

# Manitowoc librarian: Book shows Apollo 12 astronaut Alan Bean's story of art, science

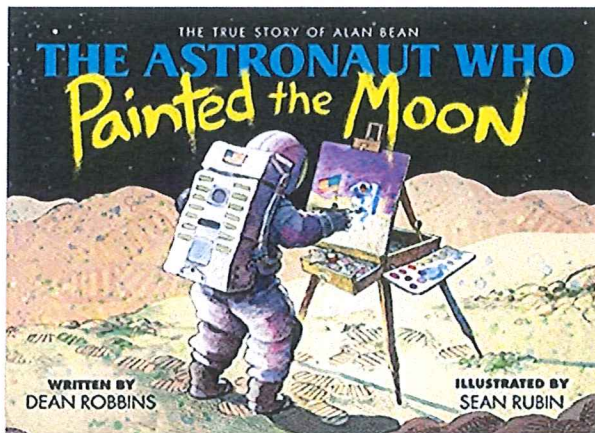
Lisa Pike, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 7:06 a.m. CT Aug. 8, 2019

For my final summer book review, I'll be covering the stellar children's picture book "The Astronaut Who Painted the Moon," written by Dean Robbins and illustrated by Sean Rubin.

This beautifully illustrated, 40-page book details the life of astronaut and artist, Alan Bean. The fourth of 12 men to walk on the moon, Bean was always humble about the experience, saying he was first an artist, then an astronaut.

As an artist, Bean had a unique perception of space travel and took it upon himself to try to share the elation of walking on the moon through his art. He accomplished this goal with the creation of awe-inspiring paintings of his experience on the moon, using a mixture of vivid colors to enliven the grays and blacks of space.

Robbins shares Bean's development — both as an artist and an astronaut — with short flashbacks showing his capacity for art and science. As a child, the "astro-artist" enjoyed both building and painting model airplanes. His fascination with models soon led to a love of aviation and his career as a naval pilot provided him with the opportunity to participate in various space missions.



'The Astronaut Who Painted the Moon: The True Story of Alan Bean,' by Dean Robbins and Sean Rubin. (Photo: Provided)

Even though his career focused more on science and technology, Bean still continued honing his artistic skills by taking regular art classes. Throughout his career and life, Bean believed both art and science were important and he was fascinated with how often the two disciplines intersected in life. He received his chance to share this sentiment with the masses when NASA chose him as a crew member of Apollo 12's mission to the moon.

Apollo 12 — being only the second vessel to land on the moon — had the important mission of collecting lunar dust and rock, taking photographs and

recording the astronaut's impressions of their expedition. The crew took more photographs on this mission than on Apollo 11, but Bean's crew mates felt these photographs were mediocre, at best. Their reasoning was that the photographs were black and white and very grainy. They suggested to him he should paint their experiences. They thought his paintings would be a more honest interpretation of the awe they felt stepping foot onto the strange, new world.

As Robbins details in the book, Bean took on this challenge and even built a three-dimensional model of the moonscape to correctly capture the light and shadows of the scenery. The author employs this scene to showcase the amount of detail used in the paintings and how it all relates back to the many connections of art and science. It also relates Bean's determination to share how art and science thrive in one another's company and can open new doors of expression.



This undated photo shows Alan Bean posing in front of a LM mock-up at the NASA-Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fl. Bean, who was the fourth person to walk on the moon, passed away on May 26, 2018, aged 86. (Photo: NASA via EPA-EFE)



Apollo XII mission photograph of Alan Bean holding a vacuum-sealed lunar soil sample container (Photo: Special to The News-Press )

At this point in the text, Robbins further explores just how unique Bean's paintings are. Resolute to share his full experience with the masses, he used some original techniques within his artwork. When preparing his canvas, he would use replica spacesuit boots to walk on it and leave impressions. He also marked canvases using a metal geology hammer that he saved as a souvenir from his mission. However, the most unusual item he used in his paintings was a patch from his Apollo 12 spacesuit.

Often the only souvenir NASA allows an astronaut to keep is their spacesuit mission patch, and for this reason they're a rare artifact. So, why did Bean destroy his? He wanted to have a literal piece of the moon in all his paintings. After asking NASA about securing moon dust for use in his paintings and being denied (the United States government owns all collected moon dust and rocks), he discovered one day that his patch was dusty and realized it was actually moon dust. So, in his own special way he found a solution and shredded his patch to stir into any paint that he used for the moonscape.

Rubin's illustrations complement Robbins' text wonderfully, and his use of a bright color palette and watercolor effects throughout the book helps capture Bean's own painting style perfectly. Rubin solidifies the astro-artist's relationship with art through a montage of Bean discovering and experimenting with his own perception of colors and light in relation to emotion. The text is kept clear and concise for young readers, and the illustrations make it accessible even to children who are just starting to read. The story shares with children how they can pursue multiple disciplines and how many like art and science are strongly related, so they don't have to limit their pursuits.

Bean, having been the only artist to walk on the moon, had a unique perspective. He wanted to show that while science got us to the moon, only an artist could capture the actual feeling of walking on it. Robbins and Rubin more than satisfy his sentiment with this picture book. The story they share not only informs, but puts the reader in his space boots as he looks upon the Earth from the moonscape for the first time.

Published in 2019 by Orchard Books (ISBN- 978-1338259537), "The Astronaut Who Painted the Moon: The True Story of Alan Bean," by Dean Robbins and Sean Rubin, includes text and illustrations and is recommended for readers ages 4 and older.

*Lisa Pike is teen associate at Manitowoc Public Library.*

# Wisconsin WWII POW camps detailed in books; meet author Bill Stokes in Manitowoc Sept. 4

Meredith Gadzinski , For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 7:23 a.m. CT Aug. 15, 2019

Wisconsin was a temporary home to over 20,000 POWs during WWII. Some returned to the state after the war ended. Douglas Raflik, Fond du Lac Reporter. To view this video please visit the following web site:

<https://www.htrnews.com/story/entertainment/2019/08/15/wisconsin-wwii-pow-camps-detailed-books-author-bill-stokes-visit-manitowoc-public-library/2000309001/>

Did you know Wisconsin housed prisoners of war during World War II? I was vaguely aware there were German POW camps in Wisconsin during WWII, but I didn't know how the communities where these prisoners were kept were impacted. I also wondered why the powers-that-be would ship prisoners to the U.S. during WWII.

My answer to that question was found in "Stalag Wisconsin," by Betty Cowley, a book that addresses the POW camps in Wisconsin. The answer was fairly straightforward: POWs on European soil would tie up thousands of Allied troops to guard them. There were also concerns guards would be overrun by prisoners. The bottom line was that the troops were needed to fight the war, not guard POWs. As such, they shipped the POWs to the United States in empty Liberty ships and housed them on pre-existing military bases.

During the WWII era, one-third of Wisconsinites were of German decent. Many first- and second-generation families still spoke German at home at that time, which may have been part of the reason some of the German POWs wound up in Wisconsin.

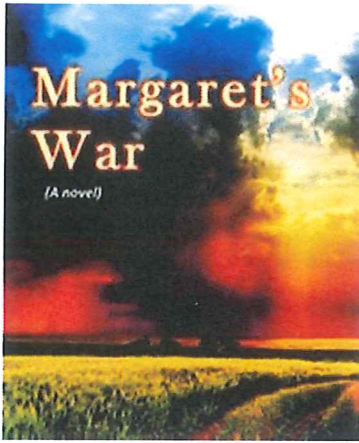
Wisconsin housed 5,000 Germans, 3,500 Japanese and 500 Koreans at Camp McCoy. Fort Sheridan created "branch camps" seasonally across Wisconsin where 13,000 POWs provided labor on farms and in canning factories as so many of the normal labor force was fighting the war overseas.

To see a map of "Wisconsin POW Camp locations", please visit the following web site:

<https://www.htrnews.com/story/entertainment/2019/08/15/wisconsin-wwii-pow-camps-detailed-books-author-bill-stokes-visit-manitowoc-public-library/2000309001/>

There was even a POW camp in Appleton. The average German POW population of Camp Appleton was approximately 180 individuals, according to "Stalag Wisconsin." In the book, you will find the tale of Helen Van Handel, an employee of the Dunda Canning Factory. She recalled she passed her name and address to a German POW on a chewing gum wrapper via an older female worker at the factory. They corresponded for a short time after the POWs were sent back to their homes. However, his intentions with her were far too serious, which eventually led her to stop writing him.

"Stalag Wisconsin" also tells the story of Merlin Romenesko. Merlin was a farm boy from Walworth, Wisconsin, who was 15 when he worked with POWs at a pea viner at a locale between his home and Kaukauna. His parents sent sandwiches to the POW workers in the hope that if their sons, who were fighting over in Europe, were ever captured that they would be treated with the same kindness. Thankfully, his brothers came back unharmed from the war.



**Margaret's War cover (Photo: Emily R. Ellerman)**

I cannot imagine the tension that was created by having POWs living and working in such close proximity while loved ones were engaged in armed combat overseas against the POWs' brothers-in-arms. I highly recommend checking out "Stalag Wisconsin." It's chock-full of firsthand accounts of Wisconsinite's interactions with German POWs.

My sudden interest in Wisconsin's German POW camps comes as a result of a historical fiction book by Bill Stokes titled "Margaret's War." The book is set in Oxbow, Wisconsin, during WWII while German POWs are present. Citizens of Oxbow come face-to-face with the enemy that has been killing their sons and lovers on foreign soil for years. I highly recommend this book, as well. The author, Bill Stokes, lives in Mazomanie, Wisconsin, retired after a 35-year career as a columnist/feature writer for the Chicago Tribune, the Wisconsin State Journal, the Milwaukee Journal and the Stevens Point Daily Journal. He has written a half-dozen other books, some of them compilations of his popular columns and stories.

Bill Stokes will be at Manitowoc Public Library talking about his book, "Margaret's War," at 6 p.m. Sept. 4. This is an author talk you will not want to miss.

*Meredith Gadzinski is adult services associate at Manitowoc Public Library.*



**German POWs march to trucks in Columbus to go to work at canning company. (Photo: Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society)**

# Yoga on the Beach coming to Manitowoc's Lakeview Park, near the lighthouse

Ariane Gunderson, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin Published 8:06 a.m. CT Aug. 23, 2019

Hello, everyone! Please allow me to introduce myself to those of you not familiar with me and my work. My name is Ariane Gunderson, and I'm a certified and registered yoga instructor. I moved to the Lakeshore exactly one year ago from Watertown. My mother is a senior library assistant at the Watertown Public Library. I remember teaching very large yoga classes in their very small meeting room.

The class I held there on Thursday nights was their most popular program. It was an honor to have so many wonderful people come and enjoy a free class. It made my heart happy; it made me feel like this was what I was meant to do. The best part was that on the same night as my yoga class, their library also held a "Reading with Rover" program where children read to therapy dogs. So, once yoga concluded, we would all get to hang out with the therapy dogs. There are so many fond memories of that library that I'll never forget.

When I moved to Two Rivers, I knew I wanted to help support our amazing Lakeshore libraries, too. The free services, programs and classes offered at these institutions are so wonderful and diverse. There is something enriching for everybody at the library. Personally, I love taking the occasional arts and crafts classes. Additionally, they also offer an amazing array of other programming — creative programs for children, spelling bees for adults, computer and tech classes, opportunities for business groups, teen programs, yoga classes, and much more! Besides the great offerings, libraries also serve as a vital hub for the community.

With that in mind, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce a new possibility for people in our community: Yoga on the Beach is coming to Manitowoc on Aug. 28! Enjoy 60 minutes of all-levels yoga by the waterfront. The class will be on the beach at Lakeview Park (by the Manitowoc lighthouse). This class is complimentary for the community, but registration is required. Head to [www.manitowoclibrary.org](http://www.manitowoclibrary.org), click on the "Events" tab up top, and click again on the appropriate calendar listing to sign up. Bring friends, family and neighbors! And while this is a free class, donations are welcome in support of Manitowoc Public Library.

The library is a great place to meet new people, outside of work and school. It's also simply a wonderful safe, quiet and warm place to be. As a college student myself, I love having a quiet place to study. These are just a few reasons I decided to hold this fundraiser for MPL. I hope you can make it!



Ariane Gunderson (Photo: Provided)

If you can't make it, we are also having some free candlelight yoga sessions in the fall! Mark your calendars for Sept. 18 and Oct. 2. Class begins at 7 p.m. in the Balkansky Community Room at Manitowoc Public Library. This class is suitable for everybody! Come as you are, no experience needed. Registration at [www.manitowoclibrary.org](http://www.manitowoclibrary.org) is also required for these classes.

If you are interested in coming to a class at our hot yoga studio, find us at 3114 Memorial Drive in Two Rivers. We are neighbors with Tapped on the Lakeshore. Find our schedule online at [www.yogibeeryoga.com](http://www.yogibeeryoga.com).

Thank you for allowing me this introduction, and I can't wait to see everyone at one of these upcoming yoga experiences at Manitowoc Public Library!

*Ariane Gunderson is studio manager at Yogi Beer Yoga.*