



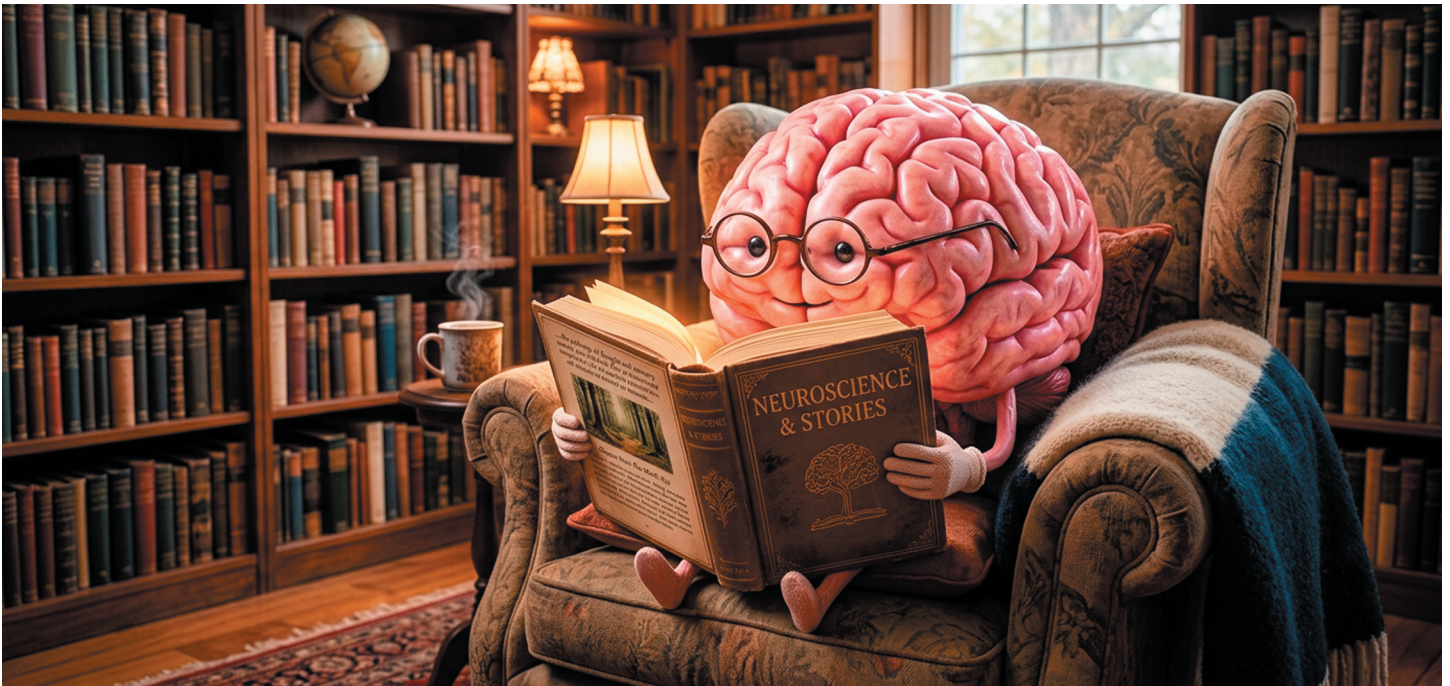
Book Lovers Dispatch

No. 12

www.bookloversdispatch.com

Fall 2026

Reading Upgrades Brains



By J.R. Bale

When I was a child, my mother strongly encouraged me to read books. I found I could even avoid certain chores for a while if I was reading. I am grateful to her, not just for letting me out of chores, but for encouraging me to read and develop my neural pathways.

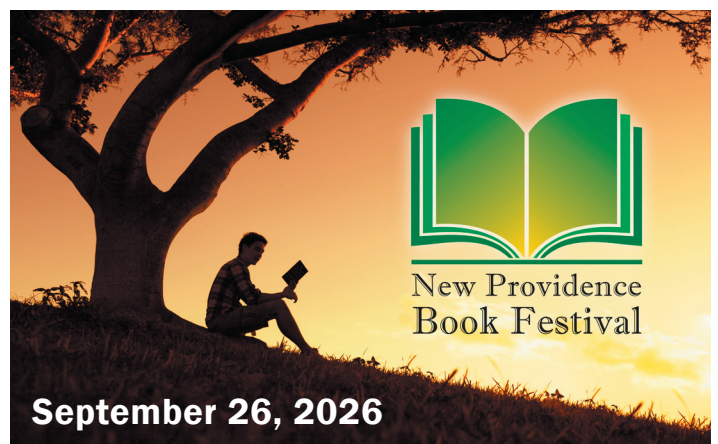
According to a 2025 study, using MRI scans and cognitive tests, the researchers concluded that greater reading time correlates with higher cognitive performance. While my mother probably knew nothing about neuroscience, the benefit was there nonetheless. The brain undergoes rapid development and restructuring, beginning with puberty around age 13.

Like a muscle, the brain needs to exercise to grow and develop. Lifting a one-pound weight does very little for our biceps. In the same way, reading social

media posts does very little for our brains.

Unfortunately, most teens engage in social media and video watching, which do not provide the same benefits as reading.

(Continued on Page 2)



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

A Call for Support: *Book Lovers Dispatch*

By J.R. Bale

Being our passion project, we've always published *Book Lovers Dispatch* at minimal cost, never charging subscribers for our work. However, as you may have noticed, many things are becoming more expensive. So, for the very first time, we're asking for financial support. We hate doing this, but we need a little help. On our website, at www.BookLoversDispatch.com/donate, you can donate any amount you choose. Every little bit helps. Another way to support *Book Lovers Dispatch* is to buy an ad for your book, business or whatever. Our ad rates are below. Thank you for any support you can give!



Donate to BLD

Continued from Page 1, *Reading Upgrades Brains*

Reading doesn't just benefit growing brains; it also helps adult ones too. Reading activity also prevents long-term decline in cognitive function in older people, as evidenced by a 14-year longitudinal study from 2020. Those with higher reading frequencies (more than once a week) were less likely to have cognitive decline.

By reading, we mean long-form reading, not short online articles or social media posts. The greater the engagement, the greater the benefit. Book reading is not just fun, engaging and a sign of good character, it is therapeutic.

And we don't even need a prescription.

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



www.amazon.com/dp/B0G5PVQHXG

Visit the Salt Box Museum



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

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
One-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.

Tom Kranz: Following the Fascinating

By Elissa Matthews

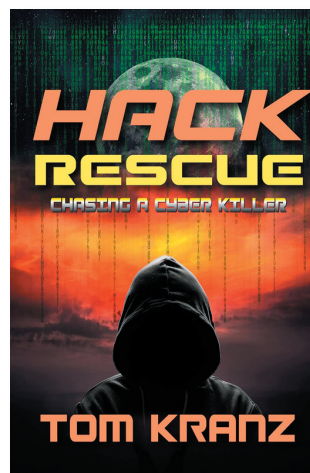
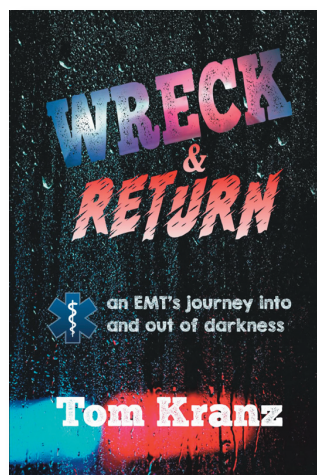
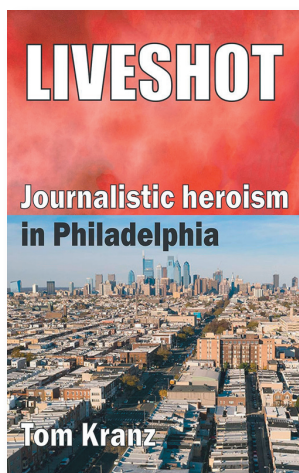
Although Tom Kranz claims to be a fairly low-energy person, I don't believe him, which is ironic, considering that much of his writing is about the slippery nature of truth in our society. His past accomplishments read like someone glued two resumes into one. As well as being a husband, father, and doing much of the carpooling and day care ferrying, Kranz held a 40-year career in radio, television, print, and online journalism. And just because it sounded interesting, he spent 20 years as a volunteer EMT and did a brief stint as a product food taster (that one turned out not to be so interesting after all).

Let's not forget writing: he has published seven novels, including *Wreck and Return: An EMT's Journey Into and Out of Darkness*, the 3-book sci-fi Earth-Moon Series, and the 3-book contemporary fiction Bud & Maggie series, as well as *Liveshot: Journalistic Heroism in Philadelphia*, a first-person account of his experience covering the disastrous 1985 MOVE conflict in West Philadelphia. Kranz says this is still the book he's proudest of. It was his first book, and between work, carpool, and family responsibilities he invaded the public library with dimes, copying microfiche pages. But he had complete ownership, including voice and narrative, to deliver his story in his way. Kranz says what captivates him about writing is the challenge: to put what's inside his heart and his head onto paper. He also likes the independence: "I'm not working with a committee. The creative process is



just me." He draws a clear parallel between being an EMT and being a journalist. "Half of the job of a first responder is communicating with another person, whether it's in an ambulance or on a 911 call." This is similar to writing a novel, in telling the reader, "I'm going to be with you, we're going to reach the end of this story together."

His most recent book is *The Edge of News*, true and dramatized stories based on his experiences. One might ask, for example, what it's like to be in Japan to report on the 1998 Olympics and end up as a big, naked Caucasian male in a Japanese hot water spa, holding a 12"x12" washcloth. I'm looking forward to reading the rest of those stories!



The New Providence Book Festival Returns!



Over a Dozen Authors Signing Their Books!



New Providence
Book Festival

at 1350 Springfield Avenue, New Providence, NJ 07974.

Over 16 authors will be signing their books, across various genres, including Leonard Apa, J.R. Bale, Linda Barth, Susen Edwards, Robert DeSando, Christopher Falco, Sarajane Giere, Tom Kranz, Theresa Lombardi Magistro, Elissa Matthews, Michael Pennacavice, Suzanne Trauth, and Carol Van Den Hende.

The event will include author talks, panels, a raffle and refreshments. A new featured event is the "Spoken Word Open Mic" event.

Book Lovers Dispatch is very pleased to be a sponsor of the **New Providence Book Festival**, to be held on **Saturday, September 26, 2026**, 10 am - 4 pm.

The festival will be on the grounds of the Salt Box Museum, located

Hosting the festival is the New Providence Historical Society's Salt Box Museum, which was originally an 18th century farmhouse. Free tours of the museum and its collection will be available during the festival.

To learn more about this event, just go to www.NewProvidenceBookFestival.com.



Merchandise to support the festival can be purchased at NewProvidenceBookFestival.com.

Upcoming Book Events in 2026

September 12, 2026

Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm

Authors Grove at Belvidere Victorian Day

Garret Wall Park

Belvidere, NJ 07823



September 12, 2026

Saturday, 11 am - 5 pm

New Jersey Horror Fest

Act 2 Books

2 Central Station

Flemington, NJ 08822



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

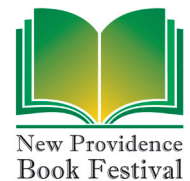
New Providence Book Festival

Grounds of the Salt Box Museum

1350 Springfield Avenue

New Providence, NJ 07974

www.NewProvidenceBookFestival.com



NEW JERSEY HORROR FEST!

New Jersey's darkest tales come to life.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12
— 11AM – 5PM —
ACT 2 BOOKS
24 Central Station, Flemington, NJ

BOOK SIGNINGS & MEET & GREETs
Meet the best of local horror authors!

SCARY STORYTELLING & READINGS
Bring the chills... Share the thrills!

AUTHOR TALKS & DISCUSSIONS
Behind the books. Beyond the darkness.

HORROR-THEMED FUN ALL DAY!
Games, giveaways, photo ops & more!

AT 8:30PM
MOVIE UNDER THE STARS!
Featuring Francis Ford Coppola's
DRACULA

A FULL DAY OF FRIGHTS, FUN & UNFORGETTABLE STORIES!

BOOKS. AUTHORS. READERS. HORROR FANS. TOGETHER FOR A DAY YOU WON'T FORGET!

Upcoming Book Events in 2026 & 2027

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 7, 2026

Saturday,

11:30 am - 2:30 pm

The Great Big Book Swap

Dover SportsPlex

111 Bassett Highway

Dover, NJ 07801



November 14, 2026

Saturday, 11 am - 3 pm

Central Jersey Book Festival

Ross Street School

110 Ross Street

Woodbridge, NJ 07095



December 5, 2026

11:30 am - 2:30 pm

Great Big Book Swap After Dark

Dover SportsPlex

111 Bassett Highway

Dover, NJ 07801



April 10, 2027

Saturday, 11 am - 3 pm

Books in Bloom

Randolph Community Center

30 Calais Road

Randolph, NJ 07869



May 2-3, 2027

Saturday-Sunday

Noon - 4 pm

Days of Wine Romance & More

BrookHollow Winery

594 Hwy 94

Columbia, NJ

www.adayofwineromanceandmore.com



Recent Book Releases

The Edge of News

By Tom Kranz

Getting naked in a hot tub full of Japanese men who didn't speak English. Spending over four thousand dollars for one dinner. Being hypnotized by a concrete pumping machine. Getting fired three times by the same company. What does all this have to do with broadcast news? Find out in *The Edge of News*.

Learn more at www.TomKranzBooks.com.



How to Get There from Here

By Beth Sherman

This book is a novella-in-flash about a family coping with dementia, set against a beach backdrop. It examines the emotional struggle, especially the fear of being forgotten. Beth Sherman explores daughter-mother experiences in the emotional weight of dementia, sometimes harrowing, sometimes comical.

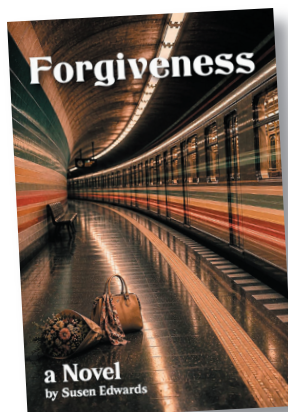
Learn more at www.bethsherman.site.

A Peck of Dirt Before We Die

By Reyna Favis

Up in the back hollers of 1970 Appalachia, 81-year-old Lummie Sinclair minds her own business and tends to the dead in the old way. She's a sin-eater by blood and by habit. When Earl Eskew, a rich mine owner, sends for Lummie to clear a violent haunting from his house, she knows trouble will follow. Spirits don't turn mean without cause, and men like Earl don't go asking favors unless they're scared clean through.

Learn more at www.reynafavis.com.



Forgiveness

By Susen Edwards

When her husband, Reuben—a journalist covering the January 6 Insurrection—is injured, Fiona is left alone with a past she has spent decades trying to quiet. The memories return in fragments: the Vietnam War protests that first bound them together, a fatal accident that shaped her youth, an affair that nearly destroyed their marriage, and a secret she has carried in silence for half a century. Continuing the story begun in *What a Trip*, this novel examines what it means to grow older with someone who knows your deepest failures—and whether true forgiveness is ever complete.

Learn more at www.SusenEdwards.com.

ACT 2 BOOKS

NEW & USED . FINE & RARE BOOKS
FLEMINGTON . NEW JERSEY

A DESTINATION BOOKSTORE FOR
BIBLIOPHILES FOR OVER TWO DECADES!

**ALWAYS BUYING
EXCEPTIONAL
BOOKS & COLLECTIONS**

24 CENTRAL STATION, FLEMINGTON . NJ

908 - 968 - 3711

ACT2BOOKS.COM



Are You a True Book Lover?



Subscribe to BLD for Free

Read Us and You Will Know.



Follow us on X (Twitter)
@bookdispatch