

Check It Out! Podcast Transcript
Episode #28
“Short stories on bestsellers, book notes and third-graders”
Sno-Isle Libraries, June 21, 2019



- Ken Harvey: 00:09 Welcome to season 2 and episode 28 of Check It Out! The Sno-Isle Libraries podcast for lifelong learners with inquiring minds.
- Cindy Tingley: 00:16 The views and opinions expressed on this podcast may not necessarily reflect the official position of Sno-Isle Libraries.
- Ken Harvey: 00:24 Coming up next, we have an interesting featurette for you. We're calling it, A Library Surprise.
- Rilee Louangphakdy: 00:31 Before I begin, I just want to lay it out on the table that I am no bookworm. My favorite type of books are graphic novels, which is totally respectable, don't give me wrong. But aside from the occasional contemporary novels, I just don't know where else to look outside of my comfort zone. What genre should I tackle first? What is out there beyond best sellers? Now there is a term that shows exactly where I'm going with this story.
- Rilee Louangphakdy: 00:58 Sno-Isle Libraries has a few blogs in their website. One of these blogs is called The Biblio Files, which is written by the library staff you usually find at the information desk. Remember that term I used, beyond bestsellers? Well, on the Biblio Files blog there's a category with that same title, Beyond Best Sellers. This category is a place where readers can come together, receive reading suggestions, and exchange opinions about the books they read. Kind of like Yelp but for books.
- Rilee Louangphakdy: 01:28 Beyond Bestsellers is managed by the Reader Services Team, a group of staff that are passionate about books, music, and film. The Reader Services Team is led by lead librarian, Jackie Parker. Jackie likes to call Beyond Best Sellers a digital bring your own book club. What's even more interesting is that each month, there's a different theme for readers to focus on. For example, last month's theme was magical realism and the month before that was weird history. In the Beyond Best Seller's online reading community, everyone gets a chance to share their favorite genres, encourage others to explore outside of their regular reading taste, and rate and leave comments on what

they have sampled and completely read; hence digital bring your own book club.

- Rilee Louangphakdy: 02:12 A lot of readers have gone really involved in this online reading community, and I can see why. Whether it's graphic novels or contemporary novels, my favorite part about reading isn't necessarily the books, but it's the conversations that I could have with others and experiences I could share. With Beyond Bestsellers, you're doing just that, contributing to an ongoing conversation among readers that lives beyond the catalogs. You can check out Beyond Bestsellers through the Sno-Isle Libraries' website. For now, my name is Rilee Louangphakdy, the WSU Everett college student and library intern, looking for my next library surprise.
- Speaker 4: 02:52 Is there a preschooler running around in your life? Then check out the Sno-Isle Libraries' Countdown to Kindergarten: 100 Essential Picture Books. Find this book list and many more online at Sno-Isle Libraries.
- Ken Harvey: 03:07 We love hearing from our listeners and subscribers, especially if you enjoy the guest or have a suggestion for a future topic. Drop us a line at Check It Out! podcast at sno-isle.org. Again, that's Check It Out! podcast at sno-isle.org. And let us know what you're thinking. Don't be surprised if we read your comment or answer your question on our future podcast episode. Coming up next, Book Notes.
- Ken Harvey: 03:39 So in this Book NotesChris segment, I am welcoming a member of our Reader Services team, Kristi Sheeler, who along with other members of her team work to put together suggestions for Sno-Isle Library customers and for us, our podcast listeners about things that they should consider reading or listening to or watching that are available in our collection. So welcome Kristi.
- Kristi Sheeler: 04:06 Thank you.
- Ken Harvey: 04:06 Well, what did you come to offer our listeners? Do you have some suggestions for them?
- Kristi Sheeler: 04:14 I sure do, yeah. I have a couple of pretty timely suggestions for right now. So my first one is a fiction book called When She Woke by Hillary Jordan, and it's set in a near-future United States. It's a dystopian novel where abortion is illegal. And the main character is a woman who is convicted of murder and she's forced to undergo a procedure to dye her skin, so that when she's walking out in public everyone knows what crime

she has committed. And it's just a really emotional tale of a woman who is just struggling to find her place in the world that's pretty dark and unforgiving. And it's pretty atmospheric and really eerily real. So it's good for fans of the *The Handmaid's Tale*. So if you've watched the series and are kind of looking for your next thing, this is a great option. So that's *When She Woke* by Hillary Jordan. And it's available in all formats, including large type in our catalog. So that's great.

- Kristi Sheeler: 05:07 And then my second one is about immigration. It's called *Everyone Knows You Go Home* by Natalia Sylvester. It's actually my favorite book of 2017. It's about a woman who married into an immigrant family and she struggles to understand their past while also dealing with the challenges of raising a teenage cousin who had just crossed the border illegally, so he just joined their family. And at the same time, the ghost of her father-in-law is haunting her and visiting her, asking her to help him find forgiveness within the family before his spirit is forgotten. It's a really poignant and timely story, and it describes with heartbreaking reality how the immigrant experience can affect individuals and families and entire communities as a whole. And that's *Everyone Knows You Go Home* by Natalia Sylvester and we have that in print.
- Ken Harvey: 06:00 So these two titles available on our collection. You mentioned the second one *Everyone Goes Home*?
- Kristi Sheeler: 06:09 *Everyone Knows You Go Home*.
- Ken Harvey: 06:10 *Everyone Knows You Go Home*, said it's available in print. The first title was ...
- Kristi Sheeler: 06:15 *When She Woke*.
- Ken Harvey: 06:15 *When She Woke*, and that was available in ...
- Kristi Sheeler: 06:18 Everything. So we have it in large type, regular print, ebook, eAudio, audiobook CD.
- Ken Harvey: 06:24 Okay. So I just want to just ask a question. Large print, that's perfect for individuals who just the print to be a little larger for them?
- Kristi Sheeler: 06:34 Yeah. So if you have some sight problems, it's a great option. A lot of the seniors that I visit, I work for Library On Wheels Rail, a lot of them prefer to read in large print. And the type is a little bit bolder as well, so there's more contrast.

Ken Harvey: 06:46 Excellent. Well, that's a great reminder for our listeners to know that we try and serve individuals regardless of where they are in their life journey.

Kristi Sheeler: 06:55 Absolutely.

Ken Harvey: 06:56 And so I'd like to thank you again for those suggestions.

Kristi Sheeler: 06:59 Thank you.

Ken Harvey: 06:59 And we look forward to having you back in the future with some more suggestions for our listeners.

Kristi Sheeler: 07:05 Thanks so much.

Ken Harvey: 07:06 All right.

Speaker 4: 07:08 Want to get the latest business news and solid financial advice from the experts for free? You can, with your Sno-Isle Libraries account. Library customers can download the latest news and advice from publications like Entrepreneur, Kiplinger's, Fast Company, and Inc. You'll find feature stories around the business of technology, leadership, innovation, the stock market, retirement planning, and achieving financial success. All of that with a library card, just waiting for you online at Sno-Isle Libraries.

Ken Harvey: 07:39 We just want to take the opportunity to remind our audience that if you hear a podcast episode that covers something that is really meaningful to you, take the opportunity to share it with friends or with family or with co-workers and peers in your career. And there are number of ways to do that, that are just about liking it on social media and sharing it. What do you guys think?

Cindy Tingley: 08:04 Oh yeah, absolutely. You know right from your phone app, there's a share option. So that's a perfect place if you're listening on the go.

Paul Pitkin: 08:10 I get almost all of my podcast recommendations from my friends and from family members. And there's a ton of podcasts out there, and so you can save yourself a lot of trouble by sifting through bad ones by forwarding the good podcast to your friends. So the good podcast, which means Check It Out! Forward it, forward it, forward it. Your friends and family will love you for it.

Abe Martinez: 08:34 We are seated in the audience of the Edmonds Center For the Arts. On stage are about 60 kids from a variety of third grade classrooms who've made it to the finals in what has to be one of the craziest named programs hosted by Sno-Isle Libraries.

Speaker 8: 08:50 Good evening and welcome to the final event for Sno-Isle Libraries Mega-Fun, Biblio-Trivia, Rockem-Sockem Third-Grade Reading Challenge.

Abe Martinez: 09:03 Despite the odd name, the third grade reading challenge, which is what I'll call it for the rest of this piece represents an incredibly successful childhood reading program that Sno-Isle conducts each year in cooperation with dozens of public schools throughout Snohomish and Island counties.

Joy Feldman: 09:21 Well, the third grade reading challenge is a literary trivia program. And the program encourages children to have fun and to enjoy reading while also honing their literacy and teamwork skills.

Abe Martinez: 09:36 That's Joy Feldman, lead librarian for early literacy at Sno-Isle Libraries. For those unfamiliar with it, this third grade reading challenge is styled like a knowledge quiz bowl. Participating students agreed to read up to six prescribed books and are formed into teams of six to eight kids. Together, they take part in local challenges in any one of over 50 elementary schools. The highest scoring teams advance to regional semifinals and the winners there, move on to the final event where just seven or eight teams are represented out of the original 200 or more that began the program months ago. It's a big deal partly because of the way Sno-Isle has structured it. Other areas do have similar reading challenges.

Joy Feldman: 10:26 But they tend to focus on fourth and fifth grade or even above. And this makes our program a little bit unique that we have made the decision to focus on third grade. It's an important point in a children's education when students really shift from learning to read, and they're beginning to read to learn.

Abe Martinez: 10:47 This focus on third graders came as a result of the insights of one particularly ambitious librarian.

Jane Lopez-Santillana: 10:54 I'm Jane Lopez-Santillana. I'm the children's librarian at the Oak Harbor Library.

- Abe Martinez: 10:58 Jane came to Oak Harbor from Seattle Public Libraries, where their reading challenge focused on higher grade levels. She knew it could work at Sno-Isle too.
- Jane Lopez-Santillana: 11:08 But we wanted to focus on where the greatest need was, and at the time, I had done a lot of research. I knew that third grade statistically was a very important point in education. The reading scores from third grade are what they use as indicators for future success throughout all their schooling, including college. There are many statistics that say if they're not reading at grade level in third grade, then they are less likely to finish school, graduate out of high school. The dropout rates are often calculated using those third grade statistics.
- Abe Martinez: 11:42 It turns out that third grade is kind of a tipping point in education, and the key to future success is the ability to read. Given that, why wouldn't you want to have a program like the third grade reading challenge? Well, for one thing, you have to convince schools who are already pressed for classroom time to commit to something new. You also have to come up with a way to pay for it.
- Abe Martinez: 12:08 Jane found a way by starting out small, with just two Oak Harbor elementary schools in need of extra assistance. She partnered with a school district who had, at the time, a substantial reading grant provided by the Navy. In this case, it was particularly helpful to have lots of kids from military families. That grant paid for the program and for detailed assessments that were made available to Jane. The results, kids who participated in the reading challenge more than doubled their reading improvement compared with those who did not participate.
- Jane Lopez-Santillana: 12:44 Having that statistic really helped me to advocate for the continuation of the program. In the following year, we were able to include all five elementary schools in Oak Harbor as well as Coupeville and the school down in South Whidbey, so seven schools.
- Abe Martinez: 13:01 And now, seven years later, the program has spread throughout the Sno-Isle service area and is a highlight experience for hundreds of third graders each year. But it gets even better, the third grade reading challenge has proven to be a great tool for teaching teamwork. It provides a fun, new connection point between parents and their kids, and it's created new pathways for cooperation and trust between schools and local libraries.

- Abe Martinez: 13:29 We'll tell you how it all happened in our next look at the Sno-Isle Libraries' third grade reading challenge. For Sno-Isle Libraries, I'm Abe Martinez.
- Ken Harvey: 13:59 If you enjoy this podcast, please subscribe so you can receive every episode automatically. And until next time, remember your library has a lot to offer you. So what are you waiting for? Check it out.