

Fox Cities Book Festival lets readers discover new venues and connect with writers

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FULL TEXT

Books and reading are at the core of every public library's mission, so it's natural that the public libraries of the Fox Cities – Appleton, Neenah, Menasha, Kimberly-Little Chute and Kaukauna – are among the driving forces behind the Fox Cities Book Festival.

Many of us eagerly await the book festival each year, and this year we had to wait a little longer, with the festival moving from April to October. The 10th annual Fox Cities Book Festival runs Oct. 9 through Oct. 15.

Festival organizers have planned 65 events with more than 50 authors appearing at the public libraries, UW-Fox Valley, Lawrence University, Appleton North High School, 1,000 Islands Nature Center and The Draw. All events are free and open to the public.

The festival was the brainchild of Appleton resident and first poet laureate of Wisconsin, Ellen Kort, who organized a board of community leaders, public school staff and librarians to establish a festival that would connect readers and writers. Since that time the festival has brought more than 600 local and national authors to our area, and more than 10,000 people now attend festival events each year.

Authors are selected to appeal to a wide audience. Unique to this year's festival – a tribute to its 10th anniversary – is a focus on past favorites, including featured authors Will Schwalbe, author of "The End of Your Life Book Club" and "Books for Living," Wisconsin novelist Nickolas Butler, author of "Shotgun Lovesongs" and "The Hearts of Men," and Leslie Kagen, author of "Whistling in the Dark."

Other featured authors include Laurie Halse Anderson, author of "Speak," Louis V. Clark III, author of "How to Be an Indian in the 21st Century," Benjamin Ludwig, author of "Ginny Moon," and many more. There's truly something for everyone at the festival.

While the obvious thrill of the book festival is the opportunity to hear from authors that you already know and love, another treat is the opportunity to find a new favorite author. I encourage you to look through the schedule and find at least one author that you've never heard of before and give them a chance. Each of these authors has devoted many hours to crafting their story or learning their subject and all are passionate about it.

Not only can you meet new authors, you can also explore new venues. Attendees regularly tell us that the book festival gives them a welcome excuse to travel to a previously unexplored corner of the Fox Cities. If you usually stick to your home library, the festival is a great time to experience the other amazing public libraries, along with the other terrific venues.

The festival will be here soon, so now is the time to start reading and discussing these books with your friends,

family and library staff. There are copies of the books at all of the libraries along with festival brochures.

Find more information at www.foxcitiesbookfestival.org and be sure to follow the festival's Facebook page to keep up to date with any last-minute changes to the schedule.

Joe Bongers is the Adult Services Supervisor at the Elisha D. Smith Public Library in Menasha

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IF YOU GO

What: Fox Cities Book Festival

When: Oct. 9-15

Where: Events take place at public libraries across the Fox Cities, plus in venues at the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley, Lawrence University, Appleton North High School, 1,000 Islands Nature Center and The Draw.

Authors: More than 50 authors will take part in the festival. For a schedule of appearances, visit the festivals website at www.foxcitiesbookfestival.org

Cost: Free

Illustration

Caption: Bongers

DETAILS

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