



Book Lovers Dispatch

No. 11

www.bookloversdispatch.com

Summer 2026

To Beach or Not to Beach?



By **Elissa Matthews**, *Book Lovers Dispatch*

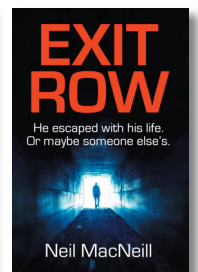
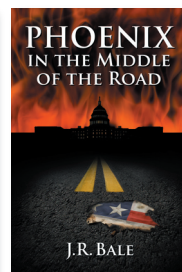
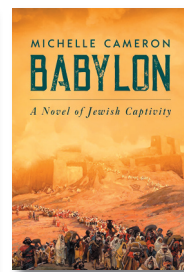
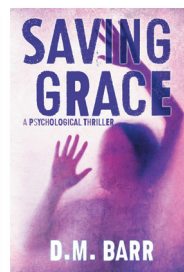
Ah, the beach in summer! For many of us the beach is paradise - warm, welcoming, and filled with the relaxing sounds of surf and seagulls and ice cream vendors coming closer. Waves roll steadily onto the shore and time seems to slow down. The sun shines and a gentle breeze carries the scent of saltwater and sunscreen across the sand.

But the beach is not for everyone. Some people

hate the crowds, the sand that finds its way into everything, and the relentless glare of the sun. Some of us prefer a quieter refuge: a secluded spot in the woods, curled up in a hammock beneath a canopy of leaves, soothed by cool green shade and the song of the rippling brook nearby.

I'm a forest person, personally, but some of my best friends are beach people.

(Continued on Page 4)



To subscribe to **Book Lovers Dispatch**, go to www.bookloversdispatch.com

*Editor's
Corner*

Resurrection of the Indy Bookstore

By J.R. Bale, *Book Lovers Dispatch*

A decade ago, the independent bookstore was declared “dead” as a viable business model. While all small business people face challenges, one bookstore owner described the advent of Amazon as a sword to the heart. Around that time, I tried to make a list of the bookstores in New Jersey. I counted roughly twelve. Even Barnes & Nobles was having a rough time.

However, the independent bookstore is making a surprising comeback. The American Booksellers Association reported over 400 new indie bookshops opened in 2025, a 31% rise from 2024. Upon hearing this, I recounted and found over 30 bookstores in New Jersey.

The environment is still challenging. Many sell other products including food, coffee, antiques, stationery or toys. And most are community-oriented, hosting author talks and other social events.

Attributed to the entrepreneurial spirit of Americans, but also to the dedication of readers and book lovers.

The revival of the indy bookshop is great news for book lovers and the spirit of American literature.



Visit the Salt Box Museum

1350 Springfield Avenue, New Providence, NJ
www.NewProvidenceHistorical.com 908-665-1034

The *Book Lovers Dispatch* is now accepting advertising as a way to support its mission of talking about all things bookish. Our advertising rates:

Half page	\$50	Quarter page	\$25
Third Page	\$35	One-eighth page	\$15

To support our mission and arrange an ad, please go to www.BookLoversDispatch.com/contact.

© Balefire Communications LLC 2026. All rights reserved.
 Permission is granted to transmit or reproduce this newsletter in whole and unaltered only.
 Transmitting or reproducing edited versions or excerpts without permission is strictly forbidden.

Beth Sherman: *Beaches Are People Too!*

By Elissa Matthews, *Book Lovers Dispatch*

Let's hear it for beach lovers! Beth Sherman is a prize winning novelist, short story writer, and avid observer of people, especially at the beach. Sitting in the shade on a crowded stretch of sand, she listens, watches, and gathers fragments of conversations which often find their way into her work. The beach, for her, is both a place of rest and a kind of informal research lab.

Back in the 90's Sherman was living in Manhattan with no car and no view, but she could hop the train to Ocean Grove and enjoy the town, its people, and its interesting sights. It was the ideal setting for *Dead Man's Float*, the first of five books in The Jersey Shore Mysteries. As the series developed, the beach became central to her creative process and she began treating Ocean Grove as an active character. (If you've ever been to Ocean Grove, you'll certainly agree with that!)

With a growing family and graduate school plans, Sherman needed to step back from the pressure of novels. When she returned to writing, she decided to try her hand at short stories, then found herself increasingly drawn to flash fiction: very short stories, sometimes less than a single paragraph. She enjoys the quick writing process, the flexibility of these very short narratives, and the many experimental possibilities, including using non-traditional forms such as reversing time, setting up multiple narrators, or writing from the "we" point of view.

Now a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee,



Beth Sherman

Sherman reflects on how writing no longer feels solitary. After years of working in isolation, she has found a supportive global community through flash fiction, while still relying on prompts and workshops to cast that first, necessary net.

Her most recent work, *How to Get There From Here*, is a novella-in-flash about a family coping with dementia, set against a beach backdrop. The work uses innovative, lyrical forms to portray a mother's mental decline and a daughter's emotional struggle, especially her fear of being forgotten. Sherman considers it her strongest work to date.



Beach Reading!



To Beach or Not to Beach (Continued from Page 1)

Whatever works, right? The important thing, either way, is to prep carefully ahead of time so that when you arrive, you can just relax. Make sure the comforts of the day are close at hand: a cooler stocked with cold drinks, Oreos (they come in so many varieties now!), and apple slices. A bag with art supplies, extra sunscreen, bug spray, and your summer playlist downloaded onto your phone. Spare earbuds, in case you lose one. And, of course, your book.

Whether it's a new book straight off the bestseller list, a classic you've been meaning to read for years, an old favorite you just have to reread, or a textbook that's going to help you anchor the changes you want to make in your life, nothing beats a good book. A doorway into another world, another time, another city, another self – it doesn't matter, you chose it, you get to enjoy it. Don't forget the Oreos.



PODCAST

With Tom Kranz

www.TypeTuneTint.com

**Too busy to commit to a full novel?
Try a great anthology with
bite-sized short stories.**



www.amazon.com/dp/B0G5PVQHGX

Upcoming Book Events in 2026

July 11, 2026

Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm

BookfestPA

Schlow Centre Region Library

211 S. Allen Street

State College, PA 16801

bookfestpa.schlowlibrary.org



September 12, 2026

Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm

Authors Grove at Belvidere Heritage Day

Garret Wall Park

Belvidere, NJ 07823



September 18-20, 2026

Friday-Sunday

Creatures, Crimes & Creativity Con

Doubletree Hilton Hotel

5485 Twin Knolls Road

Columbia, MD 21045

www.creaturescrimesandcreativity.com



September 26, 2026

Saturday, 9 am - 3 pm

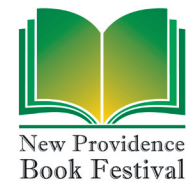
New Providence Book Festival

Grounds of the Salt Box Museum

1350 Springfield Avenue

New Providence, NJ 07974

www.NewProvidenceBookFestival.com



October 3, 2026

Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm

Collingswood Book Festival

Haddon Avenue

Collingswood, NJ 08108

www.CollingswoodBookFestival.com



October 9 & 10, 2026

Friday & Saturday

Morristown Festival of Books

Morristown, NJ

www.MorristownBooks.org



October 12-18, 2026

Easton Book Festival

161 Northampton Street

Easton, PA 18042

www.eastonbookfestival.com



November 14, 2026

Saturday, 11 am - 3 pm

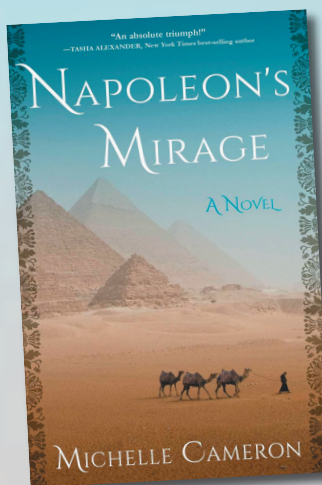
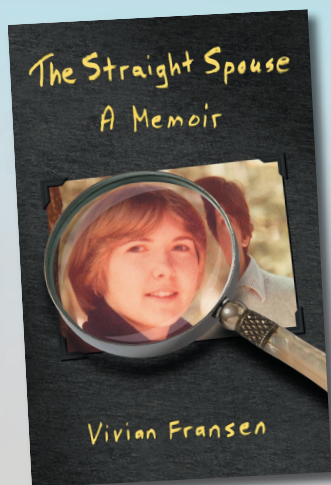
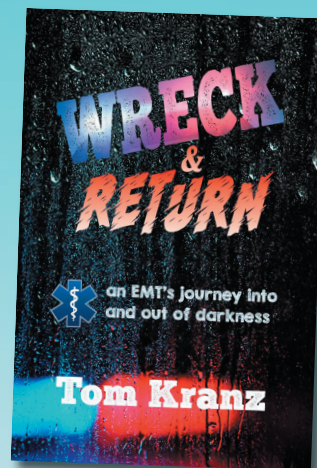
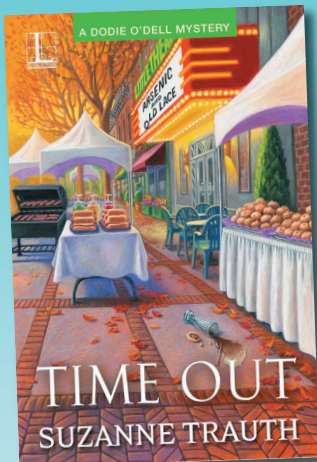
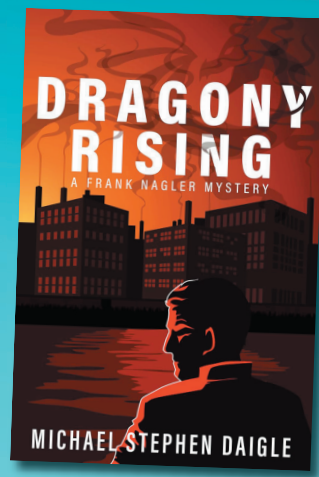
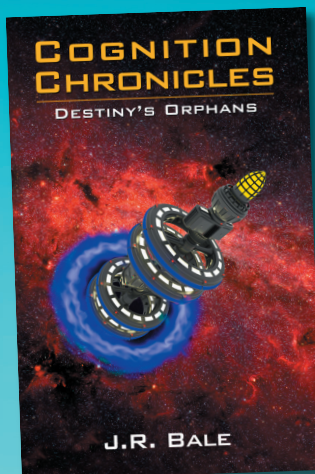
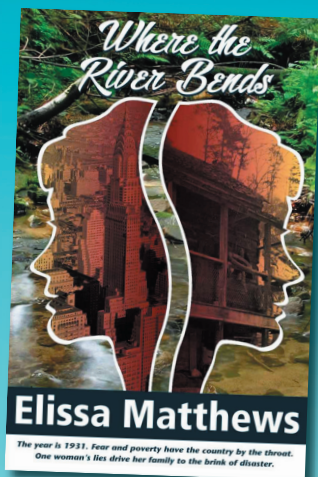
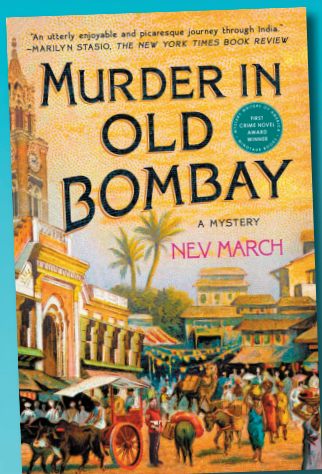
Central Jersey Book Festival

Ross Street School

110 Ross Street

Woodbridge, NJ 07095

No Matter What Beach You're On, These Books Aren't Going to Read Themselves!



Recent Book Releases

Nagler's Secret

By Michael Stephen Daigle

In 1994, Ironton, N.J., Detective Frank Nagler should be flying high. As a rookie cop the year before he solved the city's worst-ever crime spree: Serial killer Charlie Adams had killed nine women until Nagler stopped him. Nagler was a hero. People stopped him on the street to thank him. But beneath the façade of joy, Nagler carried a secret that surfaces during a police raid on a house known for drugs and child sex. A terrible case. A terrible case that lingered. In 2020, reporter Jimmy Dawson looked at his notes from that case and asked why it hadn't been solved. Or had it?

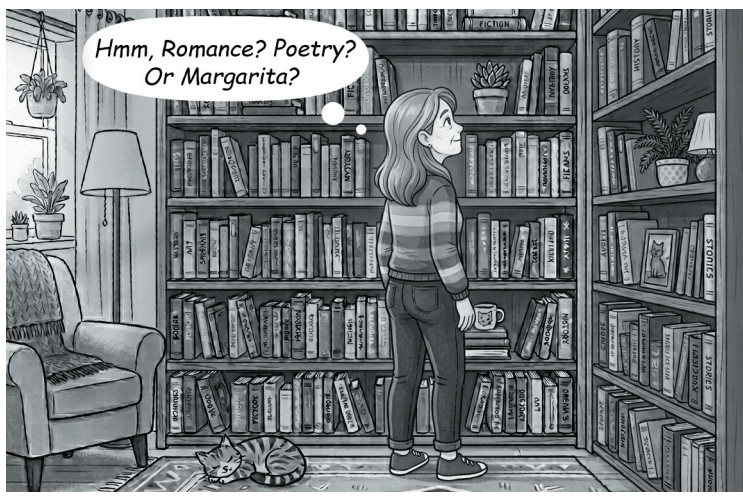
Learn more at www.MichaelStephenDaigle.com.



Are You a True Book Lover?



Read Us and You Will Know.



X Follow us on X (Twitter)
@bookdispatch