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## What's new in February: Michigan Notable Books and more

Each year the Michigan Department of Education and the Library of Michigan announce twenty books as Michigan Notable Books. To be eligible a book has to be about or set in Michigan or written by an author with a close Michigan connection.

"This intriguing collection of books represents a spectrum of Michigan's people, places and the history that makes our state unique," Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles said about this year's list.

Here is a run-down of this year's Michigan Notable Books that the library is carrying.

**Betty Ford: First Lady, Women's Advocate, Survivor, Trailblazer** by Lisa McCubbin is published by Simon and Schuster. Betty Ford was in the public eye during her husband, Gerald Ford's, term as President. Her honest and forthright sharing of her addiction and illness was ground breaking. Her advocacy for women who were dealing with health problems like breast cancer or any kind of addiction made it ok to talk about and "she inspired the modern concept of recovery." McCubbin's book details all of this.

Moving to fiction, we have **Beautiful Music** by Michael Zadoorian. Zadoorian is the author of **The Leisure Seeker**, very popular with Books for Lunch readers among others. **Beautiful Music** is the story of Danny, a high school freshman just a few years after the 1967 Detroit riots. One critic has identified the theme as "the transformative power of love." Fast upon his success with **The Leisure Seeker**, **Beautiful Music** is an excellent bet for a satisfying read.

**Nature's Friend: the Gwen Frostic Story** by Lindsey McDivitt tells about Frostic's illness at eight months in 1906 that had the physical impact of cerebral palsy. Yet, she became college educated and owned her own print making business. Her concern was with the wonder and beauty of nature and encouraging others to appreciate it.

Another non-fiction book centers on a location close to us, **The Poisoned City: Flint's Water and the American Urban Tragedy** by Anna Clark. What happened to Flint could be the story in many locations across the country. For a local setting and interest, this is a great choice.

**The Russian Five: a Story of Espionage, Defection, Bribery, and Courage** by Keith Gave has absolutely nothing to do with today's politics. Rather it is a fascinating story about one of Michigan's favorite teams, the Detroit Red Wings. Back when the Red Wings were down on their luck in the 80's, it was determined that what would really help are some Russian hockey

players. The first two arrived in 1989 and eventually five players altogether were assisted in defecting from Russia, so they could play hockey in Detroit. The result? A 1997 Stanley Cup that, in an in your face kind of moment, “they took for a victory lap in Moscow.” All Red Wings fans not to mention espionage fans don’t want to miss this one. Sports and Spies. I’m in.

Two more books to be on the lookout for in February beyond the Michigan Notable Books are C.J. Tudor’s **The Hiding Place** and Lauren Wilkinson’s **American Spy**. Tudor’s first book, **The Chalk Man**, is one of the best suspense novels I’ve ever read – completely creepy up to the very last sentence – and reviewers say **The Hiding Place** is even better. Wilkinson’s **American Spy** is a debut novel involving those difficult issues in espionage novels regarding who exactly are the “good guys” and adding elements of race and gender issues. The notices are outstanding on both.

If these don’t catch your eye, stop in. We have so much more.

See you at the Library!

**Upcoming Events: Part 2 Nature Series – The Secret Life of Skunks** Tues. Feb. 5 at 6:30 p.m.  
**Pout Pout Fish Party** Sat. Feb. 9 from 10 – 12. **Books for Lunch** Tuesday, Feb. 12 at 12:30.  
**Thursday Mah Jongg** is still going strong this winter, every week at 12:30. Keep track of regular **children and youth programming** and other events on our website, FB, and Twitter.