

MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY RACIAL EQUITY NEWS

FEB 2021

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month, an annual celebration of the achievements by African Americans and a time to honor the central role of Black Americans in U.S. history and beyond.

Join the Newsletter Team in celebrating by:

- **Taking Daily Action** with the [2021 BHM Challenge](#) created by #BecauseOfThemWeCan
- **Learning** from the [28 Days of Black History series](#) curated by Camille Bethune-Brown and Shanaé Burch.
- **Sharing Out** the awesome MPL [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) posts created by Liz B. (Marketing)
- **Getting Creative** with this tutorial on Handmade Valentine Cards with Maia Pearson of [Sweet Sorrel](#), the third in [MPL's Virtual Crafternoon! series](#) centering Womxn of Color.
- **Recommending Black Authors and Illustrators** highlighted by [The Brown Bookshelf's annual 28 Days Later Campaign](#) and planning future trips to Dominique Johnson's [Itty Bitty Bookstore](#) in Stoughton
- **Supporting Local Black-Owned Businesses** like longtime library fan (and former alder) Mo Cheeks' [Bread & Justice](#) and members of the [Madison Black Chamber of Commerce](#).



REMEMBERING BLACK LIBRARIANS

Pura Belpré (1899-1982)

Pura Belpré was New York Public Library's first Puerto Rican and Afro-Latina staff member in Harlem. She quickly became an advocate for the Spanish-speaking community by instituting bilingual story hours, buying Spanish-language books, and implementing programs based on traditional Latino holidays. In addition to being a librarian, Belpré was a well-published writer, editor and translator.

[Books by and about Pura Belpré](#)

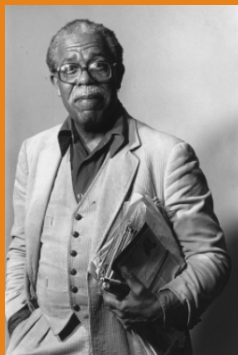


Dudley Randall (1914-2000)

Dudley Randall was a poet, publisher, and librarian. He described his life's work as "to get good black poets published, to produce beautiful books" and "to help create and define the soul of black folk," and used librarianship and publishing to shine light on Black genius.

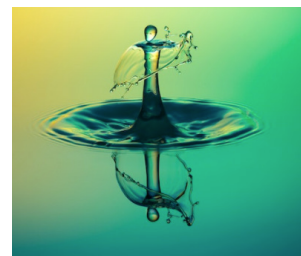
-written by Tracie D. Hall
(Executive Director of ALA)

[Poetry works by Dudley Randall](#)



RIPPLE PROJECT STAFF TRAINING UNDERWAY

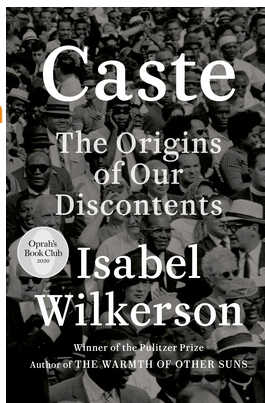
Racial Equity training for staff in all Dane County libraries through the Ripple Project kicked off February



3, 2021. The Racial Equity Change Team would like to prioritize the attendance of staff who have not been able to attend racial equity training previously, particularly Library Assistants, Clerks, and hourly staff (Pages and Security Monitors). There are five cumulative virtual webinars scheduled this month, with recordings are available for a minimum of two weeks after each session. **Please see the [1/29 Minute with a Manager](#) for more details, and talk to your supervisor today to participate!**

ADULT NON-FICTION REVIEW

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson (Random House, 2020)



The trouble with aspiring to high ideals is the expectation to live up to them. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson's latest book, *Caste*, draws Americans' attention to where we fall short of our ideals, particularly in the persistence of racism. It also presents power as the marker of social caste. If, as Wilkerson states, caste (like racism) is not about feelings or morality, but about power, no solution that merely appeals to hearts, minds, or good intentions will be enough.

With exquisite writing style, Wilkerson illustrates eight pillars of caste and examines three caste systems: India, Nazi Germany, and the United States of America. She holds up these systems, as well as the concepts of race, class, and caste, not as one-to-one comparisons, but as lenses through which we might gain fresh insights.

The idea of caste as power can be applied in all our social roles, including that of Madison Public Library workers. While reading *Caste*, I found myself considering how power shows up in our work - especially masked by flattened hierarchies, lofty ideals, and the niceness of library culture - and often does unintentional harm.

Caste is a masterful work that reminds us that knowing our history can help us choose hopeful action, even against the resiliency of injustice, even if we won't be here to see the change.

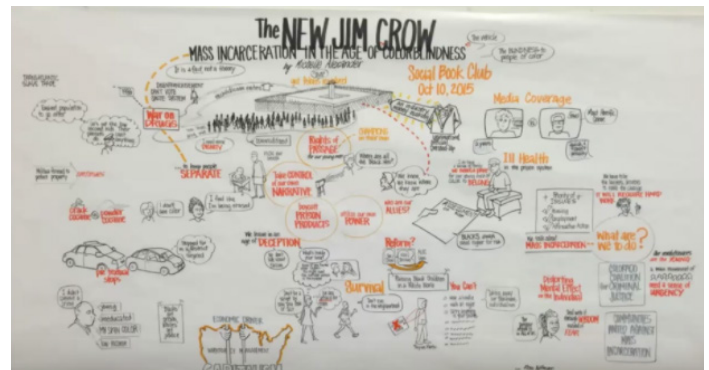
For more, check out: [NYT Review of Books](#), [LA Review of Books](#), [NPR \(Hope Wabuke\)](#), [New Yorker](#), [Guardian](#), [Irish Times](#), [New Republic](#).

-Nichole Fromm (MAD TS)

SOCIAL CHANGE BOOK CLUB

The Denver Public Library has been using Read. Awareness. Dialogue. Action. (R.A.D.A.) public book discussions to respond to issues like police brutality and institutionalized racism - and involving the voices of the Black Lives Matter movement. The goal is to focus on issues the community is grappling with currently. **They also try to “normalize intense conversations” and help people be “comfortable with being uncomfortable”.**

One unique part of these discussions is that they've worked with an illustrative artist, who draws throughout each discussion. This artist creates a visualization of the images, words, and thoughts being described.



Some of the books they've used in past discussions include:

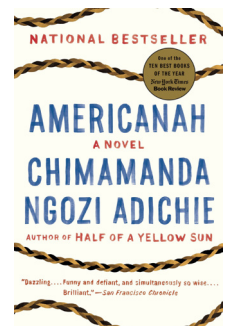
[The Body Is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love](#)
by Sonya Renee Taylor

[Dream Land: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic](#) by Sam Quinones

[White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide](#) by Carol Anderson

[Americanah](#) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

To watch a webinar with more details about R.A.D.A. - its development and continued work - visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4zjKS9m0H8> (1 hour)



Compiled by Karen Lucas, Jody Mohrbacher,
Tracy Moore, and Abby Ryan

Designed by Marc Gannon

Past Racial Equity Newsletters
can be found [here](#).



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