

Libraries Working Towards Social Justice May/June 2022 Programs

Wednesday, 5/11, 7pm at Memorial Hall Library - Courageous Conversations—Taking Action: Structural Racism, Inequities & Climate Change

Courageous Conversations welcomes the community to a discussion about inclusive solutions to climate change. Climate change and its impacts are experienced differently depending on where one lives and one's position in society. Youth and marginalized communities, the people affected the most by climate change, have often been left out of the conversation -- to the detriment of finding equitable solutions that really address all of our needs. Join Andover resident, Nia Keith, Vice President of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice for [Mass Audubon](#), and Lesly Melendez, Deputy Director of [Groundwork Lawrence](#), as well as community youth, for a conversation about how structural inequities and structural racism show up in environmental issues and why inclusive solutions are so important.

All are welcome. The program will be livestreamed and recorded by Andover TV. Read more about Courageous Conversations [here](#).

Wednesday, May 11, 7pm on Zoom (via Belmont Public Library) Red Bishop with Robin T. W. Yuan

Join Belmont Public Library, Maynard Public Library, Wayland Free Public Library and Winchester Public Library in welcoming Robin Yuan, author of *Red Bishop*, to this collaborative virtual author event.

In honor of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, Yuan will speak on his book *Red Bishop*, the story of his grandfather Robin Chen, the last presiding bishop of the Anglican Church in China. Yuan charts Chen's intricate journey, ranging from his early childhood years and his conversion to Christianity as a schoolboy at an Anglican missionary school to his death under house arrest decades later, showing a more nuanced picture of the Cultural Revolution than the version found in propaganda periodicals of the time disseminating "idyllic pictures of a communal utopia with caring barefoot doctors, smiling farmers, and singing factory workers."

[REGISTER for the Zoom here.](#)

Thursday, May 12, 6:30pm on Zoom (via Morrill Memorial Library) Allyship on Turtle Island to Indigenous Peoples--An Interactive Course

We cannot change what we cannot see. We cannot understand each other if we aren't speaking the same language. We cannot be friends if we do not tell the truth.

In this 1-hour, interactive course, we provide a framework so that we can see the bigger picture of capitalism and white supremacy and how these systems set us up to interact with each other

as human beings on Turtle Island. By providing a common language, we can start to see the roles that the system wants us to continue to play for its own profit and gain. Once we are able to see our roles, we can then make different choices based on our values and good hearts that lead us all towards truth and reconciliation.

This virtual program will take place on May 12 at 6:30pm on Zoom. The course is a 1-hour, interactive session that focuses on connection and mutual processing; attendees are asked to have their cameras on and be ready to speak in several rounds of sharing. Space is limited, and registration is required. For more information or to register, visit:

<https://norwoodlibrary.assabetinteractive.com/calendar/virtual-allyship-on-turtle-island-to-indigenous-peoples-an-interactive-course/>

Wednesday, May 18, 7pm via Zoom

Chinese American Contributions to the Fabric of America

In recognition of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the Wayland Chinese American Association, the Wayland Human Rights, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and the Wayland Free Public Library present "Chinese American Contributions to the Fabric of America."

Join us for a presentation outlining a landmark study of the challenges for, and contributions of, Chinese Americans to American society over the past 175 years. The presentation will provoke curiosity and offer a new perspective on Chinese American contributions while identifying, quantifying, and showcasing the contributions of the Chinese American community through data and storytelling. The event will be a 30-minute presentation followed by a facilitated discussion.

In an age inflamed with resurgent racism, and with geopolitical tension reversing decades of fruitful exchange with China, the US has reached a moment when it is critical to examine how diversity has benefited the society and how minority groups such as Chinese Americans have, over time, become identified with the country itself. With the country's combined racial minorities set to make up a majority of the population by 2045, an awareness of the contribution of immigrant groups - and the damaging misperceptions that exist alongside this - can ensure a future of co-operation, mutual appreciation and respect.

[Register here.](#)

Thursday May 26, 7pm

One Book Chelmsford presents: A Conversation with Author and Poet Ocean Vuong, author of *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (on Zoom)

Please note this is a virtual event. Please [CLICK HERE](#) to register in advance and receive the link to join.

Join us for a very special event with prize-winning poet, novelist and educator Ocean Vuong, author of our One Book Chelmsford 2022 selection, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, in conversation with Professor Sandra Lim, Ph.D., prize-winning poet, and

professor of English at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell. A brief reading will be followed by a conversation between our esteemed guests. Questions for the author can be submitted in advance to jfitzhanso@chelmsfordlibrary.org to be forwarded to Professor Lim. Many thanks to Penguin Random House, publisher of *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, for making this event possible.

About the author, Ocean Vuong:

Ocean Vuong is the author of the critically acclaimed poetry collection *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* and the New York Times bestselling novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. A recipient of the 2019 MacArthur "Genius" Grant, he is also the winner of the Whiting Award and the T.S. Eliot Prize. His writings have been featured in *The Atlantic*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*. Born in Saigon, Vietnam, he currently lives in Northampton, Massachusetts.

About Sandra Lim:

Sandra Lim is the author of three collections of poetry: most recently, *The Curious Thing* (W.W. Norton, 2021); *The Wilderness* (W.W. Norton, 2014), and *Loveliest Grotesque* (Kore Press, 2006). She has received the Barnard Women Poets Prize, the Levis Reading Prize, a Literature Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. She is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts Lowell and also serves on the poetry faculty in the Warren Wilson College MFA Program for Writers. Born in Seoul, Korea, she lives in Cambridge, MA.

About the novel:

The book is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, it navigates a family's history that began before he was born—a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam—and becomes a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known. The son serves as witness to his mother's story, from her undeniable love for her family and her determination to survive in Vietnam, then in the United States, to her struggles with mental health and unflinching accounts of her physical abuse. As he unearths his family's journey to present day, as he seeks understanding, it leads to an unforgettable revelation about what it means to tell your own story—and the silence of going unheard. What happens to language and storytelling as a tool of communication when a listener is not promised?

A masterful work of fiction, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is a brutally honest exploration of race, class, sexuality, masculinity, aging, and dying. Vuong asks questions central to our American moment, immersed as we are in addiction, violence, and trauma, but undergirded by compassion and tenderness. Having survived trauma, how

do we survive its aftermath? How do we make of it a kind of joy—and, above all, a kind of life? These questions power one of the most important debut novels of many years. With stunning urgency and grace, Vuong writes of people caught between disparate worlds, and asks how we heal and rescue one another without forsaking who we are.

Presented by Chelmsford in partnership with the public libraries in Andover, Boxford, Carlisle, Danvers, Dracut, Groton, Groveland, Holden, Lowell, Methuen, Newburyport, South Hamilton, Tewksbury, and West Newbury

Tuesday, May 31, 7pm via Zoom

Pop Goes the Culture: The History of Asians in American Pop Culture

In the pre-talkie early years of Hollywood, two of the biggest silent movie stars, Sessue Hayakawa and Anna May Wong were Asian. Portrayed as exotic and inscrutable, these stars graced the silver screen with great success. But suddenly and within a short period of time, all the major Hollywood movie studios began hiring white actors instead of actual Asians and gave them the “yellowface” treatment with taped-back eyes and makeup. Fast-forward to today, and Asians have attained an amazing level of stardom and success both on TV and the big screen. How, when and why did all those cultural shifts come about? This presentation covers more than a century of how Asians have been portrayed in Hollywood, on commercials, and on stage. Presented by Ashland Public Library in partnership with the Brookline, Cary (Lexington), Maynard, Norwood, Somerville, and Wayland Public Libraries. [Register for the Zoom link here.](#)

Thursday, June 30, 6:00 p.m. @ Reading Public Library

Diet for a Small Planet with Frances Moore Lappe

Can a recipe book change the world? Yes! find out how from world-renowned food expert Frances Moore Lappé. The 50th anniversary edition of Diet for a Small Planet shows us how plant-centered eating can help restore our damaged ecology, address the climate crisis, and move us toward real democracy. Book sale and signing will follow.

Register here:

<https://libcal.readingpl.org/calendar?cid=3778&t=g&d=2022-06-30&cal=3778&audience=1025&inc=0>

Thursday, June 30, 7pm

LGBTQ+ Basics and Beyond via Zoom

Participants leave this presentation with "up-to-date vocabulary, answers to frequently asked questions, and improved tools for allying with queer and transgender people."

Presented by OUT Metrowest, which builds communities where LGBTQ+ youth thrive. Register [here](#). Hosted by Wilmington Memorial Library in partnership with other libraries, including Memorial Hall Library.

Libraries Working Towards Social Justice formed in 2020 to expand our programming efforts beyond our individual communities to achieve a more equitable, diverse and inclusive society. The libraries include [Andover](#), Burlington, [Chelmsford](#), Dracut, Groton, [Haverhill](#), Lawrence, Lowell, [Methuen](#), Newton, North Andover, North Reading, Norwood, Peabody, Pepperell, Reading, Tewksbury, Topsfield, Wayland, Westford and Wilmington.