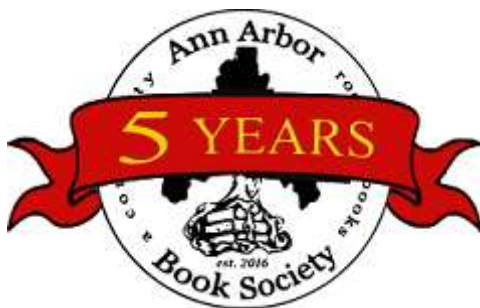


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## June 2021 Newsletter



### The Ann Arbor Book Society Turns Five!

In June of 2016, what is now known as the Ann Arbor Book Society debuted at the Ann Arbor Book Festival Street Fair with our first batch of Booktown Maps and a lot of enthusiasm to talk about Ann Arbor's then 11 independent bookstores. Though we've expanded our focus to support all the inspiring ways books are celebrated in our community, we believe our bookstores are the foundation of Ann Arbor's dynamic book culture. In the five years since our founding, we've lost three longtime bookstores and are facing the closure of another beloved bookstore this summer. Though the physical spaces may be gone, the spirit of their contributions lives on. In honor of our fifth anniversary, the Ann Arbor Book Society is embarking on an oral history project to preserve the stories of the bookstores of Ann Arbor's past, and we need your help! If you or someone you know

### June Book Event Highlights

(All events are virtual)

**Thursday, June 3rd at 6 pm:** [At Home with Literati: Claire Fuller & Cal Flynn](#), Literati Bookstore

**Starting Friday, June 11th:** [Ann Arbor District Library Summer Game](#)

**Tuesday, June 15th at 7 pm:** [Million Dollar Demon](#) book launch with [Kim Harrison](#), Nicola's Books

**Friday, June 18th at 10 am:** [The Clements Bookworm: Author Conversation with Crystal Lynn Webster, "African American Children in the Antebellum North,"](#) William L. Clements Library

Click on the below map for more great book events taking place in June!



### Ann Arbor Book Trivia

Ann Arbor's Edwards Brothers book manufacturers was one of a handful of companies worldwide to print this book from a popular series.

1. *The Hunger Games*
2. *Children of Blood and Bone*
3. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

Find the answer at the bottom of the newsletter!

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## Interview with Megan and Peter Blackshear of Bookbound Bookstore



In early May, Bookbound Bookstore owners Megan and Peter Blackshear [announced](#) their store would be closing permanently this summer. Opened in the spring of 2013, it wasn't long before this mom and pop "independent community bookstore" on Ann Arbor's northside became well-known for its thoughtfully curated selection and recommendations by its well-read owners. The closing of Bookbound will be deeply felt among Ann Arbor's book community and the store and Megan and Peter will be greatly missed. Though their closing date is still uncertain, they expect to close at the end of June or early July. Visit their website for updates, and be sure to stop by or visit their [bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org) storefront to support them while you still can!

We are grateful to Megan and Peter for taking time from this busy moment in their lives to answer some questions compiled by our board.

**What surprised you most about the reality of running a bookstore compared to your plans for it?**

**Megan:** I had never worked retail before this, and it is notoriously thankless work. I've heard so many horror stories so I was trying to be prepared for that. But after eight years, I can count on one hand the times I felt truly disrespected by people in our store. Folks gave us the benefit of the doubt from day one, both as booksellers and as human beings. They put trust in us and offered friendship and support. It's been hard for me to refer to anyone

any of that.

**Peter:** I will second what Megan said about the graciousness of our customers. Years ago I did work retail, and while most interactions were pleasant enough, few had any depth. In contrast, many people who shopped at Bookbound went out of their way to show personal kindness and to get to know us. We've developed meaningful friendships that I expect will last long after we close up shop.

### **What did you find most difficult about running a bookstore on a daily basis?**

**Megan:** That's just it - "a daily basis". As a mom-and-pop shop we just had to run like energizer bunnies day after day. No sick days, no real breaks. Regardless of what was happening in our personal lives we had to be there, and we had to be on point. I lost both of my parents over the last few years. My father died just before the extremely busy, and theoretically joyful, holiday season in 2019 and I barely had a moment to process it. At times like that I used the mantra "the only way out is through", a paraphrase of a Robert Frost poem.

**Peter:** ditto

### **If someone told you they planned to open a bookstore in Ann Arbor, what advice would you give them?**

**Megan:** Be prepared to work really hard, but keep some kind of work/life balance or you will burn out. Ann Arbor is a tough town for a small business. While there are plenty of book-lovers and folks who have the resources to buy books, it is expensive here. You either need to have the scale necessary to afford plenty of staff to help get the work done, or you need to find an affordable space that allows you to keep shorter hours than we did. And most importantly, listen to your customers and your community so you can make the best choices about the books you carry. You can look at sales reports to see what is selling, but reports can't tell you what you're missing.

**Peter:** Again, Megan is spot on. I'm recalling something else Megan has said in the past, which is something along the lines of "if we moved down the street we'd probably have to be a different bookstore." There are millions of titles in print, and any one shop can carry only so many books. We learned quickly that national bestseller lists were almost meaningless in terms of predicting what our customers might want. Having conversations with your customers and really listening to them is how we figured out what books – and what kind of books – to stock. That said, shaping a bookshop is a two-way street. Your own tastes will have a bearing on the kind of customers you attract, and your customers will

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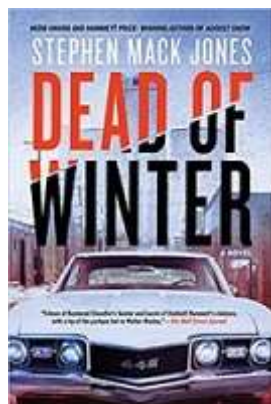
subjects and genres outside of your comfort zone. One of the things people expect and appreciate most about a small bookstore is informed advice and opinions.

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## Noteworthy New Releases



## Book Ends

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*Dead of Winter*

by Stephen Mack Jones

Soho Crime, May 2021

Hardcover, \$25

I'm not sure what it is about Michigan that creates great private eye novelists, but whatever the reason, Stephen Mack Jones has joined the likes of Loren Estleman and Steve Hamilton in creating his Detroit-based private eye, August Snow. August is a reluctant millionaire – an ex-cop who sued the police department – and he now (mostly) spends his time renovating his neighborhood, Detroit's Mexicantown, one house at a time. When his godmother, Elena, calls, however, he agrees to meet with a dying man about his Mexicantown business.

The old man wants him to buy his business and keep it viable, preventing richer developers from swooping in and creating high-end condos instead of maintaining a core community business. While in no way does August want to buy a clunky old business that even the old man's daughter doesn't want, neither does he want fancy real

## Happy 30th Anniversary Children's Literacy Network!

"For 30 years CLN has provided literacy programs to 300,000 low-income children, distributing more than a million dollars in new high-quality books and creating home libraries for families who need them most."

Help CLN reach their 30-day \$30,000 fundraising goal this June by [donating](#) now.



After over a year of being closed to in-person shopping, Literati reopened their doors on May 19th. Hours are Monday-Saturday 11 am to 8 pm. Starting Sunday, June 6th, they will also be open Sundays, 12 pm to 5 pm. Masks and kindness required for entry and capacity limits will be enforced for the safety of customers and staff.

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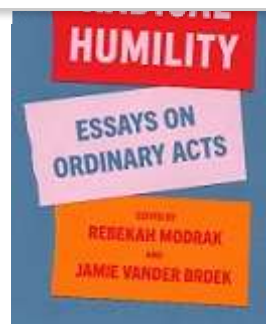
into it.

What follows is an entertaining, sporadically violent, twisted story of connections, contract killers, and the more down-to-earth aspects of August's life, i.e., his love life. While I've mentioned Michigan writers above, Jones more closely resembles Robert B. Parker in his full-on embrace of humor, cooking, and necessary violence in the service of the greater good.

Jones is a writer who is insanely quotable. His way with words is original and memorable and sets him well apart from many, many other writers. He's also great at setting the scene, whether it's the gym where he goes to box, his home and kitchen, or a meet-up at Detroit's Eastern market. These books are saturated in Detroit.

What's updated about Jones is his contemporary attitude, which is a welcome breath of fresh air. His willingness to slide in zingers about the politics and attitudes of the present infuses his books with relevance. August himself is a bit of a superman – he's kind, but he's also stylish; violent but also vulnerable. The people in his life most likely to support and guide him turn out to be women – his godmother, his girlfriend, and the shade of his mother.

Where Spenser had Hawk at his side, August has a whole community, including one of the men he basically took off the streets and



University of Michigan Art and Design Librarian and AADL library trustee Jamie Vander Broek was recently [featured](#) on the library's arts and culture website [Pulp](#), for her work on the book *Radical Humility: Essays on Ordinary Acts*. In addition to co-editing the book, Vander Broek also contributes an essay, "A Library is for You." A worthwhile read on her unique perspective on libraries!



## The library is reopening!

The Ann Arbor District Library has announced its plans to reopen all library branches on Monday, July 12th at noon. Library hours will remain from 12 pm to 8 pm with a plan to return to normal hours in September. In order to prepare for the reopening, all branches will be closed Friday, July 9th through Sunday, July 11th. Learn more about the library's reopening plans [here](#).

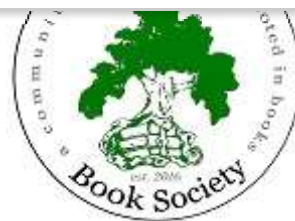
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element in these books, it's no different than the one Lee Child presents in his Jack Reacher novels. We all need a little superman in our lives, and why can't it be a Mexican, African American, kindhearted soul from Detroit who loves to cook? I'm all in.

*--Robin Agnew  
Co-owner, Aunt Agatha's*



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### Snapshot of the Past



**Caption: TIME TO READ:** These three playmates who were participating yesterday in the city-wide summer recreation program walk toward a shady nook at Burns Park to dip into "favorites" they checked out from the Bookmobile. Besides Burns Park, children can check out Bookmobile



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## Book Trivia Answer

**Answer:** In 2000, Edwards Brothers was one of a few book manufacturers to print *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, the fourth book in the Harry Potter series. They printed 800,000 of the million copies of the book needed by the release date. Considered by many to be the most popular book series of all time, secrecy and security followed every step of the publishing process. Employees and visitors were required to sign a form stating they would not remove any books, the spines of boxed books were wrapped in black plastic and locked in trucks, and the serial number on the lock was captured and confirmed at the truck's destination.

Edward Brothers began in 1893 by brothers and U-M Law School students Daniel and Thomas Edwards when they decided to copy and sell their lecture notes to other students. This small family business eventually became a leader in book manufacturing, with facilities in North Carolina and Pennsylvania in addition to their Ann Arbor location that printed 25,000,000 units a year. Edward Brothers Malloy closed permanently on June 15, 2018, after 125 years.

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