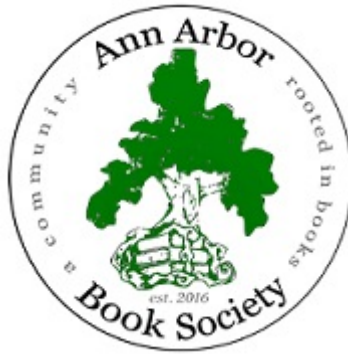


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November Newsletter

a2books.org

November Book Event Highlights

Thursday, November 2nd at 7 pm: [Grown Folks Story Time](#) at Bookbound Bookstore, 1729 Plymouth Rd.

Saturday, November 4th at 8 pm: Author [David Sedaris](#), Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway, Detroit.

Sunday, November 5th, from 1 pm to 3 pm: [Fifth Avenue Press Book Reception](#), AADL's publishing imprint! Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave.

Tuesday, November 7th at 7 pm: Author [John U. Bacon](#), *The Great Halifax Explosion*, Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Liberty.

Monday, November 13th at 7 pm: Author [Nathan Englander](#), *Dinner at the Center of the Earth*, sponsored by the Jewish Community Center and Literati Bookstore, Zingerman's Greyline, 100 N. Ashley.

Friday, November 17th from 5:30 pm to 7 pm: UM LSA Author's Forum Presents: [The Kellogg Brothers: The Battling Brothers of Battle Creek](#), Hatcher Graduate Library Gallery room 100, 913 S. University.

Sunday, November 26th from 1 pm to 3 pm: Actor/writer [Jon Glaser](#) discusses comedy and his career, AADL downtown branch multipurpose room, 343 S. Fifth Ave.

Tuesday, November 30th at 7 pm: A conversation with [Douglas Trevor and Claire Vaye Watkins](#), Nicola's Books, 2513 Jackson Rd.

For more events, visit our [events calendar](#) at [a2books.org](#)!

Event Photo Highlight



Aut Bar and Common Language owners Martin Contreras (with cake) and Keith Orr (with mic) present trivia host and employee Terry McClymonds with a cake in celebration of his 20 year anniversary, presented at the Ann Arbor Book Society trivia night fundraiser. Congratulations Terry!

Local Author Advocates



In the summer of 2016, while developing a2books.org, I was excited to stumble across the website BookstoreAnnArbor.com. Not only does it feature articles on the book culture of Ann Arbor and information about Ann Arbor's independent bookstores, it provides a platform for access to books published exclusively by Ann Arbor authors -- over 400 of them! I was fortunate to get the opportunity to meet with the website's creators, Ian Gray and Nick Suino, who enlightened me on the many challenges self-published authors face. I am very thankful for the time they took to answer my questions, and for the energy they put into advocating for Ann Arbor's authors!

Rachel Pastiva: What inspired you to create BookstoreAnnArbor.com?

Ian Gray & Nick Suino: As writers and publishers living in a town full of folks who are always proclaiming their love of books and shouting "buy local" at every turn, we were astounded to find that not only are local authors poorly represented in physical retail locally, there were no comprehensive lists of local authors that we could easily find. We understand the reasons from a bookstore and business point of view – unknown local authors aren't likely to generate the same sales numbers as a *New York Times* bestseller – but we think there's merit in helping local authors and the chance for some great marketing buzz in doing so. The site addresses both issues. It's not only the most comprehensive list of local authors we're aware of, it's also a store that lets you select titles by local authors, then check out on Amazon. So while it's not exactly a brick-and-mortar bookstore full of local titles, it's the best substitute we could provide with our combined skill sets.

RP: What do you think is the biggest challenge self-published authors face?

Ian Gray & Nick Suino: If we had to name one thing, it's probably marketing. Although the per-unit revenue to the self-published author is exponentially greater than that of an author signed with a major publisher, the tradeoff is that you'll need a substantial marketing budget or a comprehensive set of clever strategies to get your title noticed. It's a noisy marketplace these days, thanks to social media and other easily accessible publishing platforms. If we could name TWO things, the other would be simply getting titles on the shelf! Even on a local level, there doesn't seem to be much of a welcome mat awaiting the self-published author. It's not an easy thing for a writer used to sitting alone at a keyboard for long hours to don a clean shirt and actually talk to the manager of a bookstore about featuring his or her titles.

RP: With marketing being one of the biggest challenges for self-published authors, how did you go about finding the 400+ local author titles that are featured on your

site?

Ian Gray & Nick Suino: To be honest, this was a slightly excruciating process. We combed various lists and Wikis, often discovering that they were woefully incomplete, or quite inaccurate in various ways. There seems to be a tendency for people who compile lists like this to want to "claim" authors for the town, when in fact maybe the author only went to school here in 1927 for a year or lived here for a summer in their hippy days or something. That became an ongoing quandary: what determines whether someone is an "Ann Arbor Author"? We may have committed the same error in a few cases, but tried our best to stick to authors who lived here at least long enough that they did or could have established residency. And if memory serves, we allowed a few authors who live close to Ann Arbor, but only if they seem to have lived here previously or maintained a solid relationship with the town.

RP: If you could make a pitch to local bookstores to persuade them to put out the welcome mat for local authors, what would it be?

Ian Gray & Nick Suino: That the square footage they might sacrifice to feature say, a few dozen local authors would pay for itself in no time in terms of foot traffic and "cause marketing" if they finessed things a little. The unit sales themselves might be meager, but the PR and foot traffic might very well compensate. Failure to show some respect for these authors definitely has a "backlash" quality. Without naming names, I know of at least four local authors who won't shop at least two local outlets because of their failure to stock local authors while these same stores exploit the "buy local" vibe to pitch their business.

RP: As a former longtime bookseller myself, I tried to support self-published authors in a way that was reasonable for a small independent bookstore. But in my experience, many self-published authors are in the dark about how to sell their work, and unfortunately, the onus can't be on the bookseller to teach them. What is your advice to local authors to encourage a warm reception at the bookstore?

Ian Gray: I personally am more comfortable pitching my creative works for sale than many writers or artists I know. I think my first piece of advice might be to find "agency", i.e.: get someone with even moderate sales skills to do the pitching. I'd also suggest they rely on the kind of professional courtesy that one might use in any business interaction, specifically: find out who the correct contact is at the store, and inquire by email, phone, or even letter, about taking some of their time to discuss placement. I think bargaining in confidently as a "salesperson" may be worse than being shy and choked up about it! People in retail are working harder than ever for less money these days, and their time has value!

RP: Have you received any feedback from featured authors on the impact your site has had on their book sales?

Ian Gray & Nick Suino: Unfortunately, no. Though we'd love to! This was something of a side project for us, and for expedience we never got around to doing two things we'd like to do: one, direct outreach to authors that have been featured, and two, user testing to see how many visitors to the site might be put off by its online nature or its relationship with Amazon for fulfillment. Some people still think of Amazon as more evil than Borders or Barnes & Noble, when it was, in fact, corporate brick and mortar stores - especially Borders - that did more to destroy the indy bookstore market than anything.

RP: As you might imagine, I am not a fan of Amazon, due to their business practices and the [negative impact](#) they've had on all aspects of the book industry. But I recognize that self-published authors have a different relationship with Amazon and can benefit from their services. As self-published authors yourselves, what role has Amazon played in sales of your own books?

Ian Gray & Nick Suino: We were able to assemble and publish our own books using CreateSpace, which allows us to offer our books for sale through Amazon. As with any sales channel, there are pros and cons. The pros are that our books were almost immediately available to the public, our royalty rates are good, and being able to link to the Amazon page for our books makes it very easy to let people know where to buy the books. Additionally, we were able to set up our store at bookstoreannarbor.com using Amazon for checkout and order fulfillment. The cons are that Amazon isn't a local bookstore, that some people don't like Amazon, and that it takes a lot of work to market books even when they are offered on Amazon. That's probably a great point to make for writers who dream of earning their Amazon fortune ... it's just a sales channel unless and until you do a lot of work to set up and promote yourself; a small part of a "healthy breakfast" rather than the whole breakfast

Ian Gray is a digital media and small business consultant, writer, and musician/composer. He has authored or co-authored several books on success and personal transformation, and provides workshops and training to help organizations enhance their sales, managerial, and marketing activities. His musical output runs the gamut from pop & dance to soundtracks & ambient, and has appeared in two feature films and numerous theater and video productions. He is currently preparing to relocate to Kenya to embrace the blossoming tech scene occurring on the African continent.

Nick is a martial arts expert, writer, attorney, and business consultant. He's written or co-written nine books, and educates people in martial arts, leadership, and marketing. He founded Master & Fool LLC with Ian Gray, a company that encompasses a publishing imprint and the bookstoreannarbor.com website, which features Ann Arbor authors. Nick's passion is helping people live abundant, empowered lives doing the things they love to do.

Visit Ian and Nick's website, bookstoreannarbor.com to purchase books from your favorite Ann Arbor authors, and to discover some new ones!

On the Shelf



Once in awhile, a book takes you to an exact time and exact place such that you feel that you are living with the characters and experiencing things in real time, even though the events happened well in the past. Linda Jackson's *Midnight Without a Moon* is such a book.

Set in Jackson's home state of Mississippi, *Midnight* follows a young girl named Rose Lee Carter as she lives life among Jim Crow laws, segregation, and racism. Near the beginning of the book, Rose's mom leaves to pursue a new life with a new beau. Feeling abandoned, Rose must learn to live with her strict (some might say abusive) grandmother. The book winds through Rose's life as she navigates the cotton fields and

Little Free Library



273 Scio Village Court
Scio Village Condominium
Community

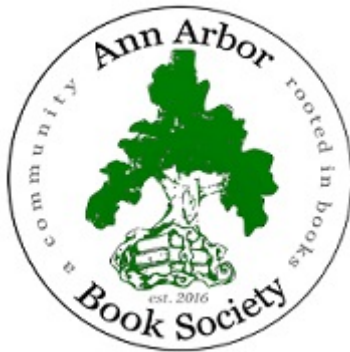
Our Little Free Library opened in the fall of 2016. The idea was initiated by library steward and founder, Rebecca Aikman. The homeowner's association approved the project which serves the Scio Village Condominiums community.

The library was designed and built by Scio Village neighbor, Marcus Johnson. The books are donated by the community and their friends. We have three shelves: two devoted to adult selections and one shelf for young readers. The library is located

extreme heat of the deep South and ultimately leads us to the lynching and slaughter of a black boy accused of whistling at a white woman. In between, the reader learns just how horrific life really was for people in Rose's situation. But Rose is a true survivor! Through all of this, she does not lose hope of a better life.

This book is recommended for anyone wishing to learn more about how life really was in our not-so-distant past.

-- Patti Smith, author and teacher



Know someone who might enjoy reading about local book news? Please forward this email newsletter and encourage them to sign up on the home page of a2books.org!

in our gazebo and there are two benches for those who want to peruse a book.

The library opened last October with a Meet and Greet for our neighbors, and with cider and doughnuts to celebrate the arrival of autumn. The goal of our library is to encourage a love of reading and to provide a gathering place where neighbors can relax and get to know one another.



Builder Marcus Johnson

Snapshot of the Past

Our mailing address is:

Ann Arbor Book Society
P.O. Box 7176
Ann Arbor, MI 48107

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