



A Wild and Wonderful Spring

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The Friends of the Gaston County Public Library had a wild, fun, and historically successful spring as we celebrated, raised money, and continued to support outstanding programs and services at the Gaston County Public Library.

2025 Annual Book Sale

The annual Book Sale, which ran from Monday, April 21st through Saturday, April 26th was the most successful in our organization's 42 year history with a record of almost **\$44,000** raised over six days!



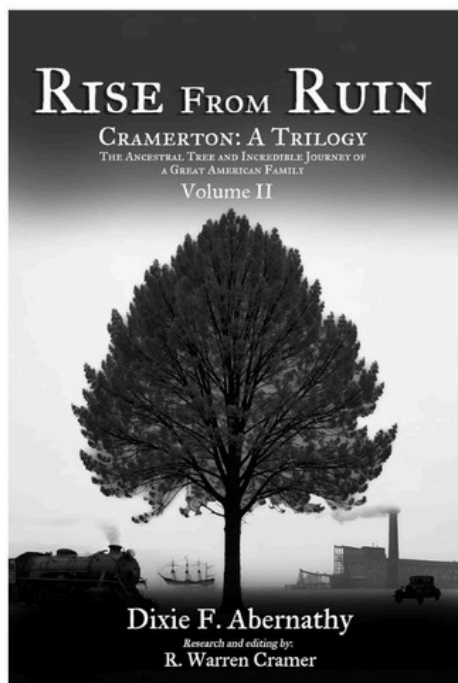
2025 Annual Gala

With over **120** in attendance, the annual Gala was also a smashing success. Our guest speaker, Emmy-award winning Molly Grantham's, inspiring words for the audience, and her celebration of motherhood, reading, libraries, and our organization was awe-inspiring. Most importantly, she emboldened everyone in the audience with her winning catchphrase "Bet on Yourself". We also had the pleasure of awarding our first two Everette N. Warren Memorial Scholarships to Zahra Batool and Grace Cera-Isbell. See pages 3, 4, and 5 for their inspiring words about the power of libraries.



Upcoming Meet the Author events with local author Dixie Abernathy!

MEET THE AUTHOR



DIXIE ABERNATHY

Saturday
September 6, 2025

11:00 a.m.

The second part of her bestselling
Cramerton Trilogy

RISE FROM RUIN

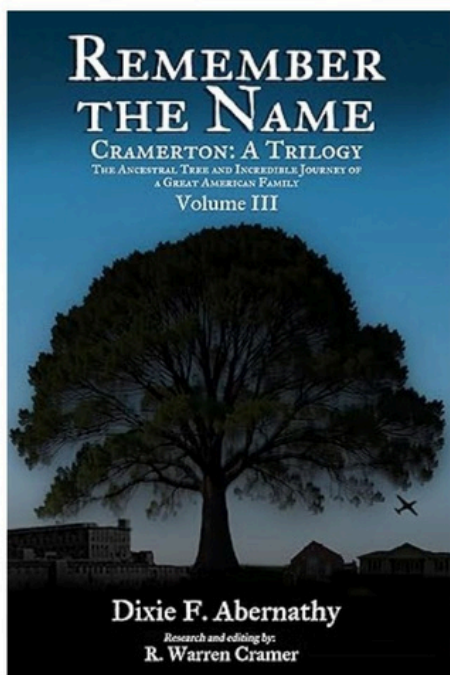
Gaston County Public Library
Main Library - Carol K. Reinhardt
Auditorium

1555 E. Garrison Blvd.
Gastonia, NC 28054
704-868-2164, dial 1

www.gastonlibrary.org



MEET THE AUTHOR



DIXIE ABERNATHY

Saturday
November 15, 2025

11:00 a.m.

The final part of her bestselling
Cramerton Trilogy

REMEMBER THE NAME

Gaston County Public Library
Main Library - Carol K. Reinhardt
Auditorium

1555 E. Garrison Blvd.
Gastonia, NC 28054
704-868-2164, dial 1

www.gastonlibrary.org



Thoughts from Your President

Greetings All,

What an exciting, exhausting and extremely successful spring we are highlighting in this edition of the newsletter. Please do not miss the coverage of the most successful Book Sale ever, the most well-attended and enjoyable Gala with the fabulous Molly Grantham and the jaw dropping details of this year's Comic Con/Bridgerton day. What a whirlwind adventure! This would NOT have been possible without your support, and we are truly grateful.

A highlight of this adventure was recognizing the first two Everette N. Warren Educational Scholarship recipients, Zahra Batool and Grace Cera-Isbell, at our Gala. Please read their enclosed heartfelt essays about what the library means to them. I am confident that Everette would be delighted. Also, please consider donating to the Scholarship on our website: www.friendsofgcpl.org in honor or in memory of someone important to you. As we look forward to cooler weather and the beauty of Fall, check out the website, our digital sign and our Facebook page for your many opportunities to visit the library. In addition, two of our community partners have very special events coming up soon. Please consider joining us for both extraordinary evenings. See page 12 for the QR Codes to purchase tickets.

Please note the return of our "Meet the Board" column. We are excited to feature new Board Member, Sarah McLean Levy. We welcome her enthusiasm and creative ideas! Also, remember that we are accepting books, puzzles, games, DVDs, CDs, etc. throughout the year in preparation for next year's Book Sale, APRIL 6-11, 2026!

Here's wishing you an abundance of blessings!

-Melinda Pierce

Upcoming Live @ Your Library Programs

Save the Date:



AUTHOR AND VENDOR APPLICATION



NOVEMBER 8TH, 2025

GASTON WRITERS EXPO
DISCOVER • CONNECT • CELEBRATE
COMMUNITY
Gaston County Public Library

Live @ Your Library:
Reader's Theater
performing



Old Enough to Know Better
Monday Sept. 22 and Tuesday Sept. 23
6:30 PM
Carol R. Reinhardt Auditorium



The 1st Annual Everette N. Warren Scholarship

Recipient: Zahra Batool



“As I write this, I sit in my local public library, taking in the silence and the other multitudes of students, kids, parents, and strangers who are here to do their own thing. If that in itself, does not describe just how valuable libraries are, I don’t know what will. Not all of them are students, not all are kids, and not all are parents---everyone who has something to do, can come to this communal building and read to their child, work on homework, scholarships, or even use the free computers. Libraries have, and always will be, hubs for interaction, assistance, and education. Its multi-faceted purposes reflect perfectly among the patrons who go in and out of the revolving doors. They provide a haven of books, movies, and educational activities to stimulate young minds, all the while also assisting with documentation, historical records, and the more stressful, adult, aspects of life. The library doesn’t judge nor discriminate against who you are, remaining a free tool for everyone, regardless of age, class, race, or gender. It is one of the only places where people happily come to gather to read, write, work, or even play. The library will always be a wonderful resource for small or large communities, wishing to find a new cult classic---or a new program to enrich their kid with. It offers itself to everyone and anyone, even me, a young student in need of a quiet place to work, on--coincidentally--a response about its usefulness.” --

Zahra Batool

The 1st Annual Everette N. Warren Scholarship

Recipient: Grace Cera-Isbell



“I have seen firsthand the many ways a library is valuable to its community.

Libraries offer a community within one. People come together with shared interests such as Comicon, study groups, book clubs, or family activities. A library is a safe space for many where they can gain information, access materials, join a club, or attend events. Libraries play a vital role in informing the public by hosting information events for all ages. For example, I aided in organizing a teen event at the Gaston County Public Library to educate youth on how to build a resume. In addition to providing informative sessions, libraries give the public access to technology they may not have. Printers, computers, and the internet can all be used in both sections of the library, adults and children. Kids can go online to play educational games while adults have the materials to work in a quiet, efficient setting. Libraries are very welcoming and give the community a safe building. In the case of a natural disaster, a library will keep its patrons safe by offering them supplies such as shelter and water. Volunteering over the summer, I know how much a library can bring life and fun to a community. Libraries are great at hosting events like crafts, live music, science showcases, and much more. Overall, libraries are vital to a community and help it thrive. Libraries have the ability to help so many people in different aspects of their lives whether it's job hunting or a fun place for the kids. The value of a library could never be replaced in a community.”

--Grace Cera-Isbell

Meet the Board: Sarah McLean Levy

Help us welcome one of our newest board members, Sarah McLean Levy! Sarah McLean Levy was born and raised in Gaston County, where her roots have shaped both her personal values and professional drive. She earned her bachelor's degree in Graphic Design and Entrepreneurship from Appalachian State University, then went on to receive her law degree from Charlotte School of Law. Today, as the fifth generation at McLean Funeral Directors and a licensed NC attorney, she blends her education with her calling as a dedicated funeral director—compassionately guiding families through advance planning with a commitment to honoring lives well lived. She also stays busy with graphic design, designing for countless social events and multiple community non-profits.



Outside of work, Sarah's favorite role is being a busy mom to her son, Mac, and daughter, Annie, and wife to her husband, Brian Levy. She's constantly on the go—shuttling to soccer, golf, piano, or dance—and is rarely without a book in hand (or in her earbuds). At First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, she is an active member where she teaches Sunday School, serves on the youth committee, and loves leading arts and crafts at Vacation Bible School. A passionate community advocate, Sarah serves as a long-time board member of the NextGen Giving Circle Advisory Board, is director of the Gaston Country Club swim team, and sits on the boards of the Gaston Literacy Council and Friends of the Gaston County Public Library. She also volunteers at her children's school in the classroom as often as she can.

Sarah loves cooking, decorating, and hosting—and never misses an opportunity to gather friends and family for a celebration. When she finally slows down, she enjoys curling up with her dogs, Garnet and Grey, and a good book (usually recommended by her grandmother). Whether she's helping a family at the funeral home, volunteering in the community, cheering from the sidelines, or hosting a joyful get-together, Sarah's heart for people and passion for her community shine through in everything she does.



GCPL Comic-Con: More Than a Good Time

On June 7, 2025, the Gaston County Public Library (GCPL) hosted its 8th annual Comic-Con—and it was nothing short of transformative. With over 2,200 attendees, dozens of vendors, and hours of programming, this free, all-ages event proved that libraries can be powerful cultural centers.



A young fan beams with joy while meeting Chewbacca—one of many magical moments that define GCPL Comic-Con.

From humble beginnings in 2015, with 847 attendees, the GCPL Comic-Con has grown into a Gaston County Signature Event—a must-attend for families and comic enthusiasts. Planning for the 2025 event began nearly a year in advance. With a small team and a modest budget, the library prioritized partnerships, community outreach, and strategic scheduling. The goals were clear: create a family-friendly event that celebrates pop culture, promotes literacy, and welcomes everyone—from hard-core cosplayers to curious first-timers. GCPL stepped up the prize game this year—with a little help from their Friends—bringing better contest rewards and a raffle that was a crowd favorite!

Vendor and community feedback emphasized how welcoming and well-organized the event was, with many already asking to be included in the 2026 Comic-Con, scheduled for June 6, 2026. Jerry from Do-Art Productions sang the event's praises: "This is one of the best library events I've ever been a part of. It was so kid and family friendly. Everyone was having a great time."

"It is a lot of hard work, but nothing in my career has made me prouder than this event," said Tanya Jones, one of the event planners. "Proud of my fantastic colleagues and collaborators, proud of my supportive administration, proud of the people in our community coming together to celebrate pop culture."

Gaston County Public Library's Comic-Con isn't just about comics and costumes—it's about belonging. In a time of disconnection and digital overwhelm, this event reminds us of what libraries do best: bring people together. With each cosplay, shared laugh, and new library card, GCPL's Comic-Con highlights the library's role as a vibrant hub for fun, creativity, and discovery – truly where the magic happens



The amazing library staff who make this event magical.

11.22.25

Stars Hollow Fest

Bridgerton at the Library!



Bridgerton at the Library: A Gaston County Public Library Comic-Con Experience was a beautiful celebration of the Regency era and the world of Bridgerton! Over 500 attendees came to enjoy themed crafts and activities, BINGO based on the Netflix show and book series, Name that Tune based on the instrumental pop music covers used in the show, and several groups learned a Regency dance! We cannot wait to come back next year. Thank you to the Friends of the Gaston County Public Library for their continued support in making Bridgerton at the Library the social event of the season!

IN DEMAND LIST

Here's a list of book titles currently in demand at the library. This list is provided by Adult Services Supervisor Andrew Pierce.

FICTION

ATMOSPHERE by Taylor Jenkins Reid. From the author of *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* and *Daisy Jones & The Six* comes an epic new novel set against the backdrop of the 1980s space shuttle program about the extraordinary lengths we go to live and love beyond our limits.

THE SURROGATE MOTHER by Freida McFadden. Abby wants a baby more than anything, but...it seems like motherhood is not in her future. That is, until her personal assistant Monica makes an offer to serve as a surrogate. But soon, strange things start happening. And it turns out Monica isn't who she says she is. The woman now carrying Abby's child has an unspeakable secret

THE STOLEN LIFE OF COLETTE MARCEAU by Kristin Harmel. Harmel returns with an electrifying new novel about two jewel thieves, a priceless bracelet that disappears in 1940s Paris, and a quest for answers in a decades-old murder.

THE WOMAN IN SUITE II by Ruth Ware. Blacklock's all-expenses paid trip to a luxury Swiss chateau should have been the ideal return to work. But as her past catches up with her, the millionaire's mistress demanding that Lo help her escape, and a body turning up in the room next door, forces Lo to ask how far would she go to help someone she's not even sure she can trust...

THE PERFECT DIVORCE by Jeneva Rose. Filled with page-turning suspense and Jeneva Rose's signature twists and turns, this book will have readers wondering: Can Bob and Sarah achieve the perfect divorce? Or will it be "til death do us part"?

THE LAST CAROLINA SUMMER by Karen White. Beloved bestselling author Karen White returns with a captivating new Southern drama about sisterhood, secrets and one woman's reckoning with the past

NON-FICTION

THE MARTIANS: THE TRUE STORY OF AN ALIEN CRAZE THAT CAPTURED TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY AMERICA by David Baron. The Times headline was no joke. In the early 1900s, many Americans believed that we had discovered intelligent life on Mars. The Martians—a truly bizarre tale reconstructed through newly discovered clippings, letters, and photographs by bestselling science writer David Baron.

SAM HOLLAND'S KITCHEN KICKSTART: SIMPLE, BUDGET-FRIENDLY RECIPES FOR BEGINNER COOKS by Sam Holland. Designed to inspire confidence and ignite a passion for cooking, this is the essential cookbook for anyone moving away from home for the first time. Talented chef and rising star Sam Holland is here to guide you!

POSITIVE OBSESSION: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF OCTAVIA BUTLER by Susana M Morris. A magnificent cultural biography that charts the life of one of our greatest writers, situating her alongside the key historical and social moments that shaped her work.

A MARRIAGE AT SEA: A TRUE STORY OF LOVE, OBSESSION, AND SHIPWRECK by Sophie Elmhirst. The electrifying true story of a young couple shipwrecked at a mind-blowing tale of obsession, survival, and partnership stretched to its limits.

MATRIARCH: A MEMOIR by Tina Knowles. A glorious chronicle of a life like none other—enlightening, entertaining, surprising, empowering—and a testament to the world-changing power of Black motherhood

DVDs/BLU-RAYS

LILO & STITCH. Maia Kealoha, Sydney Agudong, Chris Sanders. A lonely Hawaiian girl befriends a runaway alien, helping to mend her fragmented family.

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON. Mason Thames, Nico Parker, Gerard Butler. As an ancient threat endangers both Vikings and dragons alike on the isle of Berk, the friendship between Hiccup, an inventive Viking, and Toothless, a Night Fury dragon, becomes the key to both species forging a new future together.

SINNERS. Michael B. Jordan, Miles Caton, Jack O'Connell, Hailee Steinfeld, and Wunmi Mosaku. Trying to leave their troubled lives behind, twin brothers return to their hometown to start again, only to discover that an even greater evil is waiting to welcome them back.

MATLOCK: SEASON 1. Kathy Bates, Skye P. Marshall, Jason Ritter, Beau Bridges. Follows Madeline Matlock as she rejoins the work force at a prestigious law firm, where she uses her wily tactics to win cases and expose wrongdoing.

This Summer's Meet the Author Successes

This summer we had two successful Meet the Author events celebrating our local talents. First, Dixie Abernathy, joined by Warren Cramer, the grandson of Stuart W. Cramer, visited us on Saturday, June 28th to discuss the first of a new series *Cramerton: A Trilogy*. The book celebrates the history of Cramerton, NC through the family of Stuart Cramer, and the event helped us kick off our America 250 celebration! *Promise of a Nation* spent several weeks as #1 in Historical Anthologies on Amazon. Join us Saturday, September 6th and Saturday, November 15th to hear Dixie discuss the last two books in the series. (See page 2 for more details!) On July 14th, we welcomed local authors Rose Patrice and Jenn Kacmar, to discuss their novel *Snowflakes in the South*. Set in a small town in the South, this hilarious, heartfelt novel felt close to home. Jenn and Rose discussed their incredible dual writing process during the pandemic, and how they drew on each other's strengths to craft this remarkable story. They also spoke about the power of women, a central theme of the novel, to make extraordinary change in our world.



Special Thank You the Azalea Garden Club!

Your Club's dedication to providing and caring for the indoor greenery at the Library for the past 34 years is truly remarkable and deeply appreciated. Your efforts have helped create a more inviting, calming, and peaceful place for the entire community.

From all of us at the Gaston County Public Library,

Thank You!



Gaston County Public Library Wishlists

Due to decreased funding in the library's operational budget, they are asking for your continued support in helping them purchase program supplies. Here is a snapshot of the budget changes for Fiscal Year 2025-2026:

- Overall Budget – 1% increase
- Salaries – 4% increase – due to 3% Cost of Living increase for all staff
- Operating budget that the Library does not control– housekeeping, lawn maintenance, utilities, etc – 7% increase
- **Operating Budget the Library does control – programming and office supplies, furniture/equipment, collections, subscriptions, etc. – 17% decrease**
- **Programming Budget – 24% decrease**

In order to ensure that library staff can still provide amazing programs for all of us, please consider purchasing items off of their Wishlists. Scan the QR Codes below:

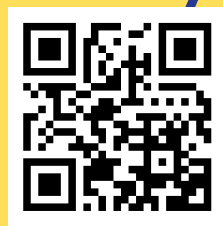
Main Library – Adult Services



Main Library – Youth Services



Dallas Branch Library



Cherryville Branch Library



Stanley Branch Library



TECH @ Lowell Library



Ferguson Branch Library



Union Road Branch Library



Community Partner Spotlight: Hope United Survivor Network

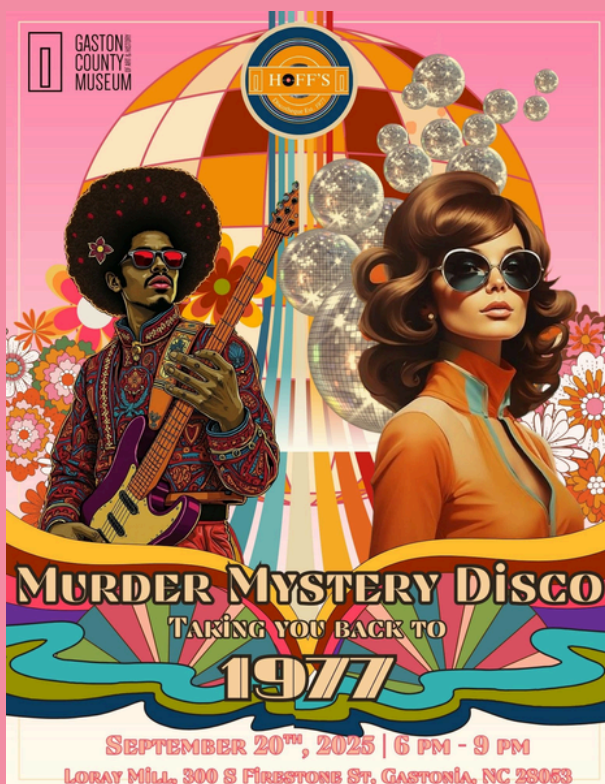
This year the Friends are thrilled to once again sponsor the Threads of Hope annual event which brings an author to Gaston County and supports the wonderful efforts of the Hope United Survivor Network. This year's event will be held on November 6th at the The Barn at Blue Sky Farm in Dallas. Tickets will be on sale soon! Scan the QR Code below.



Community Partner Spotlight: Gaston County Museum of Art and History

Join our friends at the Gaston County Museum of Art and History for their Murder Mystery Disco on Saturday, September 20th at 6:00 p.m. at Loray Mill.

Scan the QR Code below to purchase your tickets!



Poet's Corner:

John Hoppenthaler

ODD MAN OUT

Because they're pretty,
your daughter rips each errant crocus from my lawn.
The cat is wary
under sagging racemes of the laburnum,
& a bedraggled robin drops stupidly from the fence.

I'm wondering who you see
with your eyes tightly shut,
as they're shut now since glare has filtered
through oak branches to highlight your face. Kevin

returns from 7-Eleven with Saranac & Heineken,
vanilla Häagen-Dazs, Fritos & nachos,
a carton of Cheddar Goldfish for Sara. You feign
resignation; you grin & roll those green eyes as she

swoops up fistfuls of Goldfish & teeters off,
trailing crackers carelessly
behind her to blaze in the sun, bright orange crumbs
for squirrels & the birds. Your husband, gone
again to the silver SUV,

comes back clutching just one purchase more,
a simple bouquet of gas station flowers.

First appeared in Cave Wall.

Also in *Anticipate the Coming Reservoir* (Carnegie Mellon UP, 2008).



John Hoppenthaler's books of poetry are *Night Wing Over Metropolitan Area*, *Domestic Garden*, *Anticipate the Coming Reservoir*, and *Lives of Water*, all with Carnegie Mellon UP. With Kazim Ali, he co-edited a volume of essays on the poetry of Jean Valentine, *This-World Company* (U of Michigan P). His poetry and essays appear in *Ploughshares*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *New York Magazine*, *TriQuarterly*, *Southern Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, *Southeast Review*, *Blackbird*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and many other journals, anthologies, and textbooks. He is a Professor of Creative Writing and Literature at East Carolina University. Learn more about him:

<https://english.ecu.edu/people/faculty/john-hoppenthaler/>,

Poets & Writers:

https://www.pw.org/directory/writers/john_hoppenthaler,
and on Facebook, X, and Instagram.

—David E. Poston

REMINDER: Be sure to renew your Annual Membership for **June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026**. You can renew by going to www.friendsofgcpl.org or by completing a membership form. Pick one up at any GCPL library location or tear out the next page and send to Main Library.

Also, you can switch over from an Annual to a Lifetime Membership and never again have to keep track of your renewal each year!



FRIENDS

OF THE GASTON COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

1555 East Garrison Boulevard
Gastonia, North Carolina 28054
Phone: 704-868-2164
Fax: 704-853-6012
Email: gcplfriends@gastonlibrary.org
Website: www.friendsofgcpl.org

Return Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
US Postal Service

PAID

Gastonia, NC
Permit No. 181

GCPL Book Clubs

The Happy Bookers
Monthly – Dallas

A Novel Idea Book Club
2nd Tuesday of the month – BC@BC

As the Page Turns Book Club
Monthly – Union Road

Chapter Chat Book Club
Monthly – Stanley

The Last Chapter Book Club
Monthly – Main Library

Pages from the Past
1st Friday of the month – TECH@Lowell

Contact your local library branch for more information.

LIBRARY CLOSINGS

- **Staff Development Day** - Monday, October 20th
- **Veterans Day** - Tuesday, November 11th

Fall Plant Swap at the Library! at BC@BC

Saturday, October 11, 2025 | 11:00 am–12:30 pm

Do you have a houseplant you no longer need? Or are you starting a new plant hobby? Join us for our Fall Plant Swap and check out our brand-new Propagation Wall!

Meet fellow plant lovers, trade plants, share tips and stories, and explore some fun 3D-printed plant accessories available to order through the library. You might even find that Wishlist plant you've been searching for!

Event Details:

- Free to participate!
- Bring a healthy, pest-free plant or cutting to swap. Label your plant if you can
- Plants should be in soil or cuttings in water (use pots you're okay parting with)
- Everyone is welcome!

For each plant you bring, you'll get a chance to swap it for something new. Come grow your collection and connect with the community!

