

Manitowoc library's Battle of the Books 2018: Eight books range from horror to memoir

Lisa Pike, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 8:04 a.m. CT Aug. 4, 2018



(Photo: Provided)

Hey, teen readers! Looking for your next great beach or cabin read? Well, look no more. We have not one, but eight recommendations for you!

The following eight books compose the line-up of the Battle of the Books 2018, and each represents a different literary genre ranging from horror to memoir.

These titles are handpicked by Manitowoc-Calumet Library System librarians based on reviews, diversity and popularity.

The reading list this year will definitely keep those pages turning with every plot twist.

For the horror genre, we have "Dream Fall," by Amy Plum, the spine-tingling story of a group of teens who become trapped in a world of nightmares when trying to cure their insomnia.

Our science-fiction title, "The Marrow Thieves," by Cherie Dimaline, takes place in a post-apocalyptic world where Native Americans are hunted for their bone marrow in the belief it will restore the ability to dream in non-Native people.

The two realistic fiction titles consist of "Slider," by Pete Hautman, our guest emcee for this year's Battle of the Books! It's about a boy participating in a competitive eating contest to cover a \$2,000 charge he accidentally put on his mom's credit card. The other is "You're Welcome, Universe," by Whitney Gardner. This title is about a girl who is deaf who finds her creative outlet in graffiti while dealing with being uprooted from her home and plopped into boring suburbia.

The memoir, "Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card," by Sara Saedi, is the true story of an Iranian teen dealing with the fact that she is an undocumented immigrant. She has to deal with this elevated issue all while dealing with the normal teenage issues of hopes and dreams and acne!

Our historical fiction title — which also involves time travel — is "Midnight at the Electric," by Jodi Lynn Anderson. It follows three different girls who live in drastically different time periods, from Lenore who lives in 1919 England to Adri who lives in 2065 Kansas and has been chosen to live on Mars.

The last two titles on this list break from the rest in format. "Bull," by David Elliott, is a novel in verse that uses various poetic styles to update the classic Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur for young adult audiences. This year's pick for graphic representation is "The Graveyard Book," by Neil Gaiman and P. Craig Russell, a graphic novel adaptation of Gaiman's critically acclaimed novel about an orphaned child being raised in a cemetery by its ghostly denizens.

As you can see, there is a wide variety to pick from on the list. Has anything sparked your interest yet?

But, Battle of the Books is way more than just reading books: it is a competition for some serious bragging rights. Battle of the Books is a system-wide trivia competition among library teams that has been held for 15-plus years. Each library in the Manitowoc-Calumet System assembles teams of teens hungry for good books who test their knowledge for the chance to win the coveted Battle Trophy Plaque to hang in their library.

Manitowoc Public Library's team is holding practice meetings for its Battle of the Books team to prepare for the tournament at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 5 in Silver Lake College's Generose Center. Manitowoc has won the tournament for the past four years, and we are hoping to clinch another victory and prove who has the brainiest, book-lovin' teens on the Lakeshore!

When the tournament ends, the great team spirit of our local teens is celebrated with a pizza party and a book-signing with an author — all for reading great books!

To join our Battle of the Books team, check out a few of the titles from the reading list and come to the library at 4 p.m. Thursdays through the end of August to join in on the fun. You will get to hang out with other teens, discuss books and eat snacks. Not a bad way to spend part of a Thursday afternoon, in my humble opinion!

Lisa Pike is teen associate at Manitowoc Public Library.



Lisa Pike (Photo: Provided)

Ukulele jam at Manitowoc Public Library Wednesday

Julia Lee, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 7:56 a.m. CT Aug. 11, 2018



(Photo: Ron Page/USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin,)

The small, often brightly colored ukulele has seen a huge resurgence in recent years, gaining popularity with players of all ages.

Even Eddie Vedder, lead singer of popular rock band Pearl Jam, released a solo album of ukulele songs (aptly titled, "Ukulele Songs").

And it's a popular instrument for good reason: it's affordable, it's easy to learn, it's small, and it's portable. Even people who do not consider themselves musicians (myself included) can pick up a ukulele for the first time and find themselves strumming a simple tune within minutes. Give a ukulele to an expert, and the unassuming ukulele transforms into a concert instrument.

Regardless of skill or age, the ukulele's greatest strength is giving players a sense of empowerment and wonder.

To celebrate the music in our community, Manitowoc Public Library will be hosting our first-ever Ukulele Jam at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Balkansky Community Room. The jam is open to all ages and skill levels. Bring your ukulele, a piece of music you want to play solo for the group —maybe something you're currently working on to add to your repertoire — or just come ready to play, picking from a variety of sheet music that we will have available for everyone to use.

Have a ukulele but not sure how to play? We will have the basic chords on sheets for you to practice at the jam. Afterward, take the sheets home with you to further your ukulele mastery! We will even have tuners available to make sure your Uke sounds its finest. Guitars, banjos and mandolins are also welcome to come jam, although we will only have sheet music and basic chords for the ukulele.

As children's librarians, we have seen the wonder and magic that live music can bring to children of all ages. As a major component of early literacy skill building, we incorporate singing and dancing into every story time we offer. Don't be surprised if you come to the library and hear ukulele chords floating out of our storytimes and family events.

Playing a live instrument instantly grabs and holds the attention of even the youngest child. Modeling how to play an instrument encourages children to make music of their own.

Have you run out of ideas for how to get kids unplugged from technology? Try this out — present them with a ukulele and just see if you can keep them away from it. Kids are drawn to the frequently splashy-hued instruments that seem to be the exact right size for them to play.



Julia Lee (Photo: Courtesy of Manitowoc Public Library)

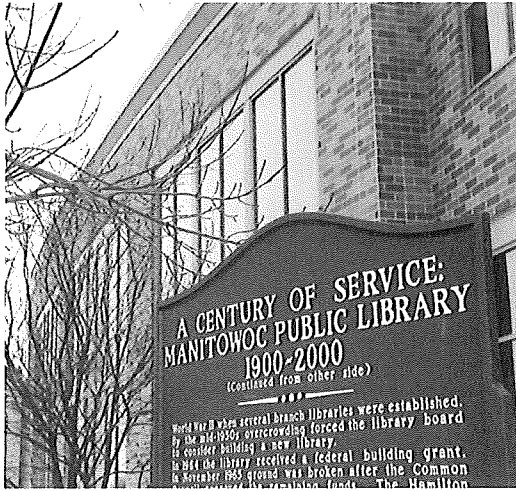
But, perhaps most importantly, playing the ukulele with others creates a musical and magical sense of community. Be a music maker on Wednesday. While the jam is open to everyone who wants to Uke it up, children younger than 8 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. BYOU (Bring Your Own Uke).

Mark your calendars, tune your Uke and get ready to jam the night away at your library. No registration required and, as is the norm, this is a free program. Call 920-686-3030 with any questions.

Julia Lee is Youth Services manager at Manitowoc Public Library.

Amazon can't replace libraries, says Manitowoc Public Library Director Kristin Stoeger

Kristin Stoeger, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 11:04 a.m. CT Aug. 16, 2018



(Photo: USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin)

Recently, an article was posted online on *Forbes'* website titled "Amazon Should Replace Local Libraries to Save Taxpayers Money." Many of you may have read this or heard about it from family or friends. Although the editorial has since been taken down (as it was deemed to be deeply misinformed), I wanted to take a moment to discuss the writer's arguments. These arguments are nothing new in the library world, but they remain very inaccurate.

There always seem to be two similarities with articles like these:

1. The author always confuses an information service (such as a library) with an information delivery or media service (the internet, Netflix or Amazon.com).
2. The author never interviews a librarian, reviews the Pew studies or appears to have visited a library in many years.

By now, you may have seen the many rebuttal articles written in response to this proposal. One of my favorites was written by my friends at American Library Association (ALA) on the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) blog. You can read the full article at www.yalsa.ala.org/blog/2018/07/23/no-forbes-libraries-cannot-be-replaced-by-amazon/. Here are some of the important points from this article, and others:

- An Amazon Prime account, with add-ons to allow for music, magazine and eBook borrowing as well as streaming movies, would cost more than \$150 per year. The average adult in the U.S. pays about \$4.50 per month for library service and gets all these services and much, much more.
- According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 21 percent of youth live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level.
- In the ALICE report compiled by United Way for the state of Wisconsin, 41 percent of families are at the ALICE level, which stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.
- Millions of Americans living in poverty cannot afford to purchase books and other materials and do not have access in their homes to current digital tools or high-speed internet.

Something you may not know is that the average library user receives much more in service than they pay in taxes. Every year, Manitowoc Public Library creates a conservative calculation of the value of the services we provide compared to what it would cost someone to buy those services themselves. Most years, we provide between \$3.50 and \$4 in service for every \$1 we receive in revenue.

In addition, it is easy to consider the “costs,” but overlook the important work libraries do that cannot be easily quantified. Your library, for example, focuses heavily on early literacy, making sure children enter school ready to learn and are reading at grade level by third grade. How do we do this? Through our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative, Summer Reading program, story times, virtual library cards, Starlings, etc., all of which focus on providing in-person, interactive learning opportunities. Our highly trained librarians provide early literacy support both within the library and through outreach. In 2017, more than 13,000 people attended programming offered by the library. This year, we are well on our way to surpassing that number.

As my colleague at Mid-Continent Public Library, Steve V. Potter, so eloquently states:

“Grade level reading is important and cannot be easily replaced with a website. Studies show that if children are not reading at grade level by third grade, they are four times less likely to graduate high school, and high school dropouts are 63 times more likely to be incarcerated. What costs more? Supporting the public library or building jails and housing inmates?

“Your library also focuses on helping people participate in the economy by building their own small businesses, learning skills to gain the next job, and even by earning accredited high school diplomas with job training. What costs more? Supporting your public library that helps create jobs and an employable workforce? Or the full funding of public assistance programs like welfare and unemployment compensation? The sum of library service is much more valuable than the actual price one pays to support the library, and online merchants like Amazon do not replicate these services or outcomes.”

By no means does this mean I don’t support Amazon or Netflix. I am a proud user of both services. I just know they are not a substitute for library services. The *Forbes* article is not the first to make the claim that libraries are dying. In complete contrast, though, libraries are more relevant than ever — we are committed to building and supporting our communities through programming, services and materials. We are far more than just a warehouse for materials. But you don’t have to take my word for it — stop down and see everything that is going on in your library to support and grow Manitowoc. We will be here!

Kristin Stoeger is director of Manitowoc Public Library.



Kristin Stoeger (Photo: Michelle Kaczmarowski)

Manitowoc library's Digital Arts Program a great experience, two-time participant says

Natalie Ford, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 8:19 a.m. CT Aug. 25, 2018



Natalie Ford
(Photo: Provided)

Lights! Camera! Action!

The Digital Arts Program (or D.A.P.) is a summer program for teens that is organized by Manitowoc Public Library and the Rahr-West Art Museum. With the use of technology, they teach teens various forms of digital art. This summer, we've learned how to make digital drawings in the form of comics and pictures, and currently, we've moved on to the videography portion of the program. D.A.P. is a fun way to get teens involved in the digital arts and keep them current with ever-changing technology.

Each Tuesday during summer, the class meets from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at the library or the museum. At the first class, we were introduced to our teachers, who this year were Susan Murtaugh and Justin Schnell. Susan is a digital artist who has worked with an incredible array of clients — Disney, Marvel, Star Wars and DC. Justin has experience in various forms of videography and has a background in theater and film. Throughout the program, we worked with Justin and Susan to create mini movies and comic panels. When D.A.P. concludes for this summer, our work is going to be displayed and shown at Manitowoc Public Library, giving our friends and family the opportunity to see the results of our hard work in person.

Susan's portion of the program was titled "B-Marvelous." During our first session, she introduced us to a new way of sketching on the iPad Pro. Using an app called "Sketchbook Pro," we practiced drawing with the iPad pen and utilizing the different utensils contained within the app. Next, we worked on our story — or "script" — for our comics. Under Susan's guidance, once the original concept was established, we spent the next two weeks working on creation and adding detail. Even though we only had three scheduled classes, we were able to check out our iPads to continue working outside of the class hours to complete our projects.

The art of videography takes time and patience, which is why this portion of D.A.P. runs seven weeks. Our instructor, Justin, began by teaching us the different camera angles used in film. During the first few classes, we practiced these, such as the Dutch tilt, the dolly zoom and various other camera positions. Afterward, we broke into groups to start the process of writing scripts and creating storyboards. We could also choose a scene from an established film to recreate.



"Fresh Seafood" by Susan
Murtaugh (Photo: Provided)

With scripts in hand, these groups began filming both during and outside of class time. The pool of actors and actresses were comprised of fellow students, friends and/or family members who we were able to talk into participating. Once we complete shooting, we'll get started on editing. The editing process includes adding titles, inserting sound effects and adding credits, as well as everything else that needs to get taken care of. One week before the final session, we share our videos with the class and make our final edits.

Manitowoc Public Library and the Rahr-West Art Museum have done a great job

organizing the D.A.P. program these past few years. They've given teens the opportunity to work with an experienced digital artist like Susan Murtaugh, who taught us how to sketch and create digital drawings that became comic book art. We've learned not only what it takes to make a movie, but with the help of Justin Schnell, we were able to write, act in and film our own mini-movies. The program is not only fun, it's free for the teens of Manitowoc County. As a D.A.P. student with two years of experience, I appreciate everything I have learned from attending the Digital Arts Program.

Editor's note: If you would like to see the work created by the D.A.P. students, the public is invited to attend the D.A.P. Gallery Night from 6 to 7 p.m. Aug. 28 in the Balkansky Community Room of Manitowoc Public Library. Admission is free!

Digital Art Program participant Natalie Ford will be a 10th-grader this fall who will be attending her fifth year of home school.