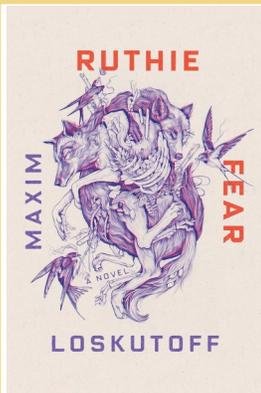


Ruthie Fear, a Bitterroot novel



In the foothills of the Sapphire Mountains in southwestern Montana, elk are bleeding. Some are dead. Others are still alive, torn by bullets, their panicked eyes searching the landscape for a way to escape. This bloodbath was caused by hunters: A few are locals who understand the “communion between hunter and prey,” but

others are “weekenders in from Missoula” who have no respect for the land. Instead of rifles, they carry military-grade AKs and bump-stocked AR-15s. Ruthie Fear, the protagonist of Maxim Loskutoff’s eponymous novel, belongs to the first group, but the carnage around her keeps her from focusing; when she finally shoots, she has no idea whether her bullet has found its target. Ruthie thinks the weekenders are ruining everything, changing the landscape and forever altering life in Montana’s Bitterroot Valley. In his gritty debut novel, Loskutoff explores the dissolution of a mill town whose mill has shuttered, ultimately suggesting that in this destruction may be a tortured form of renewal.

Ruthie is an only child who lives with her father in a dilapidated trailer. On the surface, Ruthie Fear is a coming-of-age story that explores poverty, violence and death. But below that surface lies an examination of the shifting demographics of western Montana, where a largely white, working-class community is being displaced by tourists and second homeowners. Gentrification is at the core of this novel, and Loskutoff shows how it aggravates class resentment: People loathe the new

mansions and condos, the weekend visitors and city hunters. At the same time, the book questions the idea of the rugged, individualistic, white rural Westerner. In Ruthie’s world, under-employed men hunt for food and dream of a day when society collapses and the rich must “beg for help,” even as their own world slowly implodes, from poverty and climate change — and supernatural forces.

The reviled wealthy newcomers’ arrival forces the locals to consider their own situations more critically. Most families in the novel struggle with unemployment, inadequate nutrition and poverty, but those privations don’t become enraging until rich city people appear, flaunting their wealth, buying up land and changing local customs ...when an earthquake hits, the locals attribute it to an “ancient Native American curse” that Loskutoff invents, “Charlo’s curse,” named after Chief Charlo, who led Salish resistance to their forced removal from the Bitterroot Valley by the U.S. government. Rutherford rolls his eyes at his neighbors’ ignorance, even as his Salish best friend, Terry, mocks him for being upset at the newcomers for fencing off the land that Rutherford’s family has used for generations.

Even as working-class families find themselves displaced by rich vacationers, they contend with the environmental damage of the industries that they followed to the region. They also distrust the research lab on the edge of town. Loskutoff embodies these scattered, complex threats in the form of a nightmarish creature that Ruthie encounters in the woods.

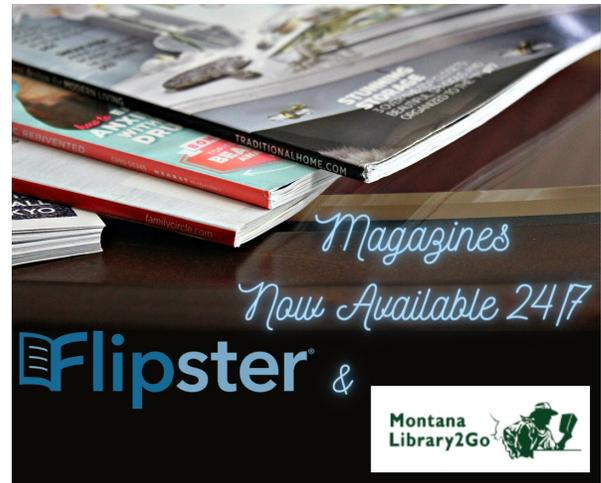
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One day while she's out with her dog, Ruthie sees a tall, feathered, headless creature that moves toward the creek on insect-like legs. The apparition becomes an obsession. Years later, she explains to a lover how she hated it, how the bizarre creature made her think of "pollution and all the horrible things" she was learning about in school. As ever more people move to town, Ruthie wonders if the creature she saw long ago was "a premonition, a ghost image of what was to come," even as she questions her own instinctive hatred of something she can't understand. In an unexpectedly apocalyptic ending, Ruthie finds evidence that the creature wasn't a single aberration, but rather a symbol of how far her town truly is from the idyllic wilderness she imagines it to be.

The full version of this review by Gabino Iglesias was originally published at *High Country News* (<https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.10/ideas-books-in-a-small-montana-town-theres-a-thing-with-feathers-hope-not-so-much>) on September 9, 2020, shared here in an excerpted form by kind permission.

More Digital Magazines



MontanaLibrary2Go now offers magazines so now there are two ways to access digital magazines.

Through the Flipster app, you can access Consumer Reports.

**LIBRARIES TRANSFORM
BECAUSE CRITICAL THINKING
IS A CRITICAL SKILL**

Reference News

Employment Help

Job Service - Missoula is busy helping job-seekers "virtually" while their physical location remains closed. Give them a call at (406) 728-7060 for assistance. All services are available by phone, email, or online at MontanaWorks.gov.

Property Tax Assistance Program (PTAP) If you are a Montanan on a fixed or limited income, did you know there was a program for reducing the property tax on your home. Your 2019 Federal Adjusted income needs to be less than \$19,625 if you are single or \$26,167 if you are married or head of household. The PTAP benefit only applies to the first \$200,000 of your primary residence's value. Library staff can help you locate the form. Your application must be postmarked or hand-delivered by April 15.

Help filing your income tax

- Stevensville Senior Center is making appointments for seniors. Call (406)777-5681.
- Clearwater Credit Union offers tax help and does not have an age qualification. Appointments are filling up fast. Call (406)523-3300 .
- IRS help lines for individuals are open Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time (800) 829-1040.

The mission of the North Valley Public Library is to strengthen and support our community by:

- fostering a welcoming and comfortable setting for all people to gather, explore, and discover;
- promoting literacy and lifelong learning;
- providing exemplary programming, service, and quality, timely materials.

ONLINE Adult Program at Partner Institution: Humanities Montana & Travelers' Rest State Park Program

Montana Women Writers Workshop with Caroline Patterson

Saturday, March 6 at 11 am

Author and Executive Director of the Missoula Writing Collaborative, Caroline Patterson, inspires aspiring male and female writers with a short history of several historic Montana women writers and then leads the audience in writing sketches about remarkable women in their past: homesteaders, teachers, ranchers, rodeo riders, homemakers, and bartenders. Audience members who prefer recording an oral history will use DIY technology to capture their stories on audio.

This program is part of Travelers' Rest State Park's 2021 Winter Storytelling series *Reimagining America*. Speakers will reflect on the theme of Reimagining America as they share stories and histories via Zoom on Saturdays at 11 a.m. The theme is drawn from the exhibit, *Reimagining America: the Maps of Lewis and Clark*, on display Jan. 9—March 6 during regular Visitor Center hours.

Register online at Travelers' Rest State Park to receive the Zoom link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtd-yhrDksGNwqnN6Y1aKWo-caHwryyA3Q>

Evaluating sources

The American Library Association writes: "Misleading information published as news is not new to the 21st century. In the late 19th century, we called it "yellow journalism," and its practitioners used sensational headlines and outright fraudulent stories to increase sales. Today, with increasing reliance on both digital news outlets and social media for news, sifting through the messages for non-biased sources requires attention, and possibly reviewing multiple sources--including seeking out a reliable original source."

1. Consider the source.
2. Read past the headline.
3. Assess the credibility of the author.
4. Look at the links and sources supporting the article.
5. Check the date.
6. Consider that it might be satire.
7. Consider it might be promotional.
8. Check your biases.
9. Search other news outlets to see if the news is widely reported.

Toolkit for evaluating sources from ALA.

libguides.ala.org/InformationEvaluation/Overview

Building soft skills with games

You may have noticed that public libraries, schools, and universities around the country offer games in their curriculum, programming, and also for patrons to check out and take home. Not only are games fun for kids, teens, and adults, but they are useful for the soft skills that are learned. Soft skills are critical for success in the workplace and employers seek those with skills such as conflict resolution, teamwork, & patience. The library is currently offering the role playing game *Dungeons & Dragons (D&D)* on Tuesdays for ages 13-18. This game has been popular for many years.

D&D is a social experience where a team of adventurers, in pseudo-medieval worlds, have a goal to accomplish. Our teen programmer oversees this role playing game as the "Dungeon Master" for a no-bullying fun experience. Teens can join online or come in-person with a mask and social distancing for a safe experience. D&D is a board and oral game in which the setting is narrated by the "Dungeon Master." This particular game teaches listening skills, teamwork, conflict resolution, problem solving, social cohesion, communication, math skills, self-control, imagination, creativity, negotiation, etc.

Recently, the Director and the Teen Programmer took an online course hosted by Sullivan University Library and the Nebraska Library Commission on *Engagement with Soft Skills: Using Board Games at the Library*.

After reviewing the book, *Everyone Plays at the Library: Creating Great Gaming Experiences for All Ages* by Scott Nicholson, the library plans to select and purchase board games for patrons to check out to enjoy at home.

Although there are lots of skills to be gained by playing games, no need to tell the teens that. Just tell them it is fun and to join in.

**LIBRARIES TRANSFORM
BECAUSE LIBRARIANS HAVE
BEEN HELPING PEOPLE FACT-
CHECK SINCE FOREVER**

TEENS MARCH NEWS

Crafty Fridays!



Ages 12-18

Fridays at 4 pm

In-person

Each week, come for a low-key craft and chill time at the library. Do the craft, your homework, or just read, it's up to you.

Social distancing will be observed and masks are required.

Registration is strongly suggested. Space is limited.

Role Playing Games in-person/online!

Ages 13-18

Tuesdays at 4 pm

Enter the world of

Dungeons & Dragons!

Create your own character and join the campaign. This program will be held both in-person (masks required) or online via Zoom. You choose. No experience necessary.

Registration is required.

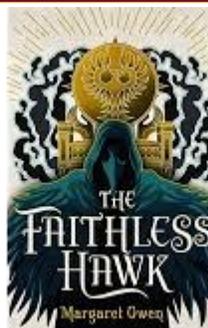
Northvalley.librarycalendar.com/events/



2021 Best Fiction

Come to the library to read this year's best fiction. Chosen by the YALSA, these books reflect some of the best to recently come out. Check out the display in the teen section. The teen programming coordinator, Emily has read two so far and enjoyed them immensely. Her picks are **Agnes at the**

End of the World by Kelly McWilliams and **The Faithless Hawk** by Margaret Owen, a sequel to **The Merciful Crow**.



YOUTH MARCH NEWS

Book Bundles for Kids & Teens

Need help deciding what to read next? Have a youth specialist at the Library custom-curate a selection of items for you! Get a pile of books from our collection that we think you'll love. Let us know your favorite types of books and our experts will create a bundle just for you. Teen and youth bundles include up to 5 items. Book Bundles are ready within two to three days. We will notify you when they are ready for pickup at North Valley Public Library. Fill out a Book Bundle registration form on our website located under the 'My Library Services' drop-down menu.

ONLINE: Mother Goose & Story Time

Mother Goose Sings and Swings for 0-3 years of age is online Monday, March 8, 15, & 22 at 10:30am. Tune into the Library's Facebook Live for interactive songs, rhymes, and a story.

Story Time Facebook Live! Wednesdays at 10:30. Stories, a quick early literacy activity, and a link to a creative craft. These live programs are geared for preschool and under.

Zoom Art Club for Kids!

What: Fun art projects together on Zoom! For ages 5-11. *You can watch lessons live or recorded.*

When: Thursday, March 18 at 4 pm

Where: Zoom—after you've registered, check your email for the Zoom meeting link that we'll use for each meeting.

How: [Register for this program on our website](#) and pick up your materials at the Library the week of.

Maker Kits

Ages 2-18

Have fun creating with your bi-monthly maker kit from North Valley Public Library! Register every other week for a different science experiment, art/craft project, or a maker activity. Pick up your kits on Mondays or Tuesdays during the Library's open hours. *Please register for each week you wish to receive a kit on the [Library's website](#).*

Register by going to our website: northvalleylibrary.org.

Click on CALENDAR. Registration is available at the bottom of each event description on the website.