

By Laura Stoll, Assistant to the Director/Office Manager

The end of the year typically brings many “best of” lists. They appear everywhere! There’s the highest-grossing movies, the most newsworthy events, the best binge-worthy TV shows, and countless others that tell us what we missed over the last twelve months. For me, reading these lists can often bring about a case of FOMO (fear of missing out). I think, “If the critics thought these things were the best, then I better not miss them!” What I often forget is that these lists are curated by people with an interest in selling their products.

Since we don’t benefit from the sale of the items in our collection, the Kirkland Town Library is the perfect curator of a “best of” list and thanks to the tech wizards at Mid-York, we were able to find out which of our items were the most popular in 2021. I hope that instead of feeling FOMO, you look at these lists and feel proud of the many ways you’ve used our library over the past year.

The item checked out the most in 2021 were our Hooked on Books bags. This program consists of 100 different bags, each containing 10 different books for kids under age 6. Families can check out one bag at a time and if they make it through all 100 bags, the child will have read 1,000 books. Other items for children were also some of the top ten most popular: the American Girl Dolls, Explorer Bags, Portable Bookshelf, and Play With Me Kits. For adults, our cake pan collection continues to be popular as do magazines like the “New Yorker” and “Knit Simple.” Of our five different park passes, Fort Rickey Discovery Zoo has been the most borrowed one in 2021.

Here are some lists of the most popular books borrowed in 2021:

Top Five Adult Fiction Books

1. “The Four Winds” by Kristin Hannah - a woman fights for her family’s survival during the Dust Bowl
2. “The Return” by Nicholas Sparks - the story of an injured Navy doctor and two women who change his life
3. “The Law of Innocence” by Michael Connelly - the sixth book in the popular Mickey Haller series
4. “The Book of Lost Names” by Kristin Harmel - a young woman helps hundreds of Jewish children flee the Nazis
5. “Dark Sky” by CJ Box - Wyoming game warden Joe Pickett accompanies a wealthy CEO on a hunting trip but who is he hunting?

Top Five Adult Non-Fiction Books

1. “Upstate: Living Spaces with Space to Live” by Lisa Przystup and Sarah Elliott - compelling and unique interiors for city and country dwellers
2. “Keep Moving: Notes on Loss, Creativity, and Change” by Maggie Smith - quotes and essays for handling new beginnings during challenging times
3. “Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner’s Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause” by Ty Seidule - the author is the Chamberlain Fellow and Visiting Professor of History at Hamilton College
4. “Untamed” by Glennon Doyle - part memoir and part self-help, this book seeks to speak to the soul

5. "Vesper Flights: New and Collected Essays" by Helen Macdonald - a collection of essays about the natural world

The top juvenile fiction books are all part of different series. Here are the top three:

1. Big Nate books by Lincoln Peirce
2. Baby-Sitters Club graphic novels by Raina Telgemeier (Incidentally Telgemeier's "Smile" is also one of our most-circulated books for kids.)
3. Twins by Varian Johnson

The top five picture books for children are:

1. "Something's Wrong! A Bear, A Hare, and Some Underwear" by Jory John
2. "Itty-Bitty Kitty-Corn" by Shannon Hale
3. "Strictly No Elephants" by Lisa Mantchev
4. "Dog vs. Cat" by Chris Gall
5. "The Box Turtle" by Vanessa Roeder

In addition to all of the items borrowed, the KTL was also a gathering place for many fun programs and events. Some highlights from the year include the Haiku Contest in April, laminating your vaccine (and booster) cards, outdoor story times from April through October, yoga classes with Kristy Caruso under the tent, and concerts by the Five Families Ensemble and Big Tasty and the Sass.

If any of the books, items, or events mentioned in this column sound intriguing to you, make it your New Year's resolution to visit the Kirkland Town Library. Getting a card is free and easy, we have no late fees for overdue books, and we're always happy to help answer any questions that you might have.

On behalf of the staff at the Kirkland Town Library, Happy New Year! We hope to see you soon!