

The 2026 Everett N. Warren Educational Scholarship



The Friends of the Gaston County Public Library are proud to announce the second year of the **Everett N. Warren Educational Scholarship**, established to honor the life and legacy of Everett Warren - a dedicated educator, mentor, and lifelong learner whose passion for education left a lasting impact on our community.

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Everette served as a professor of Business Administration and Economics at Gaston College and later taught American English in Japan, reflecting his commitment to learning across cultures and settings. Beyond the classroom, he generously mentored high school seniors navigating the college admissions process, guided students on educational travel experiences around the world, and encouraged countless individuals to pursue knowledge with curiosity and purpose. His love of learning was truly boundless, making him an ideal namesake for this scholarship.

The Everett N. Warren Educational Scholarship is open to individuals who aspire to further their education and who share Everett's passion for learning and the values he championed.

For application details or eligibility information, please visit the Friends of the Gaston County Public Library website at friendsofgecpl.org/scholarship/ or scan the QR Code.

The application deadline is March 10, 2026.

Through this scholarship, the Friends of the Gaston County Public Library are honored to continue our mission of enriching Gaston County through literacy, recreation, and lifelong learning, while celebrating Everett Warren's enduring legacy.



Friends of the Gaston County Public Library

Book Sale



FRIENDS
OF THE GASTON COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Monday, April 6, 2026
10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 7, 2026
10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 8, 2026
10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 9, 2026
10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Friday, April 10, 2026
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 11, 2026
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Gaston County Public Library
Main Library

1555 East Garrison Blvd.

Gastonia, NC 28054

www.friendsofgcpl.org

Information: 704-868-2164

Presented by Friends of the Gaston County Public Library. Book Sale proceeds are dedicated to providing equipment, furnishings, resources, and programming for GCPL patrons.

Thoughts from Your President

Warm Winter Greetings,

As we begin this new year filled with hope and promise, I believe our theme should be GRATITUDE. The Friends have been richly blessed over the past couple of months thanks to you and to other extremely generous benefactors. You will have an opportunity to read more about these gifts in this edition, but let me be the first to thank the Ralph S. Robinson Family Foundation for their \$25,000 contribution in late December, the Gaston Arts Council for the \$15,000 Grassroots Art Program Grant in early December, and to each and every one of you who contributed the our 'Giving Tuesday' campaign. As of last week, we have exceeded our \$10,000 goal.

In addition, we are delighted to offer two opportunities for students this Spring. The Everette N. Warren Educational Scholarship application is currently on our website at: www.friendsof'gcpl.org. The deadline for submittal is March 10, 2026. As Everette's sister, Ann Hedman, reminds us..."He was committed to putting books in the hands of the community, especially children". We hope you will consider sponsoring the Scholarship and help us continue to honor Everette's memory. And, for the first time, a Student Art Competition is also available on the website and details can be found in this edition. This is an opportunity for talented high school students to help us create a new design to be placed on future merchandise by incorporating the theme of "Open a Book, Open a World". The deadline for submittal is February 28, 2026.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS for our Annual Book Sale returning April 6-11, 2026, with the Set-Up Day on March 30, 2026. We are again excited about the volume of books, puzzles, DVDs, etc. available this year. If you are willing to volunteer, we will be reaching out to you soon. Also don't forget to clip your \$5.00 coupon! It is on the last page of this newsletter.

I hope you will take advantage of the many exciting programs coming to the Main and to the Branches in the next few weeks. Until we meet again, please stay healthy and warm.

-Melinda Pierce



30th Anniversary Poképarty!

Come and join us to celebrate 30 years of the wonderful franchise of Pokémon™ with games, crafts, snacks, and more!



PLEASE NOTE!
This program is **NOT** a sanctioned event by the Pokémon™ Company. It is a **free** library event for people of **ALL** ages to enjoy.

Saturday,
February 28th
from 10am - 1pm

Multipurpose Room
Main Library



Gaston County Public Library
1555 E. Garrison Blvd. Gastonia, NC 28054
<https://gastonlibrary.org/>



Student Art Competition 2026

Prompt: **"Open a Book, Open a World"**

Submission Deadline: **February 28, 2026**

The Friends of the Gaston County Public Library invite high school students across Gaston County to participate in our annual Art Contest! This year's theme, "Open a Book, Open a World," celebrates the magic of books as portals to new worlds — magical, mysterious, or real. Artists are encouraged to create designs inspired by doors, portals, or gateways from books that transport readers to new adventures and ideas.



Art Guidelines

- Artwork should reflect the theme: "Open a Book, Open a World."
- Limit artwork to 3–4 colors maximum (for print on merchandise).
- Acceptable formats: digital or hand-drawn artwork (if hand-drawn, please scan or photograph clearly).
- Design should be 8.5" x 11" or larger, suitable for t-shirts and tote bags.
- Please include your name, school, and grade with your submission.



Awards

- Grand Prize: \$100 Visa Gift Card
 - Winning Artwork: Will be featured on Friends of the Library merchandise (t-shirts, tote bags, etc.) sold to support library programs.
- The Friends of the Gaston County Public Library Board will select the winner. The winning artist will be announced in March 2026.



How to Submit

Email submissions to: friendsofthegcpl@gmail.com

Subject line: Art Contest Submission – [Your Name]

Attach your artwork (JPEG, PNG, or PDF) and must include a completed Submission & Release Form

Meet the Board: Shelley Collins

Born and raised in Gastonia, Shelley Frye Collins' love of reading began early—sparked by summers spent in the Gaston County Public Library's reading programs. That early passion for books and learning never faded. An avid reader to this day, Shelley earned a B.A. in Communication from UNC Greensboro and a M.Ed. in School Counseling from UNC Chapel Hill before returning home to build both her career and family.

Shelley spent fourteen years as a school counselor at South Point High School, where she helped students navigate academic and personal challenges. Eleven years ago, she founded Collins College Consulting, allowing her to continue guiding students toward their educational goals. One of her most meaningful roles is serving on the Board of the Friends of the Gaston County Public Library, where she helps organize the Everette Warren Scholarship. Supporting learners of all ages and expanding access to higher education are at the heart of Shelley's work, and she is honored to serve as co-chair of the Board's scholarship committee.



Deeply committed to her community, Shelley also tutors with the Gastonia Literacy Council's Reading Soulmates program and volunteers with the Cramerton Middle School PTO, Gaston Dance Theater, and the Backpack Weekend Program. She serves on the advisory boards for Camp Sunshine and UNC Chapel Hill's School of Education. Shelley lives in Gastonia with her husband, Brad, and their two children, Maggie (14) and Sam (11).

The Generosity and Legacy of the Ralph S. Robinson Family Foundation

This year, the Friends of the Library were honored by the continued and enormous generosity of the Ralph S. Robinson Family Foundation. A donation of \$25,000 was made to our organization by Leigh Finley, the current Director of the Foundation, and the daughter of Ralph S. and Sally Robinson. Leigh has continued to celebrate her father's legacy of giving, with the Gaston County Public Library as one of the favored and fondest organizations he supported.



Ralph S. Robinson was the longest serving member of the Gaston County Public Library and Gaston-Lincoln Regional Library Board of Trustees, and his dedication to the library led to the Board Room at the Main Library being named in his honor, and now his memory. His work as a Trustee was so outstanding that he was recognized by the NC State Library System as "NC Library Trustee of the Year". This represented his insistence on education and reading.

Beyond his work at the library, Ralph was a consummate leader and benefactor throughout Gaston County. He served as President of the Gaston County YMCA, Gaston United Way, Chamber of Commerce and The Rotary Club of Gastonia. He was a Director of First Union Bank, Trustee of Saint Andrews Presbyterian College, and Chairman of the Community Foundation. He served on the Board of Visitors for Davidson College and Chairman at UNC Charlotte. In 2010, he was given the Sims Award for his many years of leadership.



We thank Leigh, her family, and the entire Board of Trustees at the Foundation for their continued support of the Friends and the library.

LIBRARY CLOSINGS

- **Staff Development Day** - Monday, February 16th
- **Good Friday** - Friday, April 3rd and Saturday, April 4th
- **Memorial Day** - Monday, May 25th
- **Independence Day** - Friday, July 3rd and Saturday, July 4th
- **Labor Day** - Saturday, September 5th and Monday, September 7th

Upcoming Live @ Your Library and Meet the Author Events!

Common Threads

From the Underground Railroad
and the Stories Beyond

Saturday, February 7th, 2026
@ 12:00 PM

Carol K. Reinhardt Auditorium 1555 E. Garrison Blvd.
Gaston County Public Library Gastonia, NC 28054



Meet the Author DAVID POSTON



Tuesday,
February 17, 2026
6:00 p.m.

Gaston County Public Library
Main Library
Multi-Purpose Room
1555 E. Garrison Blvd.
Gastonia, NC 28054
704-868-2164, dial 2
www.gastonlibrary.org

Join local poet, retired teacher, and longtime Friends of the Gaston County Public Library member David Poston to discuss his new collection of poetry *Letting Go*. This program is intended for adults.



Celebrate Gaston County 250 with the Friends!

Gaston County is celebrating its rich history as part of the America 250 NC initiative, and there are fun ways for everyone to get involved!

Passport Program

Pick up a Gaston 250 Passport at the Gaston County Public Library or the Gaston County Museum of Art and History. There are 13 participating museums and historical locations to visit and explore the county's rich history. Collect stamps from 8 out of 13 sites to earn a commemorative Gaston 250 pin. Return your completed passport to the Gaston County Public Library or the Gaston County Museum of Art and History to receive your pin!

Trading Cards Program

Discover Gaston County's history through 24 collectible trading cards highlighting local museums and historic sites. Cards can be collected by visiting participating locations or attending the community events listed below.



Upcoming Events

- **Remember the Ladies: The Gaston County Woman's Suffrage League - Saturday, March 21, 2026 at 11:00 a.m.**
 - In the Multipurpose Room of the Main Library, Jane Kaylor will discuss the Suffrage League and other local women leaders in 20th Century Gaston County.
- **America 250 Historical Fiction Film Series - Main Library, Carol K. Reinhardt Auditorium. All films start at 6:00 p.m.**
 - **Monday, February 9, 2026 - Mr. Smith Goes to Washington**
 - **Monday, March 16, 2026 - Norma Rae**

Explore, collect, and celebrate Gaston County's history with us!

Friends Partner with Museum to Bring America 250 Exhibit to Gaston County

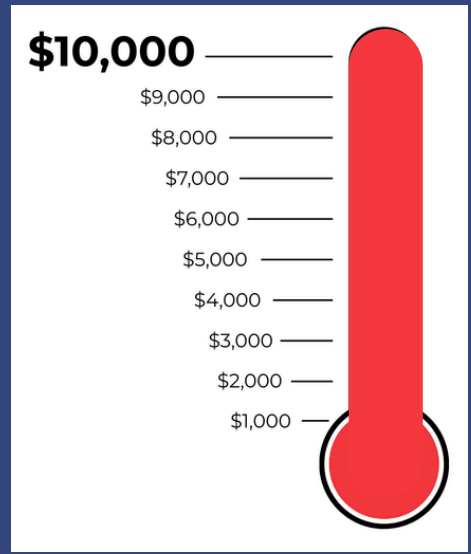
On January 9th the Gaston County Museum of Art & History opened a new exhibit entitled *Making Our Voices Heard*. It explores how everyday North Carolinians helped expand democracy by speaking up, organizing, and demanding change. Developed as part of America 250 NC's "When Are We US?" initiative and made possible with the support of Friends of the Gaston County Library and through the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, this traveling exhibit shares the stories of seven influential North Carolinians, including Gertrude Weil, Henry Owl, Abraham Galloway, Ronald Mace, and Willa Player, who challenged injustice and worked to fully participate in our democratic society. Through themes of freedom, civic responsibility, and perseverance, the exhibit reminds us that democracy is shaped by people willing to raise their voices. Join our friends at the Museum and explore the power of civic voice, both past and present.



Giving Tuesday – Goal Reached!

**GIVING
TUESDAY**

Thanks to the generosity of our Friends members and members of our beloved Gaston County community, we exceeded our Giving Tuesday goal of \$10,000!!!! This money will continue to support our mission and the library system we serve. Thank you again for helping reach this crucial fundraising goal!



America 250 Grant – Cramerton Trilogy and Gaston County Schools



After our successful Meet the Author series with local author Dixie Abernathy, we continued to partner with her and her editors to help tell the story of *Cramerton: A Trilogy* as part of the Gaston 250 celebration. The Friends purchased copies of the book trilogy for every high school media center in Gaston County Schools! The picture above was the presentation by Dixie and Melinda Pierce, President of the Friends to the School Media Specialists at the Rader Center in Cramerton before the start of the new semester.

Upcoming Branch Programs

Blind Date with a Book

March 2nd 2026- March 7th 2026

Are you looking for your next read? Pick up a blind date with a book to find your next great love- or your next ex!

All books will come with descriptions for you to pick your date.

This program is intended for Adults.

Dallas Branch Library
105 S. Holland St, Dallas NC, 28034
704-215-7142
<https://gastonlibrary.org/>



GASTON COUNTY
Public Library | Connect · Discover

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥TECH@Lowell Library Hosts:♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

Galentines: Blind Date with a Book



Celebrate lasting friendships, swoon-worthy romances, and female-driven narratives with a specially curated selection of wrapped books!

Friday, February 13th @ 5:30pm

Come and grab a wrapped book (or two!), chat and trade amongst other readers, enjoy delicious refreshments, and finally check out what could be a new favorite read!

For Adults!

Registration Required!
Register Here:



TECH@Lowell Branch
203 McAdenville Rd
gastonlibrary.org
704-879-4330



GASTON COUNTY
Public Library | Connect · Discover

Valentine's Day Kindness Drive



Stop by during our open hours any day between Feb. 2nd, 2026 and Feb. 13th, 2026 to create custom Valentine's cards for the special people in your life. While you're at it, create some cards for our friends at the **Rosewood Assisted Living Community** in Gastonia!

This program is intended for all ages.

We're also accepting new, unopened toiletries like body wash, lotion, shaving cream, and deodorant which will be donated to our friends at Rosewood.

Thank you for helping spread love and kindness during this Valentine's season.

Gaston County Public Library – Dallas Branch Library
105 S. Holland St., Dallas, NC 28034 704-215-7142
<https://gastonlibrary.org>



GASTON COUNTY
Public Library | Connect · Discover



GASTON MAX

MULTICULTURAL ARTS XPERIENCE

Saturday, March 28, 2026

Rotary Pavilion

11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

International Food Trucks - Inflatables - Free Henna
- Vendors and Artisans - Live Music Performances -
Cultural Art Activities and Crafts



GASTONIA
NC
Great Place. Great People. Great Promise.



Gastonia
ARTS
Council



North Carolina
Arts Council

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

JIGSAW by Jonathan Kellerman. Psychologist Alex Delaware and Detective Milo Sturgis, the most beloved duo in American crime fiction, return in this electric thriller from the #1 *New York Times* bestselling master of suspense.

SUPERFAN by Jenny Tinghui Zhang. Freshman Minnie is adrift at college in Austin, Texas, when she discovers a boy band called HOURglass and the online forums that worship them. But when a scandal threatens to expose Halo to harm, Minnie decides that she is the only one who can save him.

DEAR DEBBIE by Freida McFadden. From #1 *New York Times* and international bestselling author Freida McFadden comes a biting subversive thriller about what happens when women finally choose to take justice into their own hands – with killer results.

OTHERWISE ENGAGED by Susan Mallery. A twisty, tender and wise look at how secrets can transform the powerful--and sometimes problematic--bond between mothers and daughters, from #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Susan Mallery.

HALF HIS AGE by Jennette McCurdy. The highly anticipated, funny, sad, thrilling novel about sex, class, desire, and power – and the (often misguided) lengths we'll go to to get what we want.

MY HUSBAND'S WIFE by Alice Feeney. *The Sunday Times* bestselling author is back with a psychological masterpiece that will leave you questioning everything you know.

ANATOMY OF AN ALIBI by Ashley Elston. Two women. One dead husband. And only one alibi...

THE STORM by Rachel Hawkins. St. Medard's Bay, Alabama is famous for three things: the deadly hurricanes, the Rosalie Inn, and Lo Bailey, the local girl infamously accused of the murder of her lover..

NON-FICTION

LA LUCCI by Susan Lucci. The long-running Queen of Daytime television, Susan Lucci--who has gone by the endearment, *La Lucci*, since her earliest days on the set of *All My Children*--knows a thing or two about life, love, joy, adventure, and remaking oneself after loss, both personally and professionally.

EAT YOURSELF HEALTHY: FOOD TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE by Jamie Oliver. Oliver comes a new cookbook to help you build a celebratory relationship with nourishing food that will make you feel healthier and happier

THE LAST KINGS OF HOLLYWOOD: COPPOLA, LUCAS, & SPIELBERG – AND THE BATTLE FOR THE SOUL OF AMERICAN CINEAM by Paul Fischer. The untold, intimate story of how three young visionaries--Francis Ford Coppola, George Lucas, and Steven Spielberg--revolutionized American cinema, creating the most iconic films in history while risking everything, redefining friendship, and shaping Hollywood as we know it.

AIN'T NOBODY'S FOOL: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DOLLY PARTON by Martha Ackmann. A larger-than-life new biography of country music legend and philanthropist Dolly Parton.

ON MORRISON by Namwali Serpell. An illuminating, electrifying exploration of the work of Toni Morrison by an award-winning novelist and Harvard professor

HOW TO AI: CUT THROUGH THE HYPE. MASTER THE BASICS. TRANSFORM YOUR WORK. by Christopher Mims. A frank, guide to using AI at work, unpacking for the curious and skeptical alike the "24 Laws" of AI and revealing strategies that businesses of every size can use.

DVDs/BLU-RAYS

WICKED: FOR GOOD. Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande, Jonathan Bailey, Michelle Yeoh. Elphaba, the future Wicked Witch of the West and her relationship with Glinda, the Good Witch of the North. The second of a two-part feature film adaptation of the Broadway musical.

ONE BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER. Leonardo DiCaprio, Chase Infinity, Benicio Del Toro, Teyana Taylor, and Sean Penn. When their evil enemy resurfaces after 16 years, a group of ex-revolutionaries reunite to rescue the daughter of one of their own. Winner of 4 Golden Globes.

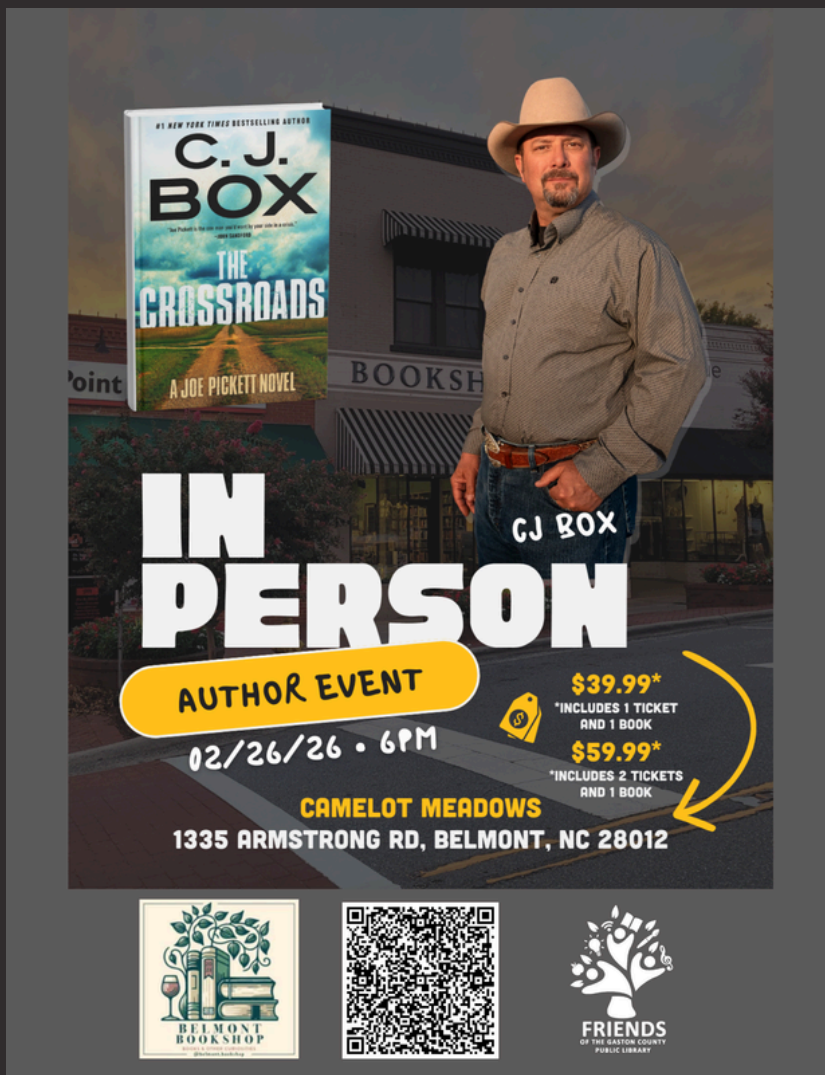
ROOFMAN. Channing Tatum and Kirsten Dunst. A charismatic criminal, while on the run from the police, hides in a hidden space of a toy store. There, he adopts a new identity and becomes involved with an employee, beginning a relationship as unlikely as it is risky.

THE SMASHING MACHINE. Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Emily Blunt. The story of mixed-martial arts and UFC champion, Mark Kerr. Available on Blu-Ray. Nominated for 2 Golden Globe Awards.

Upcoming Author Program with Belmont Bookshop:

C. J. Box

We are excited to welcome C. J. Box the #1 New York Times of twenty-six Joe Pickett novels, eight stand-alone novels, and a story collection to Belmont Bookshop for the release of the newest installment of Joe Pickett, *The Crossroads*!



The poster features a photograph of author C.J. Box wearing a cowboy hat and a light-colored shirt, standing in front of Belmont Bookshop. To his left is a large image of the book cover for *The Crossroads*, which is the 26th novel in the Joe Pickett series. The text on the poster includes:

- IN PERSON**
- AUTHOR EVENT**
- 02/26/26 • 6PM**
- CAMELOT MEADOWS**
- 1335 ARMSTRONG RD, BELMONT, NC 28012**
- Two pricing options with a yellow arrow pointing from the first to the second:
 - \$39.99*** *INCLUDES 1 TICKET AND 1 BOOK
 - \$59.99*** *INCLUDES 2 TICKETS AND 1 BOOK

At the bottom of the poster are three logos: Belmont Bookshop (featuring a tree and books), a QR code, and Friends of the Gaston County Public Library (featuring a stylized tree).

Scan here to
purchase
tickets!



IMPORTANT DETAILS: The event will be taking place at one of Belmont's most beautiful venues, Camelot Meadows – located at 1335 Armstrong Rd, Belmont, NC 28012. A portion of the proceeds will go to the Friends.

Poet's Corner:

Matthew Johnson

Jim Tells Huck Finn a Bedtime Story

The raft is a magic carpet, and we are pirates And independent, I am made.
The river, raising and raising, ten or 12 days,
Far over all the banks and dams,
Ascending so high,
That on the way up, we're plucking apples from the top of trees,
And we hear the secrets that the birds divulge
As they fly their separate ways.
And upon seeing that horizon,
Pelting us so brightly in its golden that it's not blinding,
But it's a light that opens our eyes, like the face of God,
That we forget our bitter histories, and all of Mississippi.

from *Up the Staircase Quarterly* (2022)

Up the Staircase Quarterly



Issue #56



Matthew Johnson is author of *Shadow Folks and Soul Songs* (Kelsay), *Far from New York State* (NYQ Press), and his latest collection, *Too Short to Box with God* (Finishing Line). His work appears in *Northern New England Review*, *Roanoke Review*, *African American Review*, *Front Porch Review*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *Jerry Jazz Musician*, *The London Magazine*, *Maryland Literary Review*, *Maudlin House*, *The Sport Literate*, *The Westchester Review*, and elsewhere. Recipient of several nominations, including Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net, he is managing editor of *The Portrait of New England* and poetry editor of the baseball-themed magazine *The Twin Bill*. Originally from upstate New York and Connecticut, he now lives in North Carolina, rooting for the Yankees and always having his eyes out for the Mets.

Websites:

matthewjohnsonpoetry.com

The Portrait of New England:

<https://portraitne.com/>

The Twin Bill:

<https://thetwinbill.com/>

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/johnson_matthew/

—David E. Poston



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.



\$ 5.00 COUPON
FOR USE AT THE 2026 BOOK SALE

NAME OF FRIENDS MEMBER USING COUPON