recommends "The Dinner List" by Rebecca Serle. Ever make a list of those you would choose to have a dinner with if you could choose anyone living or dead?

The year's favorite of Neenah Public Library Director Gretchen Raab is "Calypso" by David Sedaris, an author who is witty, with a sharp, self-deprecating, somewhat sarcastic brand of humor that she enjoys.

Michael Edmonds' "Taking Flight: A History of Bird and People in the Heart of America" is Menasha Library Supervisor Joseph Bongers' choice. It tells how humans and birds have coexisted in the middle of the North American continent for thousands of years with each successive culture viewing the birds around them through their own unique lens. The book is for readers interested in the human and natural history of the Midwest who appreciate writing supported by thorough research.

Menasha Librarian Kirk Moore-Nokes' choice is the graphic novel "Runaways Volume 1. Find Your Way Home" by Rainbow Rowell, a favorite young adult author. The book, which continues the Marvel classic, was illustrated by Kris Anka.

Menasha Children's Department Supervisor Kathryn Beson's choice is "Winnie's Great War" by Lindsay Mattick, the story of Winnie the Pooh and the Great War, including how Winnie meets Christopher Robin. Picture books also had some great additions this year including "Parade of Elephants" by Wisconsin's own Kevin Henkes.

My favorite is "Transcription" by Kate Atkinson which features a young recruit finding her way in England's spy agency in 1940 as the Nazis bombed London. Although this is a historical novel that doesn't include any events past the 1960s, everything that happens informs today's political, diplomatic and economic news and reminds us that World War II was not all that long ago.

The book checked out most this year by our library patrons was "Salt to Sea" by Ruta Sepetys, the 2018 Fox Cities Reads community read selection. "Salt to the Sea" is a well-told lesson on man's inhumanity to man that brings to light a huge tragedy that did not make it into most history books. This book is so good that people are still talking about it and checking it out –the perfect community read.

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