



Rodman

"Libraries do one thing that no other institution does and that's provide access to all."

— LeVar Burton

BUZZ

February 2022

The official newsletter of Rodman Public Library

Arshay Cooper found his inner leader through the sport of crew

In the sport of crew, you pull together to push ahead. That's one of the life lessons that rowing provided for Arshay Cooper, author of *A Most Beautiful Thing*, the One Book One Community selection for 2022.

In the memoir, Cooper recounts how becoming involved with the first all-Black high school rowing team at Manley High School on the West Side of Chicago transformed his life. Cooper, who eventually became the team captain, later went on to achieve his dream of becoming a chef and is now an activist and motivational speaker.

But what if Cooper would not have tried something new and foreign like crew?

"Talent is everywhere; access and opportunity are not," said Cooper when asked if he ever ponders how his life would be different if he hadn't been exposed to rowing. "I want to think I would have been fine, but I was 15 and still had no access to extracurricular activities and wasn't good enough for mainstream high school sports."

As a 15-year-old in 1997, Cooper was determined to stay away from the drugs and the gangs that he encountered every day. Instead, he focused on studying the culinary arts and he wrote poetry. However, everything really started to click when he discovered rowing.

"Rowing helped activate the hidden leader in me," he explained. "So, maybe I would have been fine, but not sure that my leadership abilities, commitment, and drive that I learned from sports would have accelerated."

As Cooper faced his fears of the water and trying something new, he dedicated himself to becoming better at rowing. As he embraced the discipline required to achieve that goal, he started to get noticed by his coaches. Through their encouragement and some success in competition, he began to believe in himself. Together, it all made a world of difference for Cooper as a young man.

"You can do anything you put your mind to," explained Cooper. "It's also essential for us to understand that we get there much faster when teachers, resources, access, and opportunity are in place."

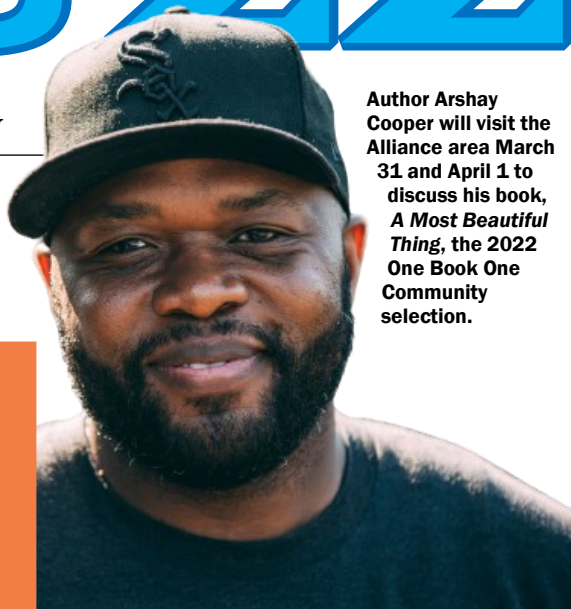
A MOST BEAUTIFUL THING

The True Story of America's First All-Black High School Rowing Team

ARSHAY COOPER



**Copies of
A Most Beautiful Thing
are available for
checkout at the library.
Patrons can purchase
their own copy for
\$14.50 per book.**



Author Arshay Cooper will visit the Alliance area March 31 and April 1 to discuss his book, *A Most Beautiful Thing*, the 2022 One Book One Community selection.

One Book
ONE COMMUNITY™

ONE BOOK ONE COMMUNITY EVENTS

A screening of

***A Most Beautiful Thing* documentary**
Tuesday, March 1 at 11:00 a.m.
and 7:00 p.m.

Rodman Public Library Auditorium

Giving Back:

The Positive Impact of Mentoring
Tuesday, March 8 at 7:00 p.m.
Spirit of Faith Christian Center
(425 E. Market St., Alliance)

A panel discussion, moderated by Chelsea Shar, will focus on keys to successful mentorship programs (especially for minority youth), the challenges and how to overcome those. The panel will consist of Laurie Moline, director of MentorStark; Greg Freeman, program director of FAME (Focus on African American Males in Education); Raymont Johnson, pastor of Spirit of Faith Christian Center; Serena Draper Hender-shot, director of community develop-

ment at 3rd Street Church; and Lester Sanders, student communicator and adversity strategist at Lester-Sanders.com.

Competitive Rowing 101

March 15 at 7:00 p.m.

Rodman Public Library Auditorium Members of the Portage Lakes Rowing Association will bring examples of equipment used in competitive rowing, including an erg machine. The group will talk about what gives people a passion for rowing and what it takes to be a competitive rower, including how they train.

Author Visit

March 15 at 7:00 p.m.

Union Avenue Methodist Church
(1843 S. Union Ave.)

Author Arshay Cooper will give some remarks, answer questions and sign books.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Family Strategy Gaming

During the family strategy game nights, held monthly, card games such as Yu-Gi-Oh and Magic: The Gathering are played as well as a variety of board games. A different board game is featured each month. No registration is needed. Call 330-821-2665, ext. 217, for information.

Tuesday, February 1 at 5:30 p.m.

Knit Wits Needlework Circle

The KnitWits, a circle for needleworkers of all types and skill levels, meets at 10:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Monday of each month at the Main Library. The group is always seeking new members and donations of yarn.

Mondays, February 14 and 28 at 10:00 a.m.

Alliance Vinyl Club

If you collect vinyl records and like listening to them with others, then you need to join the Alliance Vinyl Club which meets at 6:30 p.m. every third Wednesday of the month in the Main Auditorium at Rodman Public Library. Those in attendance will have the opportunity to spin their favorite records. Due to time limitations, only a few selections per person will be played. A turntable will be provided, but we ask that you handle your personal records and assume any liability for normal wear and scratches. Alliance Vinyl Club provides the opportunity to listen to music, talk and hang out. No registration is required. For more information, call the Main Library at 330-821-2665, ext. 216.

Wednesday, February 16 at 6:30 p.m.

TECH Time Thursday

A librarian is on hand each Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to noon to answer basic questions about your electronic devices, such as phones, laptops and tablets. No registration is needed. For more information, call 330-821-2665, ext. 216.

Every Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to noon



MAIN LIBRARY

215 E. Broadway St.
Alliance, Ohio 44601
330.821.2665

BRANCH LIBRARY

1808 W. State St.
Alliance, OH 44601
330.821.1313

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday through Wednesday: 10 a.m. — 8 p.m.

Thursday & Friday: 10 a.m. — 6 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. — 4 p.m.

Sunday:

Main Library — Closed

Branch Library — 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

(October through April only)

rodmanlibrary.com

February's Maker Monday project is for the birds - literally



Crafters to create bird feeder from wooden craft sticks

February is National Bird Feeding Month and Maker Monday crafters will create a DIY bird feeder when they meet Monday, February 21 at 7:00 p.m. in Rodman Public Library's Main Auditorium.

The feeder will be made using wooden craft sticks, glue and twine.

Led by Nicole Brown, Maker Monday is an in-person craft program for adults that is held monthly on select Mondays. All materials are provided free of charge, thanks to Friends of Rodman Library, but space is limited and registration is required for each session.

To register for Maker Monday sessions, call 330-821-2665, ext. 107, or visit our online calendar at rodmanlibrary.evanced.info/signup.

RPL to serve as drop-off site for VITA

Rodman Public Library will serve as a drop-off location for the United Way of Greater Stark County's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program.

Trained VITA volunteers help qualifying individuals file returns for free, looking for all possible deductions and credits. The free tax preparation service is available to households that earn less than \$60,000 if filing single and under \$90,000 if filing a joint return. Taxpayers with disabilities and those who speak limited English may also be eligible.

VITA is now taking appointments to check for eligibility schedule drop-offs in February through April for the 2021 tax return season. An appointment is needed for all drop-offs.

Due to pandemic restrictions, VITA interactions will be limited to drop-off only services this year. In-person appointments will not be available.

Those wishing to take advantage of the VITA program should visit uwstark.org/vita to download and print an IRS Intake Form and an IRS Consent Form. Both must be filled out so VITA volunteers can prepare and process your taxes. A list of other required documents is also posted on the website.

Those who would like more information about the VITA program or those wishing to make an appointment should call 330-994-VITA (8482).

WE CAN DO THIS! FOOD WITH INTEGRITY
COMMUNITY STARTS HERE
FOOD - NATURE
GOODN
GENERATION
HELPING
CHANGE
NATURE
FOOD
EVERY
DAY
FOOD

DO GOOD WITH CHIPOTLE

CHIPOTLE FUNDRAISER FOR
FRIENDS OF RODMAN LIBRARY
33% OF EVENT SALES GET DONATED TO THE CAUSE

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST | 4-8PM
1630 W STATE ST STE A, ALLIANCE, OH, 44601

ORDER ONLINE FOR PICKUP USING CODE **CN24M4X**
OR SHOW THIS FLYER IN RESTAURANT

CHIPOTLE

For online orders to count towards the fundraiser, they must be placed for pickup only from the restaurant location of, and during the hours of, the fundraiser. Delivery orders and gift cards do not qualify. \$150 minimum event sales required to receive any donation.

Want to help support Rodman Public Library?

Join the Friends of Rodman Public Library by calling 330-821-2665

or by visiting any of the service desks.

\$5 for an individual membership

\$25 for a patron membership

Visit libraryaware.com/3618/Subscribers/Subscribe to get

The Buzz
In your email

Rodman Library offers new digital literacy resource

Rodman Public Library is offering Northstar Digital Literacy, a new resource for anyone looking to improve their skills with computers, software, or technology.

In addition, Rodman Library will serve as a proctor site, offering certification in conjunction with Northstar Digital Literacy.

Northstar Digital Literacy is a self-directed assessment and learning tool that covers a variety of technology scenarios. It comes complete with short lessons and practice exercises to improve skills on a number of common computer topics. The Northstar resource is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the library's webpage, and library staff members are available to help with the resource during regular hours.

Interactive digital literacy test and certification topics include:

- ▶ Basic Computer Skills
- ▶ Internet Basics
- ▶ Using Email
- ▶ Windows and Mac Operating Systems
- ▶ Career Search Skills
- ▶ Google Docs
- ▶ Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- ▶ Supporting K-12 Distance Learning
- ▶ Social Media and Your Digital Footprint

Those wishing to utilize Northstar Digital Literacy can access the services from rodmanlibrary.com and will be able to take a self-guided assessment test, explains D.J. Digianantonio, head of reference services at Rodman Public Library. From there, patrons will be guided in a number of lessons in areas where they need to improve their skills.

Patrons who wish to have proof of their basic computer knowledge can then schedule an appointment at the library to take a test proctored by a member of the Reference Department staff. For those who pass the assessments, Rodman Library will certify the results. This certification can be useful for both job seekers who want to demonstrate their proficiency and employers who are seeking assurance of skills.

To access Northstar Digital Literacy from rodmanlibrary.com, hover on the Find Information tab in the blue navigation bar below the library logo and then click on Research Databases. From there, click on the Jobs and Continuing Education category, or search alphabetically.

Ohio library access to Northstar is funded through a federal Institute of Museum and Library Services ARPA grant awarded by the state library.

For more information, call 330-821-2665, ext. 217.

COOPER

From Page 1

That's where good role models and mentors, such as those that guided Cooper and his teammates in the late 1990s at Manley High, can be the catalyst for success in a young person.

"It is as simple as a bank account," said Cooper. "You make deposits, you get withdrawals. No deposits, no withdrawals. The same with mentorship/mentee relationships."

Cooper and his teammates, some of them from rival gangs, had to learn to trust one another in crew, which he describes as the ultimate team sport.

"We could have found that in other sports, but maybe it would have taken longer," said Cooper. "The difference is this sport is non-combatant and non-conflict. While other sports could trigger the trauma in such a violent community, this sport calms the daily storms out there on the water."

While building that confidence in one another needed on the water, the Manley Crew were pioneers in rowing – something that was difficult to fathom for Cooper.

"At that time, it was hard to imagine," explained Cooper. "Especially being at a race of thousands of people and to not see any that look like you. We later found out there was an all-Black rowing team at Howard University (in the 1960s and '70s), making us the first all-Black high school rowing team. That was great to hear, but it is hard to get our stories told. It took 20-plus years to tell my story. Now that it is told, the doors have been open to many youths of color. The sport is getting more and more diverse every day."

Cooper has been a force behind the diversification in rowing. A two-time Golden Oar recipient for his contributions to the

sport, Cooper has formed The *A Most Beautiful Thing* Inclusion Fund, which aims to bring rowing, academic support, and college access to under-resourced communities. In 2021, the foundation introduced 2,000 kids from under-resourced communities to rowing.

The foundation was formed following the success of the highly acclaimed film, *A Most Beautiful Thing*, which features the story of Cooper. The film is narrated by Common, executive produced by NBA Stars Grant Hill and Dwyane Wade along with Grammy winning producer 9th Wonder, and is directed by Olympian Mary Mazzio.

The film, which won a 2021 Gracie Award and was nominated for several other honors, is based on the book of the same title, originally published under the title *Suga Water*.

Although Cooper talks about writing poetry in his book and his goal of becoming a chef, he says he never dreamed he would be an award-winning author. "An author didn't seem realistic while attending a high school that graduates less than 50 percent of its senior class every year," explained Cooper. "Working in a restaurant seemed more at reach."

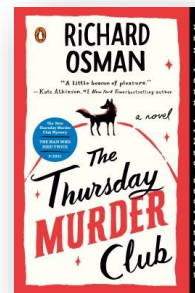
Cooper spent two years with AmeriCorps before graduating from Le Cordon Bleu and becoming a personal chef for professional athletes and other events. But he couldn't stay away from his true passions, helping youth and rowing.

His journey will bring him to Alliance on March 31 and he says he is looking forward to discovering a new place.

"I have not heard much about Alliance, Ohio," said Cooper. "And I don't want Google to tell me. I want to show up and see it myself and hear from the good people of Alliance. I am used to walking into unfamiliar spaces."

BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS

For a look at future Book Club selections, visit rodmanlibrary.com/Rodman-Book-Clubs



BOOKS & COFFEE

Meets every second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Branch Library.

February 14

The Thursday Murder Club

Richard Osman

Call 330-821-1313 for information.

TRUE CRIME JUNKIES

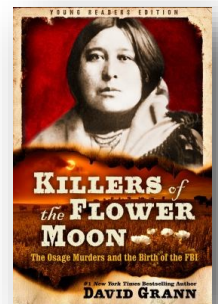
Meets every third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Main Library.

February 15

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI

David Grann

Call 330-821-2665, ext. 215 for information.



RPL EVENING BOOK CLUB

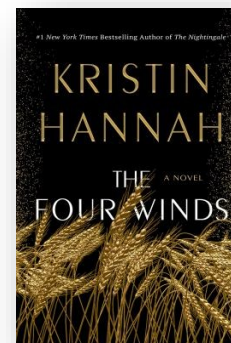
Meets every fourth Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Main Library.

February 28

The Four Winds

Kristin Hannah

Call 330-821-2665, ext. 107 for information.





A 1909 postcard, courtesy of alliancememory.org, depicts youngsters preparing to skate on the Alliance Reservoir Skating Pond. The view is looking east. Many are carrying sticks as though they are going to play hockey. The reservoir was located between Broadway and High Street, the current site of Rodman Public Library.

Learn about local history with Rodman Library

A library is full of resources to help its patrons connect with its community's past.

Rodman Public Library is no different, but what you may not know is that residents of the greater Alliance area have access to historical data, records and artifacts right at their fingertips through the library and the Alliance Historical Society.

On our website, rodmanlibrary.com, there is a wealth of local history — much of it provided through the Historical Society — just waiting to be discovered and explored, including, but not limited to, old maps of Alliance through the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps produced between 1867 and 1970, city of Alliance ordinances and

the minutes from public meetings held between 1854 and 1924, and full recordings of Carnation Festival parades for select years between 1983 and 2002. The Alliance Review Collection includes searchable digitized copies of The Alliance Review — nearly every edition produced between 1905 and 1925 — is available through Ohio Memory. The Recreational News, a weekly Alliance newspaper published from 1925-1927 that aimed to supply reliable information for every recreational activity in the interests of healthy sports and athletics, clean amusements, better homes and civic improvement is also available as are select copies of The Red and Blue, the student newspaper of Alliance High School.

One of the popular local history offerings found on rodmanlibrary.com is alliancememory.org. Featuring sights, sounds, and recollections of the Alliance community, Alliance Memory offers more than 6,000 images, documents and interviews (both written and digitally recorded) through the Alliance Oral Histories Project.

Full digitized editions of the Alliance High School yearbook, The Chronicle, from 1910 through 2017 can also be searched and browsed.

To access the full local history resources available online, patrons should visit rodmanlibrary.com and click on the Genealogy and History tab in the blue navigation bar.

Of course, patrons are always welcome to visit the Main Library to explore physical materials such as books and microfilm.

Those wishing to talk to a librarian concerning historical and genealogical research, or those who need help accessing online material, should call 330-821-2665, ext. 217.

LOCAL BLACK HISTORY

Rodman Public Library offers several resources for those interested in learning about Black History, including transcripts of local residents recorded by the Alliance Historical Society as part of an oral histories project that began in the 1950s. The material is available for checkout or can be heard online at rodmanlibrary.com/oralhistories or on alliancememory.org.

Those studying Black history, especially those interested in genealogy, may also be interested in African American Heritage, a database from ProQuest that provides detailed records for African Americans. Records include federal census, marriage and cohabitation records, military draft and service records, registers of slaves and free persons of color, and more.

Visit rodmanlibrary.com/dbases and search the genealogy and history category or alphabetically to access African American Heritage.

ALLIANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Alliance Historical Society was founded for the promotion of historical studies of the city of Alliance and its surrounding areas. Members of the Society collect, preserve, and organize historical materials and work with area schools and community organizations to present historical programs.

The home of the Alliance Historical Society is the Mabel Hartzell Historical Home and Alliance History Mini Museum.

If you would like to become a member of the Society, or help to support it, call 330-736-1116, or email alliancehistory@yahoo.com.

For more information about the Alliance Historical Society, visit alliancehistory.org.