

You're never too old to be read to

June is National Audiobook Month

I have fond memories of being read to as a child. I requested the same book at bedtime whenever I stayed at my grandmother's house. I first entered Narnia through my dad's voice as he read "The Magician's Nephew" to my sister and me in his big reading chair. Speaking a story aloud gives it such power and depth; even as a child, I understood the richness of language and words in the voices of those who read to me. This love of listening has not left me, so now I do much of my reading through audiobooks. June is Audio-book Month, so in case you haven't hopped on the audiobook train yet, let me introduce you to the wonderful, powerful world of spoken stories.

Let's start with the age-old question: Does listening to an audiobook count as reading? This debate has been around for a while, but the fact is that listening to an audiobook can make you a



Fuller

better reader. Studies show that listening to a book can improve comprehension by 76% and reading accuracy by 52%. It also teaches pronunciation, expands vocabulary, and helps develop critical thinking skills, according to sources cited by the Audio Publishers Association. Plus, audiobooks make reading accessible to those who can't read print books due to dyslexia, illiteracy, or poor eyesight.

Librarians and teachers encourage parents to read to their children, but the truth is that everyone can benefit from being read to. Personally, I have noticed that the books I remember most vividly were those I listened to. If you listen to an audiobook, you're not "cheating." You've put in dedicated hours and have received all the benefits of reading a book, gaining new perspectives, ideas, or pure entertainment.

Here's something else crucial to the audiobook experience: Narrators make all the difference. The best narrators bring the story to life and create an intimate reading experience with the power of their voice. However, I'm not afraid to turn off an audiobook if I don't like how the narrator is reading it! Some authors narrate their own books, while others are read by stage and screen actors who use their vocal talents to act out scenes and characters. If

you're not sure where to start in selecting an audiobook with a powerful narrator, peruse the winners of the annual Audie awards to find the year's best audiobooks in a variety of genres, as well as the top narrators.

Although I work full time, commute daily, and have a toddler, I still read extensively, thanks to audiobooks. Audiobooks transform the most mundane tasks — like doing dishes or driving home from work — into an experience that engages my mind and pulls me into a story. I look forward to getting in the car when I know another chapter of the book is waiting for me. Listening to audiobooks is also something I can share with those around me. Last month, I checked out a pile of children's books on CD for our road trip so we could listen to books together as a family.

Audiobooks are more expensive than print books, but they're free at your local library as CDs or Playaways. You can also download free digital audiobooks from Wisconsin's Digital Library at wplc.overdrive.com or through the free Libby app. Enter your library card number to start listening, no matter where you are!

(Jill Fuller is coordinator of marketing and communications for the Bridges Library System.)

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By THOMAS JOSEPH

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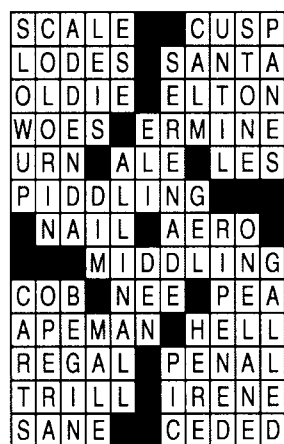
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IN BRIEF

Waukesha library to host discussion tonight on transgender issues

WAUKESHA — The Waukesha Public Library will hold an educational discussion on transgender issues today at 6:30 p.m.

This program will be led by OutReach Madison and will include a group of trained volunteers to speak about their personal experiences. They will discuss ways to decrease oppression and increase transgender empowerment as well.

For questions or more information, call 262-524-3682 or visit waukeshapubliclibrary.org. The library is located at 321 Wisconsin Ave.

Summer happenings at Elmbrook Humane Society

BROOKFIELD — Elmbrook Humane Society will host Thank Dog It's Friday and Kids Camp.

The Thank Dog It's Friday will take place Friday from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Elmbrook Humane Society facility at 20950 Enterprise Ave. in Brookfield.

Thank Dog It's Friday is a dog-themed event featuring lure coursing, swimming pools for dogs, raffles, food and beverages. The event offers free admission with nominal fees for lure coursing, food and beverage.

"We are very excited to once again host Thank Dog It's Friday, as it strengthens the bond between dogs and the people who adore them,"

said Executive Director Heather Gehrke. "This event is a great way to live our mission by promoting the human-animal bond."

Kids Camp will offer Animal Adventures for children ages 6-7 on July 23 or Aug. 9 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the cost is \$40 per child. They will also offer Kids for Critters for children ages 8-12 on June 20-21 or July 25-26 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the cost is \$75 per child.

All Kids Camps offer a shelter tour, animal interactions, fun animal-themed

games and crafts and art activities.

To register, call 262-782-9261 or email Sheila at sheila@ebhs.org.

Mukwonago Community Library to host Touch a Truck, other events

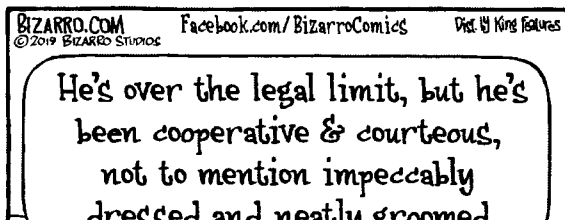
MUKWONAGO — The Mukwonago Community Library will host events within the upcoming weeks such as Touch a Truck on Friday and Backyard Birding on June 27.

On Friday, the Touch a Truck event will take place

from 10 a.m. to noon at the library. There will be diggers, tractors, dump trucks, police cars and more for children to get hands-on experience with.

The Purple Springs Memory Cafe: Backyard Birding event will take place on June 27 at 9:30 a.m. Those with memory loss and their care partner are invited to attend this informal social gathering for conversation, activities and refreshments. For first time attendees, register with the Alzheimer's Association at 800-272-3900.

Bizarro



Speedbump

