

HILLSBORO COMMUNITY LIBRARY NEWS

VOLUME 20: NUMBER 6 NOVEMBER / DECEMBER, 2025

Featured this Month

The Singular Miss Betty Brost by Connie Wanek

It's been 70 years since some of these stories were told to me. I was a small child learning about a world that my mother, Betty, had explored in her youth. My sister, Connie, is a poet, writer, and observer who challenged herself to document our mother's life in this very personal biography – which could be called a semi-autobiography. Why? Because Connie transcribed letters from Betty to her mom during her travels. I can hear her voice in all the letters. Connie has assembled many of Betty's own photos. To give her stories context, Connie has included historical facts of the culture and places where she traveled.

Many of you knew Betty Wanek, wife of Ralph D Wanek, who lived in her self-designed straw-bale house in Kingston, NM. Our matriarch, who's life spanned from 1924-2022, was born in a time when women with “mechanical aptitude” could become typing teachers instead of engineers or rocket scientists. Betty was ahead of her time. Way ahead!

In 1943, just out of high school, Betty and her friend Edna, traveled via buses and trains from Verona, Wisconsin south to see what they could see. They'd get a job in a cafeteria so they could eat for free, rent a room in someone's house, and pinched pennies day by day. They kept a journal and wrote down how much money they spent: “Edna – 14 cents, Betty – 21 cents”.

When working at Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, they managed to avoid getting married to every young man who was heading off to war. Over 35,000 naval pilots graduated during the war including President H.W. Bush.

They had the crazy idea of going to Mexico City – yes! Crazy in 1943, two young girls going to a foreign country! They didn't tell their parents until after they made it out alive! After very long bus rides they made it to California, learning to weld. They built “Liberty Ships” as “Wendy the welders” in Richmond, CA. Betty writes about excellent wages: \$1.11/hour! At this point they were so very busy building ships that they didn't write many letters.

Fast forward to the end of the war. Betty and Edna are back home, going to school, and Betty is learning to sing for money as a part-time job. All her life she believed she could learn things by reading a book. That's what she taught us too.



Now, it's 1946! The war has been over for a year in Japan. In spite of her mother's warning never to speak to her again, Betty spends a year in Occupied Japan as a clerical worker. Never content to follow rules, she travels around Japan to places that no white woman would/should ever go. She falls in love (we think), and is proposed to again and again, makes friends with her Japanese maids, visits factories, beaches, mountains, oh wow, what an adventurous woman! Towards the end of her year in Japan, she traveled via ship to Hong Kong, Shanghai, Manila and back to Japan. Betty's experience in Hiroshima was riveting.

Connie inserts a bit about our dad, Ralph Wanek, returning from 4 years at war. I've heard said he was a “legend” as a Municipal Court Judge in Las Cruces. I can only imagine what he and other soldiers had to process the rest of their lives. I know he was an observer and listener like Connie.

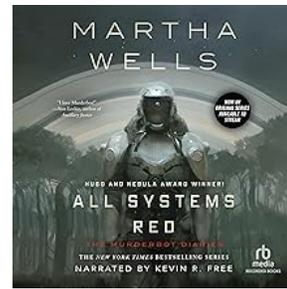
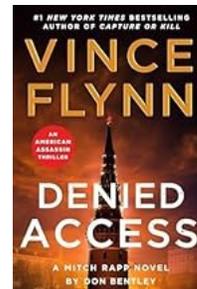
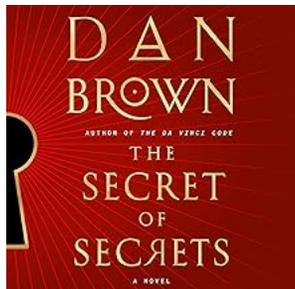
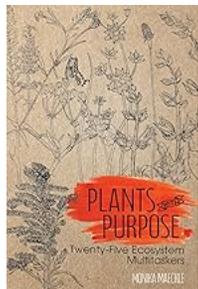
Yes, this book is very personal. As an observer, Connie questions Betty's motives, thoughts, feelings as a parent might, and yet as a daughter she wonders what might have been. For me, as her sister, and Betty as my mother, I am still overwhelmed by the content, the bravery, and the spirit of a very young Betty. These adventures paved the way for all of Betty's six children, who each in our own way have mimicked her audacity. Betty could not imagine that she'd accomplish so much for another 75 years. It's especially poignant because I just turned 75. Yes, it's personal for me too.

Review by Sherry Litasi

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New at the Library



Fiction

- The Andromeda Evolution**-by Daniel H. Wilson
***Apostle's Cove**-by William Kent Kruger
The Book of Two Ways-by Jodi Picoult
Delcan's Cross- Sharp & Donovan Novel-by Carla Neggers
Don't Let Him In-by Lisa Jewel
Fourteen Days-A Collaborative Novel-edited by Margaret Atwood and Douglas Preston
***Fourth Wing- Emphyrean, Book 1**-by Rebecca Yarros
The Girl From the Channel Islands- by Jenny Lecoat
The Grey Man-by Mark Greaney
Integrity- Baer Creighton Book 8-by Clayton Lidemuth
Irish Thoroughbred- by Nora Roberts
The Last Bookshop in London-by Madeline Martin
Lethal White- A Corman Strike Novel-by Robert Galbraith
The Marauders- A Novel of the Oregon Files-by Clive Cussler and Boyd Morrison
The Maze-A John Corey Novel-by Nelson DeMille
A Million Reasons Why- by Jessica Strawser
Oracle- A Sam and Remi Fargo Adventure-by Clive Cussler and Robin Burcell
Rain on the Dead- Sean Dillon, Book 21-by Jack Higgins
The Perfume Collector- by Kathleen Tessaro
***The Secret of Secrets**-by Dan Brown
***Sunrise on the Reaping- A Hunger Games Novel** by Suzanne Collins
Sycamore Row- by John Grisham
The War of Two Queens- Blood and Ash, Book 4 by Jessica Armentrout
When All the Girls Have Gone- by Jayne Ann Krentz
Whiteout- by Ken Follett

Nonfiction

- The Beast in the Garden- The True Story of a Predator's Deadly Return to Suburban America**-by David Baron
Dream Land- The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic-by Sam Quinones
In the Garden of Beasts- Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin-by Erik Larson
Herbal First Aid- Basic First Aid Techniques Using Spices, Foods, and Plants- by Jessie L. Emerson RN
***Mimbres Far from the Heartland- Identity at the Powers Ranch Site of East-Central Arizona**-by Mary E. Whisenhunt and Patricia A. Gilman
The Mountain Knows the Mountain- A Fire Watch Diary-by Philip Connors
***One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This**-by Omar El Akkad
***Plants With a Purpose- Twenty-five Ecosystem Multitaskers**-by Monika Maeckle
The Singular Miss Betty Brody-by Connie Wanek
Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates- The Forgotten War That Changed American History-by Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger
***What Walks This Way-Discovering the Wildlife Around Us Through Their Tracks and Signs**-by Sharman Apt Russell
We Keep the Dead Close- A Murder at Harvard and a Half Century of Silence-by Becky Cooper
***The Western Horse- A Popular History of the Wild and Working Animal**-by Randi Samuelson-Brown
***Episodes From Apache Lands**-by Daniel Aranda

DVDs

- Slow Horses-seasons 1-4... The Sopranos-seasons 1-4...Billy Elliott**

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Poetry

***Psalms from the Badlands**-by Hosho McCreesh

Mystery

The 6:20 Man- by David Baldacci

***Confidence Woman**- by Judith Van Gieson

Countdown- Jesse Sutherlin Mysteries, 2-by Frederick Ramsay

The Dark Wind-by Tony Hillerman

Denied Access- a Mitch Rapp Novel by Vince Flynn and Don Brantley

Four Funerals and Maybe a Wedding- Royal Spyness Mysteries-by Bowen Rhys

The Hellfire Club- by Jake Tapper

Mercy- an Atlee Pine Thriller by David Baldacci

A Minute to Midnight- an Atlee Pine Thriller by David Baldacci

The Oligarchs Daughter- by Joseph Finder

***The Shadow of Venus**-by Judith Van Gieson

***Vanishing Point**-by Judith Van Gieson

Science Fiction

***Lexie- Book 2 of the Hidden**-by F. Paul Wilson

***The Murderbot Diaries- Volume 1**-by Martha Wells

***The Murderbot Diaries- Volume 2**-by Martha Wells

***The Upwelling- Book 1 of the Hidden**-by F. Paul Wilson

Graphic Novels

***The Deviant- Vol.1**- by James Tynion

*These are some of the titles purchased with funds provided by a grant from Charles Lehman through the NMSL Foundation.

Bake Sale

The Library Bake Sale is on for

Saturdays

November 1 (in front of the post office)

10:00am -1:00pm

and

December 6 (in the HCC)

10:00am-3:00pm

Come and get your goodies!

Bookmobile Schedule

Caballo

Caballo Country Store and RV Park

Thursdays Nov. 13 and Dec 18; 10:30am- 11:00am

Hillsboro

Post Office

Friday Nov. 21; 9:15am-10:00am

(tentative, please check website)

Kingston

Fire Station

Fridays Nov. 21 and Dec 12; 10:30am-11:15am

<https://nmstatelibrary.org/bookmobiles/west-bookmobile/>

Library Hours:

Sunday: closed

Monday~ 5:00pm - 8:00pm

Tuesday ~ 2:00pm - 5:00pm

Friday ~ 10:00am -1:00pm

Thursday~ 2:00pm - 5:00pm

Friday ~ 10:00am -1:00pm

Saturday ~ 9:00am - 2:00pm

For a complete listing of Library materials, visit

<https://hillsborolibrary.org>

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Notes from the Library Board

Be sure to stop by the library while you are in the Community Center celebrating Christmas in the Foothills on Saturday December 6. We will be open from 9am until 2pm. You might just need a breather from all the excitement. We will also have a table of books outside for sale for a minimal donation. And, of course, don't forget to stop by the Library Bake Sale table in the community center. Be sure to take home some sweets and thank Frances and Bruce for all their hard work. We sure appreciate them!

Do you or someone you know need Large Print books? In addition to what we have in our collection, the New Mexico State Library is providing quarterly loans of Large Print books. You will find them on the top shelf of the "New Books" bookcase. And don't forget that the State Library has other resources for the visually impaired. Visit them at <https://nmstatelibrary.org/lbpd/about-us/>.

We have quite a collection of fiction and mystery books in print and audio as well as movie DVDs. And, we have an extensive collection of non-fiction books. However, if we don't have what you want or need, we will do our best to accommodate you. We can borrow many items from other locations through an Interlibrary Loan. Or, if your request doesn't break our budget and we think other community members would enjoy the same item, we will purchase the book/DVD/or CD.

Don't forget to visit the Library's home page online at <https://hillsborolibrary.org>. We have so many interesting links for you to roam around in. Especially look at the "Events" section where you can see Nancy Chapman Elliot read her poem "Saga of the Mountain Pride".

Can't wait for the Newsletter to find out what's new on the shelves? Then go to our online catalog, <https://16467.rmwebopac.com>, and scroll through the "New Items". Or, better yet, stop in browse our shelves and visit our volunteer librarians.

Join Meghan and Bill on Monday evenings for board, card and other tabletop games. Meet up in the library reading room from 5pm-8pm. Bring your own snacks and (nonalcoholic) drinks.

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P.O. BOX 205, HILLSBORO NJ 88042 (575-895-3349)