




Friends of the  
Sun Prairie Public Library

# 2019 Writing Contest Anthology

## "Why I Love My Library"



I love my  
library  
because...



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## Introduction

In 2018, the Friends of the Sun Prairie Public Library began planning something new and exciting: a writing contest, to be held in conjunction with the 20 year celebration of the Sun Prairie Public Library! The theme of the contest was *"Why I Love My Library."* We hoped this theme would spark creativity and encourage people to tell their own library stories. Contest entries could be in the form of essay, short story, poetry or other forms of writing, and had a suggested maximum of 500 words.

The contest ran from February 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019, and we were thrilled to receive 47 entries from people of all ages. A winning essay was chosen from each of three age categories: Kindergarten – Grade 5; Grades 6-12; and Adult. Winners were awarded a prize at a Recognition Celebration on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Selecting the winning entries was no easy task-- all of the entries were great, as you will see in this anthology.

The styles and formats varied widely: some were handwritten, some were in poetic form, others were written as letters or journal entries, some were very short, some were longer; and no two entries were quite alike. But they all demonstrated a love and appreciation for the Sun Prairie Public Library, a sentiment shared deeply by the Friends of the Library. We hope that you will enjoy reading these wonderful tributes to our library as much as we have.

*- The Friends of the Sun Prairie Public Library*





**Category:**

**GRADES 6 - 12**







## Why I Love My Library

Books are plentiful expressions of thought, so it is no surprise that libraries are reflections of the many lessons taught through literature. Every element that goes into a library is as carefully considered as each word written in a storybook. The Sun Prairie Public Library exemplifies many admirable qualities and has proved that it is no challenge to fall in love with. Our local library encouraged my curiosity and creativity, and taught me what it means to be a supportive member of the Sun Prairie community.

The library helped open my young eyes to the world of storytelling, causing my childish curiosity to grow into an appreciation for literature. I have an early memory of sitting in the story time room, eagerly awaiting the story. I listened and watched attentively. Each moment was taken beautifully into the next by the efforts of the library staff. Their hard work and dedication brought me into a world where my mind was free to roam. Because of this deep and early connection, my young mind is still flourishing from those story time days. The staff of the library sparked my curiosity in the world around me. I am endlessly grateful. I love those who dedicated their time to the children of our community to give them the chance to love stories as greatly as they do.

The Sun Prairie Public Library is a harbor for imagination. Many events have been organized and hosted well there. Namely, the Crazy Craft Contest was a wonderful experience. My grandfather and I were given the chance by the contest to create something only the two of us could think of. Activities like this assisted me in understanding that my imagination is a wonderful, good place. To have such encouragement of creativity from my very own library was, and still is, quite meaningful.

Libraries are only as strong as their staff, and ours are incredible. They helped teach me what being a good community member means. During the summer, the reading program offers incentives for children to continue reading while school is out. Through this, the youth of the community are set on a path to being well literate people. The staff also offers Teen Late Nights, and by hosting such events they show they support the teenagers of this town. Lastly, the library workers organize many summer and year round events that bring families closer together. The people working at our library truly care about making Sun Prairie a better place, and it shows.

The Sun Prairie Public Library is a central part of this city. Curiosity is greatly encouraged, creativity explodes throughout the entire building, and the staff members are role models for the community. I share a deep love with everything my library represents and has taught me. Books are only as good as their authors. Libraries are only as good as those who work there and what they encourage. The Sun Prairie Public Library is wonderful.

By: Madeline Shea

***“Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.”***

*-Laura Bush*

I feel like the Sun Prairie Library opens the doors to learning for everyone in my community. First of all, I love it for the atmosphere. When stepping into the library, you are welcomed with calming hues of beige, accommodated by spacious ceilings. Further in, there are the rich colors of the child's area. Personally, that's my favorite space. There is even an opening to a sunny patio overlooking the prairie where you can enjoy the beauty of reading and the environment all in one. I think this is cool because it connects to the town name, Sun Prairie. Around the same section, there is an open project space for kids too; a colorful location for creativity. My favorite touch in that region is the fish tank. I could spend hours kneeling there, just watching the vibrant fish glide on the invisible currents. One day after staying there too long, I was inspired to write a 5-page short story on them. I have no regrets.

When you have vibrant areas like these, you also need soothing spaces to balance them. That's what is included in the Sun Prairie library as well. Laying back and reading in other sections of the library is a reflective experience; the world fades around you and non-stop motion of daily life can finally come to a rest. It cultivates a location that helps you get things done when you need to.

This is only one reason; the employees are another one of the essential constituents to making the library wonderful. Unlike in the movies, where angry librarians with arched eyebrows aggressively shush people, the staff is always radiant, welcoming people with smiles and never hesitating to lend a helping hand.

Now, a concluding reason why I admire my library would be all of the resources. With over 12,000 resources available for checkout, including over 6,000 for children I can always find *something to read*. It has many items; books, audiobooks, movies, and more. This is helpful to me because I can check out ebooks on days when I can't get to the library or so I can enjoy less costly family movie nights, with a screen flickering light and the senses of happiness or sadness brimming the air.

These are a few reasons why I love my library. I feel like a comfortable atmosphere is always beneficial, cheerful employees can enlighten any day, and that resources of all kinds are notably useful. All of these elements of the library reflect the quote at the beginning. I've learned so many things, from the location of fantasy worlds to how to make hot chocolate. This is why I love the Sun Prairie Library. Like in the quote, it opens the doors to learning for me and many others in my community.

By: Ella Anneling

Carla walked through the large library doors, a bubbly excitement inside her. She *adored* reading. Her brother Oscar immediately sprinted away, Mom right behind. Carla knew she had plenty of time, as her mom wanted to get Oscar into poetry, despite Oscar being four. So Carla walked around casually, plucking interesting books from their shelves. As she continued she discovered a messy table covered in books. She dropped her books and began cleaning the mess. Suddenly she noticed something unlike the other books. It was a mishmash of messy papers tied with a frayed string. The cover had messy handwriting saying "*why I love my library*". Carla picked it up. Some kid must've made a book and forgotten it. Carla fell into a chair and opened the small book curiously. The penmanship was awful and there were mistakes everywhere. Yet, Carla didn't dismiss it as bad. For she understood that the language pouring from the pages of a book could be spoken by any age, any tongue. Later she was glad she'd taken a chance, for that book held beautiful insight, inspired by an enjoyment of literature and a curiosity to seek out knowledge. Fixed, it read:

*Why do I love my library? Well because it's magic! But why's it magic? I thought it was fairies, but Mama said it's because the library can accomplish many things. It can give people almost anything they ask (I don't buy it because I still haven't gotten the candy I want) But mommy said it doesn't give people physical things, it gives them inspiration, ideas, or entertainment! She said fiction can give people excitement or an escape from reality. She said nonfiction can allow people to learn new things or see something a new way. But later I thought more and realized our mistake. We kept saying the library is magic, but it's not. It's the adventures kept within that are so special! Made unique by the imagination placed inside!*

By now Carla was so engaged she hadn't noticed her mother and brother until they were standing over her. Carla glanced up. Her mother was holding a shredded book with Oscar beside her. Oscar had destroyed a book, and they were leaving. Suddenly Oscar's eyes lit with interest as he spotted the papers in Carla's hand. "Wat's dat?" He asked, grabbing at the package. "Nothing," Carla replied, trying to yank it away. Oscar grabbed the papers and pulled, breaking the string. Papers flew and Carla's mother grabbed them, then threw them into the trash. Carla's mom grabbed Oscar and Carla, then marched away. Carla grew upset because she wanted to learn the insight of a fellow book enthusiast. She could never find something quite the same. Suddenly a thought occurred to her. Anyone could write, why not her? She silently made a promise, one day she'd unearth the magic of literature and share her ideas with everyone, just as the young writer had. As she was leaving Carla spotted one last sentence. *That's why I love my library.*

By: Fiona Crowley

August 19

Hey, I'm Aaliyah, I'm 15 and this is my new journal. My Abuela got me this for my birthday, she said if I didn't write in it she would take it right back to the store. It's my third week in a new town. Sun Prairie's cool, but it's awful hot, and I miss my friends. This journal is dumb, it's not going to fix my loneliness, wanting to go home and feeling trapped.

August 23

My Abuela is sending me to stay with her librarian friend.

August 25

The librarian seems nice, I can't remember her name though. The library is pretty cool, it has tall bookshelves and comfy chairs. I'm going to start looking around.

August 26

It's only been a day, but I've already "traveled" to Mexico, Italy, everywhere, through books. I always feel excited when I walk in. I should feel trapped, but I feel like I can go anywhere by picking up a book.

August 27

I'm in a way better mood than this morning. I checked my "best friend's" Instagram and saw her posts with her new bestie, it hasn't been a month and she replaced me. I was sitting in the corner reading about politics, when the librarian came to me and asked what's wrong. I told her nothing she would understand. She walked away and motioned me to follow. She led us to the teens' book section. She said characters in these books are dealing with all different problems, and know how you feel. These books would help me, these characters would bring me into their life. Books aren't therapists I said. I was wrong, books do make you feel better. All those characters understand me.

August 29

Today is my last day with the librarian. I've never understood people who said they felt at home somewhere that wasn't their house. Now I understand, the library is where I'm accepted. Whatever mood you're in the library will help you. I'm going to start school soon, but I won't be alone. All the characters will be with me, the stories inside my head. Whenever the world feels like it's crashing down, I pick a book and think of the endless possibilities.

September 2

School starts tomorrow. I went to the library to see the nice librarian, turns out her name is Ms. Walker. She wished me luck and handed me a book about traveling the world. She told me if I ever felt like everything was wrong, read. If I had problems, read. Knowledge was at my fingertips.

September 8

School is hard, the library, Ms.Walker, and Abuela keep me going. We had to write an essay for class about where we felt we belonged, mine was on the library. Ms.Walker liked one sentence in particular. "If the library walls could talk, they would share the story of faraway lands and of the different people they see every day." I'll continue to travel the shelves, reach for the characters, and check out the past. For now, I'm going to finish my book.

Bye Journal, Aaliyah

## **More Than Meets the Eye**

Brick and Mortar,  
on the outside.  
But really,  
there's more than meets the eye

You'd never suspect,  
the hidden world within.  
So much of... everything!  
Where to even begin?!

An aroma of restfulness,  
hoovers in the air.  
Surrounding the warm sunlight,  
and the super comfy chairs

So many characters,  
living inside the books on the shelves.  
Each so relatable,  
from dogs- to elves

A countless number of worlds,  
to discover and explore.  
Futuristic, historical,  
dystopias galore

Ample adventures,  
filling each and every world.  
So nail biting and hand wringing,  
the pages end up curled

Plenty of morals,  
woven in between the pages.  
Lessons so powerful,  
they have been passed down through the ages

Overall, such an inspiring place,  
filled with knowledge, entertainment, and fun!  
Such an astounding place,  
second to none!

I love my library!  
I hope you do too!  
If not, go in and have a look,  
And you'll find these words to be true!

By: Hudson Eisenrich

“When in doubt go to the library” JK Rowling, who wrote this quote, was correct. Libraries are awesome places! Somewhere to meet. Somewhere to learn. Somewhere to enjoy. The Sun Prairie Public Library is a welcoming and comfortable place to hang out, read a book or take a class. I have enjoyed several activities at this public sanctuary, such as a slime making class, the summer reading program and many more. I am involved in Kids 4, a film club, which is housed in the same building as the library, so I come weekly looking for new and exciting adventures in print, from books on cooking to crafts, I can always find several books to check out. Interestingly enough my newest favorite find is the Playaway portable books, I recently went on a road trip and they are a great way to listen to books in a car. I relish in the other activities offered at the library such as the scavenger hunt and guess that book. Resourcing and downloading, my private hideaway is filled with information and a friendly librarian who is willing to help when I ask. Looking at my check out history you will find I like buzz books by the dozen, Baby Sitters Club, Dork Diaries and graphic novels along with magazines such as the Owl Magazine. The library has so many resources for me to enjoy and each time I come I find something new to explore. I have loved the library since I was little, I read my first chapter book at the library and subsequently I have read many more books since that time. So I strongly encourage you when in doubt, go to the Library.

By: Liberty Fiesel

Frantic college student studying for exams;  
tired mom trying to entertain her restless children;  
nerdy teenager looking for some like-minded friends;  
sweet old couple relaxing by the fireplace;

Libraries have been a cornucopia of knowledge and community for centuries.

The amazement of the innumerable rows of books, the wonder of all that knowledge at one's fingertips, the enchantment is the part of the library that has been remembered for generations, and hopefully generations to come.

I know this sounds cheesy, but there truly is something to be said for physical books: The worn down smell, the hard cover, the questionable crumbs, the forgotten bookmarks.

Some people may argue that it would be easier and more practical to solely use e-books. But to me, the library is more than just books; its fellowship, its comfy chairs, friendly staff, and the books are just an added perk.

The Sun Prairie Public Library is always the perfect place to spend long summer afternoons, cold wintery weekends, and everywhere in between.

And that's why I love my library.

-M.C. Friedman



**For The Love Of Literature**  
**By Rose Hisson**

Why does one love a library, you ask,  
The answer's not the building or the shelves.  
Our lives are but a never - ending task  
And stories, books can help us free ourselves.  
Their legends, whether fiction or fact, can  
Give us escape from the troubles and strife  
That no matter what, where, why, how, or when  
Most always seem to plague one's joys in life.  
Tomes of tales, doesn't matter what subject  
Mystery, fantasy, romance, poems  
Take us to a world where we can connect  
With places exotic, realistic or unknown  
With characters, whether good or corrupt,  
Who our view of the real world can disrupt.

"Why I Love My Library"  
By: Justin Kohl February 2019

I love my library because whenever I need or want to check out a book they have one there for me. One of my favorite authors is James Patterson. Whenever I'm in the mood to read a James Patterson book, I can always go to the library and they will have one there just waiting to be checked out. Mike Lupica is also one of my favorite authors and if I want one of his books, they will have one there for me to come and read or check out! I can always go and get a book instead of having to go and buy it at the store. Another example of why our hometown library is so amazing is that they have so much more than just books! There are movies, computers, printers, places to read *and* kind staff who are willing to help you to find anything in the library. The next thing our awesome library has is the summer reading program! I love doing this program! It encourages me to try new books that I otherwise wouldn't have read and it has some really cool prizes like free passes to Mallard games, the Milwaukee Public Museum and a free scoop of ice cream at Beans 'N Cream. They also give away free books for completing parts of the extra challenge! A third and final thing that is amazing about our library is that they hold all kinds of events during the summer *and* winter months. One of my all time favorite activities they have held is a tie dye station where you have to bring your own shirt but then you can dye it there. Another activity the library puts on is the big Summer Reading Program Kickoff where there is usually jugglers or jokesters cracking you up! Overall I believe that we have one of the best public libraries in the Madison Area. Go Sun Prairie Public Library!

Sanaa Semia

Why I Love My Library - In Limericks

They ask me why I love my library.  
I tell them books are quite extraordinary.  
I can sit and I can read  
As much as I please,  
And it helps to build my vocabulary.

With each page I turn, there is a new journey.  
Adventure and danger, without any worries.  
The words on the pages  
Spark my imagination.  
I read and I read, but not in a hurry.

Aisles and aisles of hardcover books,  
Way more interesting than my school textbooks.  
Fantasy and fiction  
Are my addiction.  
There are so many; I continue to look.

But how to choose the story for me,  
One with which my taste shall agree.  
Who do I ask  
To complete this task?  
I look, but there is no one I can see...

Oh, how about the friendly staff?  
They greet me with a smile and a laugh.  
They help me look  
For an enjoyable book.  
I check it out, and that is that.

Faith Vue

Sun Prairie Public Library

Why I Love My Library

8 March 2019

There are many reasons why I love that my community has the Sun Prairie Public Library. They have a wide array of book selections, they allow members to gain access to machinery that they may not personally have, and the environment is a safe head space to be able to walk into. Since I was a child I've been visiting the Sun Prairie Public Library, and still I find the time to bask myself in the environment they have there.

Since I was a kid I've been working my way through the doors of the public library in Sun Prairie. My favorite past time as a kid was to read, and I always found a way to get a new book each week. Although I was just a kid I could be dropped off here for hours on end and still not get enough of the environment. My all time favorite book was actually discovered here - The Storyteller by Antonia Michaelis. It was probably during my freshman year of high school that I discovered this book and fell in love with it completely. The characters were extremely complex and you found yourself holding your breath on multiple occasions. When I fell in love with the entire creation of the book as a whole and realized it wasn't that popular amongst readers, I looked it up to gain more information on it. What I discovered was that it was originally a German book, which could be the reason why it wasn't very popular in America and why it was such a hard book to find. Without the Sun Prairie Public Library, I don't think I would've enjoyed my childhood as much as I had.

Through the public library in Sun Prairie I was able to enjoy my youth to the fullest of its extent. I discovered my favorite quiet spaces, my interests in literature, and my favorite book in

that building. The librarians and volunteers were able to always help me when I had questions and I never felt uncomfortable in the environment. As I am graduating high school, I only wish I could be able to visit it as much as I do in the future. Until then, I am so very thankful for the Sun Prairie Library for making my childhood as amazing as it was.

When I first learned we were moving to Sun Prairie, my mom drove me and my siblings around on a tour of all the important places. Of course the one place I was most looking forward to was the library. My face lit up when I saw the massive modern building. With excitement in my voice, I squealed, "THAT'S THE LIBRARY?!" I could not wait to get inside and explore and it quickly became my favorite place in my new town. How it makes me feel, how many different areas it has, and all the clubs and activities they offer make it a great place. Because of these reasons and more is why I love my library.

The library helps me relieve stress, feel better, and gives me a safe place to hang out. One of the best feelings is when we pull up to the library with our car full of books. I start to feel excited about new books and all the books I will search for. I know I could find anything I want to read or learn about.

Then, when I walk up to the big wooden doors I barely get the door open and I am already thinking of everything I will do. Every visit goes the same. I return my books and go drop my bag off with my mom who will be sitting and reading in the kids section. I always go straight to the graphic novel section first. Then I like to go to the adults sewing section and admire the beautiful projects or look through the arts and crafts books which are exploding with color. I must spend time in the cooking aisle because I try to always have at least one cookbook to try the recipes at home. If I could stay there for hours and hours of reading, searching, and homeworking I would!

Another reason why I think my library is so cool is all the clubs and activities for teens. They are so much fun. I love the craft ones. Making buttons, bags, and tassels was the best. My favorite memory was with my friends during teen night. We went to the Harry Potter-themed event. We had so much fun assembling the sparkling snitch, I put on HILARIOUS plays with the puppets, the pizza was delicious, we drank "*ButterBeer*," and watched the movie *Fantastic Beast*. *Let's just say there were a lots of laughs.*

For all these reasons and much more, this is why I love my library. As Albert Einstein once said, "The only thing you need to know is the location of the library." I can't wait to go to the library again. I hope I can go tomorrow!

By: Alanah Wilson



**Category:**

**ADULTS**







Why I Love My Library  
By  
Katie TerBeek

No one will argue that divorce is a terrible thing – even when it is the right choice to make for everyone involved. It tears apart homes, devastates finances, ruins friendships, and can cause insurmountable grief and guilt. These were my circumstances in the beginning of 2011 when I found myself newly single for the first time in my adult life and living on my own for the first time in my life.

This was a time of tremendous upheaval and I found myself alone in a new city with no job and a dwindling savings account. I applied to every job I was even remotely qualified for, but nothing was happening on that front. To make matters worse, I was exceedingly lonely and unsure how to go about making new friends.

A month or so after settling into my new city, I found myself outside the local library while on a walk. In all of the turmoil of my new life, I had forgotten about the library. I didn't have any particular goal in mind when I opened the doors and walked in except to get my new library card. I just knew that there'd be some piece of fiction there to help me escape into a better place for a little while.

After finishing that first book I checked out, I went back for another. But that next time, I also spent some time on the library's computers and realized that I could utilize their internet for free and was able to save some of my quickly dwindling savings by forgoing my own internet at home. Not only that, I was able to cancel my movie subscription service because the library had all of the movies and TV shows I could want to watch on Blu-Ray with a generous borrowing timeline. My library was helping me save money.

But I was still without a job and applications and resume submissions were going unanswered. It was about a month and a half after obtaining my new library card that I discovered a section of books for entrepreneurs. I had never considered going into business for myself before but a few books caught my eye. To make a long story short, I found the encouragement and blueprint for starting up a dog-walking business within the pages of those books. Within a week, I had fliers and ads up around my city and within two weeks, I had my first clients. My library was helping me earn money.

Through starting my own small business, I was able to support myself, gain confidence, form lasting bonds with new people, and become a contributing member to my local community. If not for my library providing support when I needed it and helping to spark a new business venture, I'm not sure where I'd be today. And that is why I love my library.

The book worms, the bibliophiles, the readers- you've seen them at the library pacing the aisles with measured steps. An extended finger caresses each volume, leading the way like a divining rod pointing the intellectually thirsty toward inky waters. It was they who charted the boundary lines between fiction and non-fiction, called each of the genres by name and branded the spine of every book with a mysterious rune.

They are their own subculture with their own secret language; using words like hubris, protagonist, and trope. They have a paperback tucked in a pocket, a shoulder bag heavy with books, stacks of novels filling their arms and a pile of book marks as currency. While the world might think them serious and quiet, call them bookish as if that posed no threat, you are not deceived.

You have watched the printed words work their magic as stories unfold behind their ever-scanning eyes, creating the most incredible of illusions, the most hallucinogenic of experiences. They possess amongst them the knowledge of all written history, the morals of a thousand tales, and the adventures of heroes unnumbered. They see the world as it was, the world as it is, and the world as it could be.

They have lived a thousand lives and relish the thought of a thousand more. They are revolutionaries, visionaries, and scholars. They can escape between the pages in an instant, invent innumerable possibilities, and if they can't disassemble and reassemble an engine or recall all of the details of the Guttenberg press, well, they know just where that reference book is.

When they're near, you will remember to whisper in the library. You will notice the scent of paper and ink that fragrances the air and enjoy the sound of a page being turned. You

will recall a half-forgotten tale from your youth and wonder if you too shouldn't take home just a few books.

Is there a slight buzz to the novel you checked out? Does it have some magnetic property? Surely it must as you notice yourself thinking about it throughout the day, drawn to it regardless of your best intentions only to find that it is long past your bed time and you just can't seem to put it down. Is it contagious? Have you caught it? Have you become one of them?

There is only one way to find out. Tomorrow you will take the book you have finished back to the library and check out some more. Just to be sure you're not one of them, that you too haven't become: a bookworm, a bibliophile, a reader.

i love my library  
because  
it is not  
my  
phone.

By: David Cox

### **LINKcat puts the world at my fingertips.**

There is so much to love about the Sun Prairie Public Library – from the prairie style architecture of the building to the numerous activities and programs for all ages.

But my favorite thing is the LINKcat app I can use on my phone to access the library's vast holdings of books, music, movies and periodicals. LINKcat's online resources connect me to the entire South Central Library system of seven counties!

So if someone recommends a book, I read a good book review, or see something interesting in a catalog, I simply go online and search for that author or title. If the book is in the system I place a hold and then get an email notification when it's on the shelf waiting for me. Quick and easy!

After reading the book I might end up purchasing it from a bookstore for my own collection. But my bookshelves are getting crowded, so the SPPL saves me space and money.

When it's time to return the book, I can use the convenient drive-through book drop off if I'm in a hurry. Otherwise I can return the book inside and browse for more reading or music. I might even find a treasure (or a cookie) at the Read Before Bookstore.

The staff at SPPL is friendly and helpful. It's always a pleasure to use the reading room with the beautiful stone fireplace. Whatever your age, there are an astounding amount of activities and events offered at the library. Small children will enjoy coming to story time and picking out books to take home. Students have a comfortable place to study and do their homework.. Genealogist can research their ancestry with online tools. Travelers can learn about their next destination. Check out the many programs, lectures, concerts and workshops offered frequently at SPPL. Reserve a meeting or conference room for your local groups or organization.

The Sun Prairie Public Library is a true gem in our community.

Dana Derber

## Side by Side

By Blake Higley

Thousands of stories stacked side by side,  
Tell tales from the future and before our time.  
Walking through the aisles spaced five feet wide,  
we can learn anything without spending a dime.

Need inspiration? try Angelou's 'Still I Rise',  
Or maybe something more dangerous with spies and bad guys.  
Whatever you're looking for, in this Library it lies,  
Just walk around this castle and open your eyes!

But maybe more interesting than the books themselves,  
Are the humans that roam and explore these shelves.  
From the old and wise to my little one with blue eyes,  
We search and we learn and we grow with pride.

Just take a look back at history,  
A little before our time, both you and me,  
Credit to Ben for The Library Company,  
Everything's connected, don't you see?

Within these walls built in 1999,  
We still believe to support the common good is divine,  
I love this Library because it is *ours*, not mine,  
So just like our books, let's stand side by side.

My heavy bag, overstuffed with an arsenal of toddler distractions, drops to the ground with a solid thud. My body follows collapsing into the soft, calming blues and greens of the too-big-chair. I join the other weary parents, and watch my toddler lumber towards the toy train. His excitement muted only by his thick snowsuit.

As he joins the other children playing before storytime I breathe in the smell of books and crayons, letting the warmth of the sun soaked windows wrap itself around me. I want to crawl into these book-lined shelves and set up residence between the dog-eared plot lines and surprise endings. My eyes are heavy in spite of the strong, black coffee I hold in my hand.

I jolt upright in a panic!

*Where are my keys? Did I leave them in the car...drop them in the lobby?*

I reach into my pocket but there's only that pesky Wocket In My Pocket! "Have you seen my keys?" I whisper, in an attempt not to draw attention.

"I saw Fox In Socks running that way with them", he says, pointing towards the train, in a voice clearly not concerned with drawing attention.

I see my son riding the train around wooden curves, through tunnels and bridges, pure joy on his face...*How did he squeeze himself onto a toy train?*

My eye catches a metallic glint against the light. *My keys!*

The train rounds the bend and Fox In Socks jumps from the caboose to the ground landing gracefully, gliding past me. Just as I turn to follow I see my toddler, in all his padded glory, go sailing through the air after him! He lurches toward the keys, but sits up with only a solitary sock in hand, the other flailing loosely behind the fox.

The Geiling On The Ceiling yells emphatically and reaches his arms down to us. I load my son on my back, get a running start, and jump to the Zelf On The Shelf who catapults us the rest of the way! We clasp hands with the Geiling who swings us across the room! We fly past the Bofa On The Sofa, who's acting as if he doesn't care, and land, eye to eye, with Fox In Socks.

"Excuse me", I say, "...but those are my keys!"

He backs away from me, looking mischievous, until he steps on the edge of his own loose sock and the keys go flying! My eye follows them cartwheeling through the air both of us grabbing for them...

The librarian's voice pierces the air, "Storytime is over!" I shake my head, disoriented, confused. She tilts her head to one side eyeing my outstretched hands, "Are you ok?"

"The Fox In Socks...", I say, "...he stole my keys!"

"Oh yes", she says laughing, "He's a sly rascal! I chased him down during a Naming Ceremony at Hogwarts last week...but that's why we come, isn't it? For the adventure? To have a bit of an escape?"

*\*Characters in this essay are based on Fox In Socks and There's A Wocket In My Pocket written by Dr. Suess and also Harry Potter written by J.K. Rowling.*



Why I Love My Library  
Amy Kohl - February 2019

Sun Prairie Public Library is an excellent resource in our community! I visit the library regularly with my two boys, and we have been doing so since they were babies. Our library is warm, welcoming, and offers something for everyone. The staff is always available to respond to questions and is willing to stop what they are doing to help library patrons. I love the excellent selection of books, and the inter-library loan system is second to none! Finding and requesting books online is simple and convenient. I have found the system to be fast and well organized. Having this system allows library patrons access to virtually every book one could think of! I also appreciate the accessibility of materials in our library. There is a large print section as well as audio books that make it easier for people of all abilities to access material. The Fireside Room is cozy and quiet for a study space or a warm place to sit with a good book, magazine, or newspaper. Finally, I love our library for the children's area and activities offered for children. When our boys were babies and toddlers, we regularly attended story time. The librarians chose engaging stories and encouraged movement and interaction with the stories being shared. Our boys learned to love choosing their own books and have searched out different parts of the children's area as they have grown (board books, picture books, early readers, chapter books, playaways, fiction, non-fiction, etc.). They have been involved in the summer library program since they were babies. Each year, the staff puts together a great line-up of entertainers and gathers prizes to encourage kids to come to the library and keep reading over the summer. Our boys have loved the opportunity to celebrate their reading with ice cream treats, baseball game passes, and even new books! It is exciting to see the "library champion" signs appear in yards around Sun Prairie each summer as kids finish their reading challenges. Sun Prairie Public Library should be enormously proud of such a huge program that helps to encourage kids to read over the summer in an effort to minimize regression in reading skills when students return to school in the fall. I love our library and all the services it offers. Our family uses the library regularly, and we appreciate having such an amazing place right in our own community!

## Why I Love My Library

To the music of *My Favorite Things* by Richard Rodgers

Books in all genres

And art exhibitions

Sonnets by Shakespeare & classics of Dickens

Books for adults, teens, and younger siblings

These are a few things the library brings

Turning off cell phones and reading in silence

Fiction best sellers

With glossy dust jackets

Brick fireplace in reading room fit for kings

These are a few things the library brings

Smiling librarians with deep knowledge bases

Helping out patrons with curious faces

Internet access for global connecting

These are a few things my library brings

Want an ebook

Movies or music

Hear a free lecture

I simply remember my library things

And then I do feel so glad

Films with subtitles and books in translation

Friends of the Library alive with passion

Chance to preview books before purchasing

These are my favorite library things

Popular titles with classic appeal

Storytime with puppets that make children squeal

Well-read staff never give away endings

These are my favorite library things

Comfy reading rooms and plans for expansion

Magazine essays with wit and sarcasm

Reservable small-group rooms for meeting

These are my favorite library things

Open daily

For the year round

And admission free

I simply remember what libraries bring

And then I do feel so glad!

## Why I Love My Library

Sean Patrick Little

I was a child when I first learned about the magic of the library. I remember watching *Reading Rainbow* on PBS. LeVar Burton would introduce me to a book, and when I went to the library, the book would be there in physical form, ready to be touched and held. For a kid who loved stories (*and TV*), it could not get any better than that. It cemented a relationship with my library that would never change. Over the forty-plus years of my life, I have spent countless hours poring through the stacks, finding stories that excite me, challenge me, and make me experience lives I will never be able to live. That's a debt that I will never be able to repay, no matter how much I accrue in late charges.

When I was older and school failed to capture my imagination, the library was there to support me and encourage me. The dull lessons I was learning about dates and places could be bolstered by non-fiction books that read like novels, books my teachers never mentioned which would paint history with bold, vivid strokes in my mind. If I wanted to learn about art, there were books with lavish photographs and instructions. In the Dark Ages (*before the Internet*), the library was the *only* place to get these things. Knowledge was still at your fingertips, but you had to use a card catalog or a librarian to gain access to the subjects you desired to learn.

When I was in college, the library became a refuge. It was quiet and reserved. There were plenty of work spaces where I could squirrel myself away from the drama of collegiate life and actually get work done. There were tall, solemn stacks of old books desperate for young minds to yank them off the shelves and use them, *really* use them. Not just to flip through and glean a quote or two for a paper--but to really delve into the text. Looking back, I never took enough advantage of those tomes. I wonder if it would even be possible to devote enough time to the eons of knowledge those college libraries held.

Throughout my life, libraries have remained a constant. I've lost contact with old friends. I've lost family members. My library is still there. In those times when I moved to a new town, the nearest library is something I visit within the first three days. A new library card is a must-get item, and I will not be truly settled in my new home until I've checked out a new book or a couple of DVDs. The library is always there. It is a beacon, a steadfast outpost of knowledge, engagement, and community.

The magic of my local library has not diminished since my days of seeking out picture books I saw on TV. If anything, it has only grown as the libraries have expanded their resources to support all media. Much of my life, who I was and who I am now, has been shaped in no small part by my relationship with my local library. I am, and will remain, an ardent supporter and defender of America's public libraries. They give so much and ask for so little.

## Why I Love My Libraries

Growing up on a small farm in Rusk County, WI, in the 1950's-1960's could have been a culturally deprived experience. It was not, because of the free public Ladysmith Library in the county seat funded by the generosity of Andrew Carnegie.

The red brick building with white columns had wide concrete steps rising up to a second level much like the former Sun Prairie library on Main Street. For us farm children, just arriving at the library was a thrill. The dark wooden floors glossed with wax, the stacks towering over us, the silence reminded me of walking into a forest of old-growth pines.

When school was out, our parents take us to that library. We'd load up with as many books as we could for the duration of the vacation. In elementary school, I borrowed Laura Ingalls Wilder's books, Kjelgaard's Big Red, Enid Bagnold's National Velvet, William Farley's Black Stallion and Anna Sewall's Black Beauty and sequels.

Of course there were other libraries--classroom libraries and then the high school library, where in 8th grade, I had the honor of checking out books. Thus, in the summer before high school, I read Jane Eyre and discovered Daphne du Maurier. She opened my mind to historical fiction and her classic Rebecca. I discovered Mary and Charles Lamb's Tales of Shakespeare which prepared me to actually enjoy Shakespeare's plays because I knew the plot before hand. Great Expectations by Dickens was next. And then I found the Three Musketeers by Dumas and hastened onto the sequels. Reading these books with their 19th century prose started writing with long sentences and plenty of clauses and phrases. Years of writing classes and a number of editors could hardly break me from writing like a Charlotte Bronte-wanna-be.

Later in high school, one of my favorite Christmas's was accompanied by The Mutiny on the Bounty, The Caine Mutiny, and a couple of Herman Wouk books which my dad and I read together. Dad and I continued sharing books for the rest of his life--we always had something to talk about. The Ladysmith library offered those books and had scripts of musicals with lyrics-- The King and I, Music Man, and My Fair Lady which introduced me to Shaw's Pygmalion. These books led me to my life-long enjoyment of musical theater and theater in general.

Reading Emily Dickinson's poems one year, I found "There's No Frigate Like a Book." I knew what she was talking about--adventure! I found and read I Married Adventure by Osa Johnson about adventures with her husband, Martin, a great wildlife photographer from the 1930's. Bitten by a travel bug at 16, I started pursuing adventure at 60 to Tunisia, then North Cape in Norway and the Ecuadorian Andes.

Libraries offer the opportunity to be self-educated, to expand one's knowledge beyond what was covered in classes, and to follow where one's curiosity led. So too, all this reading and its influence on my writing lead me to become an English teacher. No surprise there. And, most of the books I read came from public libraries--cheap and accessible. To say I love the library for its entertainment or for knowledge is an understatement--the books made me who I am today.

By: Jacqueline Martindale

## Always Reading

My mom and dad knew how much I loved to read. It was a grand occasion when the encyclopedia salesman showed up to sell us a set of World Books! My sisters, neighborhood kids and I would peruse these volumes for knowledge now found at the touch of a button on a smart phone.

In my parochial elementary school there was a library about the size of half a classroom and *Kon-tiki* by Thor Heyerdahl was consumed. I begged for coins to purchase books via the Weekly Reader and horse books were brought home to fantasize about riding. The family budget was limited, so an introduction to the children's section in the basement of the Carnegie-endowed local library ensured a continued appetite for reading. The building sported granite columns on the outside and beautiful woodwork indoors with cozy fireplaces. I discovered the Beany Malone series there. Right next door was the County Library (how lucky was I!) and *The Black Stallion* series were gobbled up. My high school and college libraries had favorite study carrels.

Because of my love to read, I have a stash of library cards saved from all the libraries where I have lived. The most valuable one at this point is the Sun Prairie Library card as I have used it for the last twenty years. I love the beauty and architecture of the building with its books, nooks and librarians. It is a sanctuary, a destination of knowledge and literature, a place to gather for book club, and many times a spot to enjoy friends who have come to be entertained or enlightened in the community room.

Sometimes I go for a bike ride and end up stopping at the library. I can spend time in the Read Before Book Store to find a favorite book or puzzle as a gift. I can research the safety and environmental records for the next car to buy. I can explore the stacks for interesting cookbooks or gardening treasure troves. I can find that most interesting novel whose author was recently interviewed on the radio. I can flip through a few magazines or newspapers in the Martha Renk Reading Room. I can relax next to the fireplace and admire the structure of the building and the views through its windows. I can just sit and read.

If I am snowbound or unable to head to the Sun Prairie Library in person, there is technology at hand to check on future reading adventures. Daily emails suggest new possibilities. The website is filled with connections to digitized reads, reminders of artwork displays, and dates for movies or presentations to see. There is even an app on my phone through which I can put a book on hold! My library is the encyclopedia to the mind.

I love my library because I love to read.

Cheryl Namyst

## Why I Love My Library by Lisa L. Nelson

Gentlepeople, children of all ages, behold the library:  
A world of worlds, a realm of magic, a place for you and for all.

First, walk through a corridor of friendship and community. On the right, a world of books, well loved and ready for new homes. Beverage and candy entice the young and old, and children's books go for a quarter. On the left, bubbles encase entire small humans and exotic animals roam. In this same room, people gather, and knowledge and craft grow.

Then, enter through heavy doors into a world of worlds. Turn left to hear children play—the music of laughter and wonder. A librarians of great knowledge stand ready to lead you into the world of your choice. A book about trains or insects or Australia? Like magic, she produces the very thing. Print, audio, video, toys—all free for the taking, but please, bring them back for another to enjoy.

Travel into the world of fiction with its stories of detectives, explorers, and lonely parsons. Men and women recreate their lives from burning ashes, explore the stars, or find love and friendship—all within the covers of a book. This is no mere escape, for fiction is a vessel for truth and can change lives in the course of a couple hundred pages.

Once you've filled your heart with stories, veer into a quiet world to sit and study or read the paper by the fire. Sunlight spills into this world, and silence wraps you in a blanket of peace. But more adventures await, so ready yourself to leave this world, if you dare, for shelves of music and movies and books to listen to in the comfort of your own car.

From here, another world beckons: The world of fact and knowledge and new beginnings awaits the next handyman, gardener, cook, or student of the stars, business, or medicine. Learn anything your heart desires: Origami, plumbing, business, travel. It's yours to discover, yours to taste. Stop and browse the internet, a world so vast you hardly know where to begin.

Now for the Inner Circle: A world for those unsatisfied with what has come so far but a world not for the faint of heart. Dystopias: Civilizations undone by virus, failed energy grids, falling orbits, and zombies. Magicians and mutants, vampires and werewolves, humans with talents as yet unknown. So many worlds! How to choose? The answer rests with a courageous guide, who leaves the safety of her desk at a moment's notice to lead you on your quest.

In this world of worlds called the library, treasure awaits. Come, expand the horizons of your mind, extend the reach of your spirit, and explore the depth and breadth of humanity. Or sit at home and experience the magic of downloading a book without leaving the couch. Push a button, touch a screen, and watch the book fall from the cloud. What a wondrous world!

# The House of Doors

A Vignette by Eric S. Piotrowski

I was ten years old, and bored. My friends were all doing chores. There was a house down the street — a strange, creepy house with big weird doors and strange sounds coming from inside. People had tried to lure me inside for years, people I trusted. With nothing better to do, I ventured inside.

I walked through the bizarre gate into the house and felt a presence to my right. Someone was watching me, but they didn't speak, so neither did I. With nervous footsteps, I hurried to one of the doors and peeked inside. Suddenly I was grabbed by the neck and yanked through. I fell onto a cobblestone street, staring up at a disheveled man who grimaced at me.

"Where am I?" I asked, gazing at the oil lamps and horse-drawn carriages.

"You're in Amber," the man said. "This is the Land of Zelazny. You should spend some time here."

And so I did. For hours, I wandered the streets and met the royal family. I walked The Pattern and toured The Courts of Chaos. I fell in love with that land, a love like nothing I'd experienced before. For years afterward I returned again and again.

Another time I visited the House of Doors and stepped into a shire in the Land of Tolkien. I trekked to Mordor and threw jewelry into a volcano. I visited the Land of LeGuin and learned from the wizards. I visited the Land of King and made friends with a little girl who started fires. I visited the Land of Asimov and fell in love with a robot. I visited the Land of Morrison and spoke with ghosts.

The House of Doors became my favorite place. The person watching the entrance was, I learned, a lovely person who helped me find interesting new doors. I visited the Garden of Dickinson and met the things with feathers that perches in the soul. I toured the Garden of Cummings and greeted the busy monster manunkind. I wandered the Garden of Hughes and spoke of rivers, digging all jive.

Some doors took me to real places. I traveled into the past with Zinn and Brown and West and hooks. The guide Shirer took my hand and showed me how the Nazis rose and fell. The guide Goodwin introduced me to Abraham Lincoln and The Roosevelts. The guide Chomsky took me to East Timor and helped me fall in love with that beautiful land.

Soon I learned there were other magical houses with their own doors. Everywhere I went, I found houses filled with exciting doors. Eventually I learned how to make doors of my own. Now I'm the one snatching people into crazy lands — lands of conflict, love, and prison escapes. I get to teach young people how to make doors, and I owe it all to the creepy House of Doors down the street.

And that's why I love my library.



## To You, With Love

Growing up, I sometimes was allowed to order a new book through my school's Scholastic book program. But most of the time when I asked for a particular title or subject, my mom would tell me to "see if they have it at the library." My teenage self might have rolled her eyes and called her "cheap." But she would take me there herself, keeping me company as we browsed the shelves of our 800-square-foot library in a small prairie town near the Minnesota River. As my love for reading grew, we would divide and conquer the stacks together to try to find a book I hadn't yet read.

I was spellbound by the "Betsy-Tacy" stories of Maud Hart Lovelace, and the Laura Ingalls Wilder "Little House" books, as they were both set in my *own* neck of the woods. Through her novels, Judy Blume lent me virtual friends in those years before social media. Colorful art books substituted for museum visits before I could travel on my own. One summer, after my uncle taught me the basics of water skiing, I went to the library to find a book that would show me how to get up on one ski and slalom.

We now have the internet for much of that, but a book from the library is still compelling in its own right. Sometimes timeworn from many loans, its warmth beckons me to learn its secrets. Those faint food splatters on a recipe in a borrowed cookbook—is that a recipe I should try, too? In the pages of a copy of *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* I find a Kwik Trip gas receipt which I adopt as a bookmark—it must have served the previous borrower just as well.

At the same time, the new books promise serendipitous discovery within their uniforms of crisp reinforced binding and fresh barcode stickers. And long hold lists for those popular titles assure me I share a common interest with my community.

My love for the library, however, isn't all one of romance. Practicality is in my roots; frugality is a family value I can't escape. In a consumer culture, I can browse the library and come home with an armful of books, magazines, movies, and music, and never suffer buyer's remorse. If retail therapy really can boost one's mood, (no need to run to Target) my library will lift me up. And if my kids are with me, I don't need to limit their pleas of "I-need-it" with no's—let them fill their bags with books.

One last thing: Thank you to the Sun Prairie Library Board. I am grateful for the recent elimination of most overdue fines. Without effort, this policy has changed my language in regard to borrowing—the most basic transaction a library provides. When my young girls have a book due, I no longer cajole them with, "We need to return this or we're going to have to pay." I say, "We need to return this so *other* kids have a chance to read it." As a community, let us invest in our library for yet another generation, to share our love for learning and adventure.

(534 words; Nicole Riewe; March 2019)

## Why I love my Public Library

Theresa Stevens

My library is placed in a storybook setting, with trees to read under on a sunny day, prairie grasses swishing with the breezes, and colorful blooms eight months out of the year to entice the eyes, light floral notes to tickle the nose, and the gentle sound of humming bees. Simply put, it's magical. In the winter months when outdoor reading is hard to do in the frigid cold, a warm, crackling fire can be found inside extending seasonal ambiance and comfort of it's patrons. The stones of yesteryear making up the façade only add to the idyllic setting of a cottage on the prairie surrounded by forest. This is of course, fine details which are only cosmetic with nods to human comfort, yet these details are what make this library my favorite library.

The Sun Prairie Library is made up of so much more than the building and features. As they say, "It's what's on the inside that counts," and is true here. Upon opening the primary doors, a sense of community immediately greets you. Artwork and community history, a book store with coffee and tea, and a room available for community meetings, functions and performances. Step further inside and you feel at home. It doesn't matter if you were there the day before, or it's been a month or year later, the feeling of "home" envelopes you like a warm embrace. From the friendly welcomes by staff, to seeing favorite titles on the shelves, comfortable sitting areas, to the sounds of children playing, the library is the living room of our community.

One of my family's favorite features of our library though is a person who works there. Ms. Lynn is a community icon that has pulled new moms out of postpartum depression, engaged children from days old to many years old, can recommend classics to new books for any level of reading, and educates in a way that is approachable for both children and parents. The children's area is fun and engaging for little patrons six years old and younger. And the Summer Reading Program! Oh, we would be a bored bunch without that amazing program. The prizes are just as fun as the stories we read to accrue them. It's so much more than a proud yard sign, although it is fun to drive through town and see many other participants.

My library is a true community gem. A gem that deserves our time and attention to maintaining the building and quality people within. No matter how many new buildings are built in Sun Prairie, the library will forever be my favorite place to spend time at. The library welcomes all with wide open arms, and a curiosity about our own stories. It's a place to share, learn, engage, and participate in our community. I love my public library because it is everything listed here and so much more than words can ever describe.

## Why I Love My Library

By Marie True

As a little girl, I fell in love with books. A story can take you anywhere, and I wanted to go! Reading was a way to learn and live in someone else's shoes. Reading gave me a broader outlook of the world than I could've ever achieved living in 1980's small town Sun Prairie Wisconsin. My family didn't have a lot of money or time for books, but I didn't let that stop me. As soon as I was old enough to go alone, the library, then on the corner of Windsor and Bird Street, became my spot. I mastered the dewy decimal system and devoured books! As I grew older and my interest more varied, the library became a spot only when necessary for homework purposes, or the coveted computer time at school. The new public library was completed in 1999, the same year I graduated high school and moved away. I remember thinking how beautiful it looked and how it reminded me of the castles in the books of my youth. I moved back to Sun Prairie with my husband in 2005, knowing that it was where I wanted to raise my family. The way I use the library certainly has changed, starting with borrowing our first baby name book in 2011. Since then we have had almost weekly visits to our library for story time, and crafts, and books, and movies, and Legos, and the reading program, and of course, the still coveted computer time. I love the library because I love books, and because I want my children to love books. The library is a special space that ANYONE can go to escape the doldrums of their everyday lives. To explore the world in new ways. To meet new friends and visit with old friends. It's a place we can teach our children that it's ok to sing and dance and be silly, no matter your age! The Library is a place you can go, that can take you anywhere, and in my opinion, that's a pretty spectacular place to be.



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