

## Librarians Telling Tales Podcast Transcript- Episode 17

### Quick Look Booklist:

- **Section 1: Councilman Montoya Interview Part 1: Reading History**
  - *Hatchet* series by Gary Paulsen
  - *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli
  - *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
  - *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx
  - Nick Hornby (author)
  - Dave Eggers (author)
  - *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare
  - *King Lear* by William Shakespeare
  - *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel
  - *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin
  - *Fatal Vision* by Joe McGinniss
  - *Nausea* by John-Paul Sartre
  - *Mein Kampf* by Adolph Hitler
- **Section 2: Councilman Montoya Interview Part 2: Reading Together**
  - *Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
  - *The Fault in our Stars* by John Green
  - *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
  - “Problems of a Bookworm” from *I’d Rather Be Reading* by Anne Bogel
  - *Native Son* by Richard Wright
  - *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky
  - *The Forbidden Game* by L.J. Smith
  - *Rainbow in the Dark* by Sean McGinty
  - *Sophie’s World: A Novel about the History of Philosophy* by Jostein Gaarder
  - *Strong Towns: A Bottom-Up Revolution to Rebuild American Prosperity* by Charles L. Marohn
  - *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card
  - *Shadow of the Giant* by Orson Scott Card
  - *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney
  - *Hyperbole and a Half* by Allie Brosh
- **Section 3: Councilman Montoya Interview Part 3: Reading Recommendations**
  - *Destiny of the Republic* by Candace Millard
  - *Four Lost Cities, A Secret History of the Urban Age* by Annalee Newitz
  - *What Do They Do With All That Poo?* by Jane Kurtz

### Transcript:

**Musical Intro:** “Uplifting 2463” by Twisterium from pixabay.com  
(Description) Upbeat, piano and percussion. Music fades and plays under.

**Amy:** Hey, bookworms! Welcome to Librarians Telling Tales, where we introduce you to all the things we love about libraries, books, people, and making connections. I'm Amy!

**Blair:** I'm Blair!

**Jennifer:** I'm Jennifer!

**(0:21) Music fades out**

**Blair:** In today's episode, we are excited to introduce a very special guest, Councilman Brandon Montoya. Councilman Montoya enjoys reading and is here to talk about some of his favorite books and the role the library plays in our local Prescott community.

**Music Transition:** "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from [Orangefreesounds.com](http://Orangefreesounds.com)

*(Description) Bright marimba scale.*

**(0:39) Section 1: Councilman Montoya Interview Part 1: Reading History**

**Jennifer:** So, welcome!

**Councilman Montoya:** Thank you, it's a pleasure to be here.

**Jennifer:** Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself and about your reading history?

**Councilman Montoya:** As you noted, I'm on Prescott City Council. I've lived in Prescott since I was 11, so that's quite a few years. I think I've attained a local status at this point. I have a very fond place for this library in my heart because I remember coming here. I would do my homework here when I was in high school and middle school. So, I love the library and for me, reading has always been just this amazing way to access whole other worlds. And kind of respite is kind of the way I think of it, you know? I definitely, as a kid, enjoyed going to different worlds. I think I was a sophomore in high school and I was in English class and the English teacher I had was teaching a AP Senior English class and she had a reading list of classics, and I got bored and I started reading all the books on that list <laugh>. And she said, "Why are you reading these books?" And I said, "Well, figured if they're good enough for them, they're good enough for me." And so read a lot of Shakespeare, but I also did a lot of YA novels. I know you guys are youth librarians, so definitely spent some time with *Hatchet* (Gary Paulsen), for instance. There's *Hatchet* and then I was trying to remember, there's a sequel I can't remember the name of it.

**Amy:** There's a couple...

**Blair:** There are.

**Amy:** ...*Brian's Return*, *Brian's Winter*... (Gary Paulsen)

**Councilman Montoya:** *Brian's Winter* is the one I remember. There was another book I remember reading as a pretty young reader that was about, I can't remember his name. I was trying to talk to my sister about it. But the characters in the story would drink Coca-Cola and then they would put peanuts into the Coca-Cola. And I can't remember the name of the author or the book. I think it was a, a story about a kid who was running. Anyways, I, anyways...

**Jennifer:** I find it interesting that you remember that detail of the book.

**Councilman Montoya:** Well part of it was 'cause my sister and I started trying to do that.

**Amy:** *Maniac Magee* (Jerry Spinelli)?

**Councilman Montoya:** Maybe... Yeah, yeah, yeah!

**Amy:** I feel like I remember reading that when I...

**Councilman Montoya:** Yeah, yeah, yeah- that sounds right.

**Amy:** Maybe.

**Councilman Montoya:** Yeah.

**Amy:** I have to ask you though, really fast. Senior year, then, did you take the AP test and with all that knowledge of AP novels, like, rock it?

**Councilman Montoya:** So here's the thing that's really funny about me: Okay, so, I grew up here. Due to circumstances beyond my control, that experience I had was actually in Durango. So, I briefly went to high school in Durango, Colorado, for my sophomore year. And then we moved back to Prescott, and I went to Prescott High School. When I moved to Durango, they put me into just a general education English class. And very quickly the teacher would kind of looked at me and she's like, what are you doing in this class? And so, they bumped me into an AP English class, which had this assignment that I'll never forget. It was a summer assignment, so you had to do it going into the junior year of the AP class. You had to read *Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck and *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx. And you had to compare and contrast and draw conclusions as to whether John Steinbeck was trying to incite a communist revolution in America in the thirties. And I was like, wow, this is really cool.

I did the reading and thought about it, and then we moved back to Prescott in the interim and my English teacher at the time, Mrs. Sandberg, I transferred in and I was like clearly going to an AP class. And she said, what books are you reading? You know, what books have you read? It was this like really intimidating thing. And at the time I was reading, my brother-in-law and my sister who I was living with at the time, I was reading a lot of the books that they were reading and they were reading a lot of contemporary fiction. So I was like, oh, I'm reading Nick Hornby and Dave Eggers, and I was reading all these kind of adult contemporary literature. And she was like, well what about, and she just, I didn't have off the tip of my tongue. Like I had read *Hamlet* by then, I had read *King Lear* (William Shakespeare) I, I read all these different like classical literature, but those weren't the things that I talked about 'cause I had kind of progressed. She said I think you'd be better in the block program. So, I ended up not going down the AP English path, which is fine. But never took the AP test. But I did take English 101, which I think worked out better for me, as a senior.

**Jennifer:** So, I'm really curious, you continued to read as you were in your adolescent years, and we lose a lot of young men to reading during that time. So why did you continue to read? Is there an influence in your life, your parents, or was it just something innate?

**Councilman Montoya:** You know, I think for me it seemed like a way to access a whole host of information. I got really interested in philosophy when I was 15 or 16, and I read this book that was an early graphic novel explainer of the history of philosophy and I don't even remember the name of it. But I loved the book. Very simplified explanation of incredibly complex philosophy, like Descartes and Sartre and all this stuff. And then I got really interested in Nietzsche and I was like, oh this is cool. And got really into existentialism. But I realized that I wanted to read primary sources. So I started reading a lot of primary sources. And there was no one who was like, "Hey, you should read." But it gave me an advantage. It was power, right? Like the expression knowledge is power, like that was very clear to me at a young age.

It's funny you say the thing about losing kids to reading as you progress. You know, the contrast for me is I have my son who's six and he's at that age where he's learning to read, and it's really different. My daughter who's 16, like we waited a little bit too long to teach her how to read. And by the time we were teaching her to read she just, she was already off to the races. But with my son Ellis, I've seen him—it's like this magic trick that happens with kids when they learn to read where the pieces just lock into place and suddenly he can read. And I'm just like, wow, you're reading to me now! It's special. And my daughter—reading was this thing, it was like, “Oh my gosh, I love reading.” Even still today.

I think about right before the Pandemic, I read *Station Eleven* (Emily St. John Mandel), which was a terrible book to read before the Pandemic <laughter> because it was, I was, I was scared outta my mind when the pandemic happened because I was like, “Oh my gosh, like *Station Eleven* is actually coming to real.” But it was a really good novel and I think there's something that happens to me especially—and I don't have the opportunity to read as much fiction as I'd like to. I find myself, for both of my jobs that I have on City Council and then in my professional life as a financial planner, I do a lot of nonfiction reading, which means I read a lot of articles, I read a lot of periodicals, you know, news. But there's still something that's really powerful, magical about reading a really good piece of fiction. Like when you're halfway through a book and it's so good and you have this feeling of: This book is gonna end at some point and I'm gonna be kind of sad <laugh>. And then there's like this letdown, too, when you finish the book and you're like: Man, that was amazing. And then I'm almost afraid to pick up another book, right? The most recent book I read was *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* (Gabrielle Zevin).

**Blair:** Oh, that's on my list.

**Councilman Montoya:** It's so good. It is like probably the best written book I've read in a very, very long time. It was so good. I checked it out from the library, and then I bought a bunch of copies and gave them out as gifts for Christmas. But I was halfway through reading it and I said that my wife who's a professional writer, “You have to read this after I do so that I can have someone to talk to about it 'cause it's such a good book.” For me, there was some nostalgia there 'cause I remember playing a lot of video games as a kid. And so, there's touch points if you're kind of of that generation. Like I remember playing Atari and then I remember when Nintendo was a thing and then Super Nintendo and like I went through all the gamut of video games. But the thing that's beautiful about that book is it's a real interesting kind of treatise on friendship and it's beautiful. Again, it was the kind of book I remember reading it and I was just like, this book's gonna end and the next book I read is not gonna be this good. And that's hard, right? But I mean that's what is great about reading.

**Blair:** I did wanna ask a question as a follow up to some of the things that you said earlier. You were talking about how as a teenager you were reading a lot of adult fiction, you were following your passions and reading a lot of different things—original source material. Was there ever anyone who actually said to you, you shouldn't read that, you're too young for it? Because I feel like that happens to a lot of our teens and then they get turned off, “Well, if I can't read what I want then....”

**Councilman Montoya:** Yeah, no, you know, it's funny you say that. I was actually talking to my sister about this the other day. She asked me, “What was that book?” And I remembered what it was. It was a nonfiction book that she and I both read. And I think I read it when I was like

nine or 10. And it's a book called *Fatal Vision* (Joe McGinniss) and it's about a Green Beret who comes home from Vietnam and murders his family. It was like true crime before true crime was a real thing. And I remember going into my fourth or fifth grade teacher and being like, "Oh, look what book I'm reading!" And she's like, "You shouldn't be reading this." <laughter> But it was fascinating to me.

That's the thing, no one ever said no to me. No one ever said, you shouldn't read. I mean she, even that teacher didn't really say, "Well, this is kind of an interesting book for, you know, a 10-year-old to be reading." But I think that's the thing about reading is that's what's powerful about it, right? It doesn't matter if you're interested in dragons, there's books for you. If you're interested in true crime, there's books for you. If you're interested in like original source material and you wanna read *Nausea* by John-Paul Sartre, go ahead and read it. That's cool to me. And one of the things recently on City Council, I got an email from someone. You know, they were imploring me to ban a bunch of books at the library. And there was this list that was going around on the internet maybe two or three months ago, and I think it was a school board in Texas that had banned a bunch of books because they didn't think they were appropriate. And setting aside the fact that schools and school libraries are slightly different than public libraries, I wrote back to this constituent. I said, you know, I appreciate your email but I don't have the power to ban books from the public library as a City Council person. And frankly, even if I did, I wouldn't. Because you just don't want to cut off people's access to information. I mean there's books in this library that I'd probably find the content of them abhorrent. You know, I don't know if you have a copy of *Mein Kampf* here, but I imagine you might. And you know, I don't think Hitler's a good person or that his thoughts are thoughts that I would like to know about. But the idea that you have access to that information, that's kind of the point. And I think that's the thing we have to remember with kids, encourage that exploration, right? If you kind of forbid it or take it off the table, then you almost make it more attractive in some ways. Then they're gonna go down really devious paths with stuff. Like you need to let them kind of sort things out and then ask good questions, you know? I mean, that's the thing I find with my kids, especially my daughter. As she's reading books, she'll say, "Well, what do you think about this, Dad?" And I'll be like, "Well, I don't know. What do you think?" It's a conversation.

**Blair:** That's awesome.

**Music Transition:** "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from  
Orangefreesounds.com

(Description) Bright marimba scale.

### **(9:55) Section 2: Councilman Montoya Interview Part 2: Reading Together**

**Blair:** So what are you reading with the kids or what are they reading that you're fascinated by?

**Councilman Montoya:** What's really funny is the books that I've read that she's read. So she's 16 and she's a brilliant kid. She's, you know, really smart. She's in her second year of high school and then she's really dedicated to school, she's volunteering, she's a better kid than I was. But I gave her a copy a year or so ago of *Perks of Being a Wallflower* (Stephen Chbosky). And I said, "Man, when I read this book it made me feel a lot less alone as a high school kid. And I thought that this might be, you know, something that you would like." And it was kind of cool for her

and I to have that conversation. She's like, "Yeah, I really did like this book." And I was like, "Don't watch the movie 'cause the movie sucks." <laughter>

**Blair:** It was terrible, yeah. <laughter>

**Councilman Montoya:** So that's one. And she's read the book *Faults in our Stars* (*The Fault in our Stars* by John Green) and I think I read that too and I really liked it too. And it was kind of nice to have that conversation with her. I mean I still remember my dad when I was pretty young encouraging me to read *Catcher in the Rye* (J.D. Salinger). It's weird 'cause that was like maybe his generation's version of *Perks of Being a Wallflower* that he was able to share with his kid. And so, it's kind of cool to have that bridge between generations. With Ellis, he's really into science and Minecraft <laugh>. So, we read a lot of books about Minecraft and Minecraft strategy. Today was really cool. His sister got him this book on natural wonders and he's just so into science that he came into the bedroom this morning, he's like, "Look at this. Isn't this fascinating? Look, it's a coconut and there's a crab that can open coconuts." So, we're not talking about plot structure, but... <laughter>

**Blair:** Yet.

**Councilman Montoya:** Yet. Yeah, yeah, yet. Again, to me that's the power of books and reading, and libraries as a community space too, right? Is that you, you have conversation with people about things that you wouldn't anticipate.

**Jennifer:** I think you are a true book nerd <laughter>. I really do. And I say that with all fondness and respect because of the comments you've made reminds me of an essay I read called "Problems of a Bookworm" (from *I'd Rather Be Reading* by Anne Bogel).

**Councilman Montoya:** Oh, sure.

**Jennifer:** And one of them is what you mentioned—when you finish a book and you love it and you're nervous to read the next book 'cause it might just not live up to your expectations. So I thought you just really have a true book heart.

**Councilman Montoya:** The trouble I have, and I don't know if you guys have this—'cause I listened to your last podcast talking about books you'd read, and I heard you allude to this—it sounds like you guys give yourself permission to start a book and not finish it. Is that true?

**Amy:** Yes, actually Blair had a problem.

**Blair:** That was my actual resolution last year.

**Amy:** She, she refused to not finish books. And she would plod through these terrible, terrible reads and now she's giving herself grace.

**Blair:** There was like a whole dozen that I didn't finish last year.

**Councilman Montoya:** So, do you have a book, the worst book you've read all the way through? <laugh> I do as an adult. And this goes back to when I was going through high school. Everyone had said *Native Son* (Richard Wright) is this really good book. And I read *Native Son* and it's a good piece of literature, don't get me wrong. But the story and the characters—you're just kind of like, this is just not... It almost reminded me of *Crime and Punishment* (Fyodor Dostoyevsky), which I read as a teenager too. Where it's just kind of this slog and the characters aren't super likable. At some point you're like, I guess I'll just keep reading, for reading <laugh>. I started reading some books recently after I read *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*. I started reading it and I was like, I'm just, this isn't for me. And I put it down and it felt kind of powerful to be like, nope, not for me.

**Blair:** I have two things. So, the giant book that I forced myself to finish, it's from the Teen Zone and I had saved it from the purge list and I thought this sounds so interesting, I'm gonna read it. It's like 700 pages 'cause it's three books in one called *The Forbidden Game* (L.J. Smith). Oh, it was not pleasant. It was brutal because it had the perfect storm of all the things that I don't like in genres. Not that it's not a good book, but it's kind of like a wimpy romancey fantasy. Oh my gosh, get me out of here <laugh>. But I finished it because I forced myself to finish it. Because I said we're keeping this book on the shelf, I need to be able to tell people what it's about to read it. And it was pretty brutal.

But as a potential read-alike for *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*, we have in the Teen Zone so it is YA but it's called *Rainbow in the Dark* (Sean McGinty) and it is a really interesting take on limbo with video game components and questions of morality and what limbo looks like for different people. So that's a really fun one.

**Councilman Montoya:** While you're saying that, the one I remember reading too, it's a novel. And so I had read enough primary source of philosophy that I got annoyed with the oversimplification of things. But *Sophie's World* (Jostein Gaarder) was one that I read I think as a teenager where it was a way to introduce people to the idea of philosophy in this simplified way that works. But it was still novel that you were able to kind of get into. But I'll check that out. I mean I'm desperate for good books, good fiction. Right now, I'm reading a lot of nonfiction. So, I'm reading a book about presidents. I read a lot of historical nonfiction, too, as my leisure reading.

The book that I read most recently is a book called *Strong Towns* by Chuck (Charles) Marohn. And this is how much of a geek I am, it's about the structure of municipalities and how we used to do it and how to make your community more walkable and to create better community structure and how being a car-centric country has driven us into more isolation. And he's got a whole movement, he does podcasts and everything. But this is the thing I loved about reading a lot as a kid. There was a moment where I got really into theoretical mathematics <laugh> and I was like, oh this is interesting. And I read books about Fermat's Theorem and the Fibonacci Sequence. And that's what I did as a kid. I would go to the library and be like, "Oh this is really fascinating. I'm gonna read about theoretical mathematics." And I wasn't particularly good at math, but you just could kind of explore and go down really sinuous paths with reading. The world is there for you to find out.

**Jennifer:** When you came to the library as a kid, were you someone who went through the stacks on your own or did you ever talk to a librarian, get recommendations? Or were you just self-directed?

**Councilman Montoya:** I think at different times the answer was yes to both components. At the high school library, there was a librarian who I think works here now, by the way. Her name...

**Jennifer:** Ms. Bothell?

**Councilman Montoya:** Yes!

**Jennifer:** Yes. She works here.

**Councilman Montoya:** Yeah, Ms. Bothell <laugh> So, I remember when she was the librarian at the high school and she was definitely a resource. I had a teacher who encouraged me to apply for a scholarship in high school. You had to write an essay about the Czech Republic and at the time they were about to join the European Union. And so I remember going and trying to do all

this research and using EBSCO Host 'cause that was a thing back then. You could like look at magazine articles. I don't know if, is it still?

**Blair:** It is, yeah.

**Councilman Montoya:** But when it came to fiction, other things would kind of lead me down a path and then I'd look at them. I think what's weird is when I was a teenager this bottom layer of the library didn't exist. And so it was all just kind of mixed together. I guess there was a Youth section up there back then, but I just didn't limit myself. It was like all these books are for me <laugh>. Certain times, I would certainly look for recommendations but it sounds like you guys get a lot of feedback where people are like, tell me what to read, or tell me what's good.

**Blair:** We do, we get a lot of people who have finished a big series and then don't know what to do next. That's always fun. Or last-minute assignments for school. <laughter> Various things like that.

**Amy:** Or Minecraft fans, like your kiddo. Yeah, get a lot of that.

**Blair:** So many Minecraft fans.

**Jennifer:** There's a teacher, I think she's at Granite Mountain Middle School and she has a genre wheel. So, the kids spin it and we get to hear about that when they come in and they'll say I have to do a historical fiction or a science fiction. 'Cause they've spun the wheel and that's their assignment.

**Councilman Montoya:** That's really a creative way to approach it. I regret that I didn't explore certain genres more when I was a kid, and now I'm probably a little bit more resistant to them. Science fiction's one that I'm not opposed to; like one of my favorite books of all time is *Ender's Game* (Orson Scott Card). Love that book. In fact, love a lot of Orson Scott [Card] books generally, *Ender's Game's* a good book. I think *Shadow of the Giant* is probably one I like a little bit more. And it's weird 'cause it's not right in my bailiwick of books that I like, but it just, there's something that resonates so well. But fantasy is a genre that I don't ever think I really got encouraged to explore. And it sounds like that's a bigger area for kids these days. Is that right?

**Amy:** Definitely. Yeah, those dragon series, the kids are really into fantasy. A little bit of sci-fi, but the blend of sci-fi and fantasy in today's literature for kiddos is pretty significant.

**Councilman Montoya:** That's cool.

**Jennifer:** They also like funny books. Books that make them laugh. So we're always looking for something beyond *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Jeff Kinney).

**Councilman Montoya:** Yeah, but you see the problem is I read a lot of adult nonfiction. <laughter>

**Jennifer:** Right.

**Councilman Montoya:** I mean there's a book I've read that made me laugh out loud. It's called *Hyperbole and a Half* (Allie Brosh). There's a lot of drawings in it, and it's probably not super age-appropriate for kids. But it's the only book I remember reading, laughing out loud. A measure of a good book, to me, is a book that you read and it's almost like a good TV show or a movie where you want everyone you know to read it so that you can talk to them about it. And that was how that book was. I worked at Chase Bank for a while and I gave it to a couple different coworkers at Chase Bank and I would come into the break room, and I would hear them laughing while they're reading the book and I was like, yeah, it's really funny. Funny books are good.



**Music Transition:** "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from  
Orangefreesounds.com

(Description) Bright marimba scale.

**(18:18) Section 3: Councilman Montoya Interview Part 3: Reading Recommendations**

**Jennifer:** So now that we've learned a little bit about Councilman Montoya, maybe we can give him a reading recommendation from each of us.

**Councilman Montoya:** I would love it.

**Jennifer:** I have one, it's an adult but I think you'll like it. It's *Destiny of the Republic* by Candace Millard. Because you like reading about presidents.

**Councilman Montoya:** Yeah.

**Jennifer:** And so it's about the lesser-known president James Garfield and his assassination.

**Councilman Montoya:** Oh, yeah.

**Jennifer:** But it's also about the medicine at the time and where we were in that period of time after he got shot, we weren't sterilizing equipment quite yet. And so all the doctors were trying to figure out how to get this bullet out of President Garfield. He was shot in July and then he didn't die until September. So he was just suffering. But it's also about Alexander Graham Bell and the technology at the time and how they utilized his knowledge to try and find where the bullet was.

**Councilman Montoya:** Oh, wow.

**Jennifer:** And so it's nonfiction and it's written in the style of narrative nonfiction, so it reads like a story.

**Councilman Montoya:** That sounds great. I'll read it. What else you got?

**Blair:** I don't know that I can commit to just one <laugh>, but when you were talking about reading books that talk about cities and planning and all those kinds of things, I have a fascination with ancient cities and ancient abandoned cities. And so one that I read last year was *Four Lost Cities: A Secret History of the Urban Age* by Annalee Newitz. It talks about Pompeii, then Central Turkey, Cambodia, and then Cahokia. And I grew up between Southern Illinois and Silverton Colorado, so when you said Durango, I was like: Yeah. But Cahokia was really close, and I remember going on field trips and still not really understanding about these ancient cities and the way things were done and the different kinds of planning that really went into laying out these cities and aquifers and aqueducts and water supply and how to keep your city safe and how advanced some of these cities were because they were lined up according to the sun patterns so that you had good light throughout the day. All of these interesting things when you're talking about archeology and planning. So that totally made me think of that book.

**Councilman Montoya:** That's fascinating. So, what's the name of the book?

**Blair:** *Four Lost Cities*.

**Councilman Montoya:** *Four Lost Cities*, okay. Yeah, I mean I assume you'll put in the show notes.

**Blair:** We will.

**Amy:** And then mine is definitely for you and Ellis to share together. And that would be one of my personal favorites: *What Do They Do With All That Poo?* (Jane Kurtz) <laugh> It's nonfiction and it's all about all the waste that the animals at the zoo create daily, how each animal poops,

and some of the reasons why they poop the way they do or in the shape that they create when they poop. And...

**Councilman Montoya:** And I know my son so well that if he knew that this conversation was happening right now, he would suddenly be very interested in this <laugh>. So I think... you're dead on.

**Amy:** And then what do the zoos do with all of that? Because..

**Councilman Montoya:** It's a lot.

**Amy:** It's a lot, every day. And so they test it, they use it for that paper and they send it off, of course, to the dump. They use it for composting so they actually make zoo-chini, you know. You get it: zoo-chini? <laugh>. Yes. It's so fun.

**Councilman Montoya:** So, is it designed for kids?

**Amy:** It is, yeah. It's like a nonfiction picture book, basically.

**Councilman Montoya:** Okay, cool.

**Amy:** It's awesome. Like I also like poop <laugh>, sorry, poop, poop stories, I think are hilarious. They make me laugh, and that book was so interesting.

**Councilman Montoya:** Oh I mean Ellis, like I said, that's right up his alley.

**Jennifer:** Amy's our go-to for books of, uh, unique information.

**Blair:** Yes. Unique is a good way of putting it.

**Jennifer:** So between the three of us we've read quite the gamut of books. It's wonderful.

**Councilman Montoya:** I bet. I'm not naive about what it takes to be a librarian. I think one of the things is that you do have access to reading books and such and that's probably pretty cool. I, I know there's more complexity to the job than that. It's not like you just sit reading all day. That would be nice, but at least you do get to connect with and have that communication with people around reading. It's pretty powerful.

**Jennifer:** It's very powerful.

**Councilman Montoya:** Can I ask you guys a question?

**Blair:** Of course.

**Councilman Montoya:** One of the things that I think about as an elected official in this community is what are ways that elected officials like me can support the work that you're doing, beyond the obvious things, right? I mean, you guys submit a budget to the City Manager's office. What are things that other members of council or, you know, the mayor or anyone can do to make your jobs better?

**Jennifer:** Well, first of all, thank you for asking that. I feel like you have a librarian heart. Really. I think just helping people to spread the word that libraries are for everyone. They're free. We've discovered a lot of people still think that there's a fee to come in and use the library and access information. So we just want to encourage people to come. <affirmative> You can spread that word about what libraries are for and they're welcoming spaces. And maybe one other thing is getting transportation for people to even get here.

**Councilman Montoya:** Right.

**Blair:** I would agree with that. I would agree with looking at ways to increase potential transportation, making sure they're accessible. And then also, I don't know how many Council members attend library programs or use the library or know what we have to offer. And it feels like sometimes we offer these programs and we offer these events and they're kind of into a void of the same little tunnel of people.

**Councilman Montoya:** Sure.

**Blair:** And it would be awesome if when we're selling all the cool things that Prescott has to offer that we remember to include the library.

**Councilman Montoya:** One of the things that I've seen you guys do, by the way, that I'm really impressed by, just to give you some, some positive feedback on what you're talking about, Blair, is the library of things. That's amazing. And I know that's happening all over the country, and I think that's a way you can highlight the library in a different way, right? The idea that, gosh, I'd really like to get into hiking but I don't have the equipment or I don't know how to do it. Or you know, the idea that you can just come down the library and like check out a hiking kit. There you go. To me that's taking the library to the next level. <affirmative> And that's really cool.

You know, it's funny you say a librarian's heart... to me, it's just so natural to come to a library. I remember when I was a kid there wasn't a ton of stuff to do and so the library is just a place I'd go. And it was free, to your point. And no one gave you a hard time for being there. I think that's the thing that always felt comfort to me about being in libraries. It's a place you can go. You can access information. You, I remember like the internet was still kind of a nascent thing when I was a kid. And you could come to the library and you could access the internet for free. That was amazing. Like there were coffee shops that were charging you to get on the internet. And I think it's one of those things where I'll always be a champion for libraries and what they do. 'Cause again, it's just that idea that there's this shared resource. It's no different in my mind than streets or police or fire. This is a shared resource that we've all said collectively: Yeah, we want this and we want everyone to be able to take part in it. And it's a beautiful thing. What are your, how can I help you?

**Amy:** I think just to build on what Blair said is the use factor. If you don't use the library, you don't know what the library has to offer in many cases. But there's just so much that happens here—the library of things, the internet, the magazines, the newspapers, the Friends Book Sale.

**Councilman Montoya:** Right.

**Amy:** All of the programming that we do. But then also librarians as a resource. So like not just the building and the space, but the actual humans that are in it. Come talk to us and ask us what should I read next and get to know who works in the building and how we are here for this community. Like, we're here for Prescott. I mean it'd be a dream to read at your job. Right?

**Councilman Montoya:** Right.

**Amy:** We don't actually do that. I mean at storytimes, yes. But we read to an audience.

**Councilman Montoya:** Well and I will tell you by the way, one of the most, and I know Mr. Steve is no longer with the library, right? But what blew me away about Mr. Steve was I was in Wild Iris coffee shop with my daughter who came to storytime as a baby. <affirmative>. And I saw him and by this point my daughter was in high school already or maybe late middle school. And he said, oh how are Lily and Ellis? And it blew me away. And I was thinking the thousands and thousands and thousands of kids that he has seen in his time and the fact that that he like made the connection, that's the dad, here are the kids, how are they doing? It was amazing to me. And storytime, you know, I'm biased as a parent but that is one of the most amazing things that happens in the library because my son yesterday was playing with a kid that he met as a

little guy at storytime. I mean that's where you form community <affirmative>, you forge it, right? And to me that's what any municipal kind of shared space is about. And this is something they talk about in the *Strong Towns* movement is that we need more third spaces. So there are two spaces that most people interact with and engage with. One is their home obviously, right? And then the other is where they work. But you need a third place. If you just have those two spaces, your life is not really full or rich. And so I think libraries are a third space that we don't talk about enough. And really good third spaces in my mind are places where you can congregate and it doesn't cost you anything. <affirmative> And that's really critical. It's so beautiful to be able to just show up someplace and not have an expectation. I'm just here. I think for a whole segment of this community and communities everywhere, libraries are sanctuary. The thing I'll say, don't hesitate to invite Council to things and ask us to show up and be advocates for you. And I can't speak for everyone else on Council, but I'm happy to be an advocate for the library 'cause I believe in what you guys are doing and thank you.

**Amy:** Thank you. That's huge.

**Blair:** Awesome. Thank you.

**Jennifer:** Well, I just wanted to tell you thank you for all of your positive comments and your support. It's just been really easy to talk with you because I think we share a lot in common with a lot of the same beliefs about our books and about families and about the library as a community space. We really love the library family because we've been here a while and we get to know these families and we connect with them, we watch them grow up, and we talk to them about books and about life. And what you mentioned about Mr. Steve is just, it's a beautiful connection

**Councilman Montoya:** And it continues on. I, I see it happen now. You know, you see there're connections that are being made it, that wouldn't otherwise happen. It's a power when you have a shared space where it's safe for anyone to be there and everyone's welcome.

**Music Transition:** "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from OrangeFreesounds.com  
(Description) *Bright marimba scale.*

#### **(27:42) Section 4: Councilman Montoya Interview Part 4: Reading Resolutions**

**Amy:** Do you have any reading resolutions for this year? Like things that you wanna read or share with your family?

**Councilman Montoya:** So I think my big one is to just be inclined to read more. To think about it, to make it more top of mind for myself. This is maybe a cheating resolution cause I'm already moving in the right direction, but it's really tempting for me to come home from work or whatever and just stare at my phone and decompress that way. My big resolution is to fight that temptation and pick up a book. I do a lot of reading... I love reading book books, but I also read on Kindle and so I've been carrying my Kindle around with me a lot more so that if I have a break between meetings I can just continue reading.

**Amy:** It's smart to bring your Kindle with you because I have the Kindle app on my phone and then I've tried reading that way and all the notifications still come in.

**Councilman Montoya:** Yeah.

**Amy:** And then you're totally taking it out of the book, constantly. So if you bring the Kindle and you put the phone in your pocket.

**Councilman Montoya:** Yeah. Yeah. And there's some, I have the Kindle app on my phone too and it's just not the same. I don't think there's a problem with digital reading, but I think doing it in that way where you're still getting sucked out of it <affirmative> is kind of not super great. Another resolution I would have is to connect with my kids a little bit more through reading because I think it's an opportunity that exists for parents. You know, I think about that moment when I shared that book with my daughter and like having that shared communication with her around it. It's an opportunity, right? And so the more you can do that you kind of associate positive vibes towards reading with your kids. That's, that's a good thing.

**Amy:** That's huge.

**Jennifer:** That's one of the joys of our jobs is that we read across the board and we connect with the kids and we love having these conversations. Well, thank you so much for joining us, and we really appreciate it.

**Councilman Montoya:** I appreciate you guys doing the podcast. I've enjoyed listening to it and it's in my queue now so I'd listen to it and I'll enjoy continuing to listen to it and listening for your recommendations. 'Cause there are a lot of books you guys were mentioning at the end of the year and I'm like, oh, gotta check this out. Especially with young kids, it's good to have <affirmative> access to that information.

**Music Transition:** "Ascending-marimba-notification" by Alexander from  
Orangefreesounds.com  
(Description) *Bright marimba scale.*

### **(29:29) Section 5: Our Reading Resolutions**

**Blair:** Alright guys, so I guess it's only fair since we uh, asked Councilman Montoya for his resolutions, what are some of ours? Anybody wanna start?

**Amy:** Yes! My reading resolution this year was inspired by your book nerdery last year, where you shared your color-coded lists of how you listened or how you read and what genres and what age groups and things. But really mine is just to actually keep track more formally of my reading and what I'm reading and what I'm enjoying. But also even those things that I DNF because usually I just go in and remove them from my reading history. But now I'm going to actually say why I quit this book. So I'm going to actually use the Aspen catalog because by and large what I read is from this network, our library or our library partners. And so it's in my checkout history, since I have that enabled, I can write reviews and star things too. And they are anonymous to others. I did check this <laugh> and, but I can see them, see what I read that I liked it, that I didn't like it, whatever. And then make lists... so I can list things like, these would be great for this age group or these are reader likes for blah blah, blah, blah blah. Then others might benefit from seeing a review, like a four star review for something and why it was fun. So that's one of mine.

**Blair:** That's kind of cool. Maybe I will migrate some reviews into our catalog from GoodReads. That might be fun.

**Jennifer:** Are you going to start using the Aspen catalog to rate the books? You know, we have that rating system.

**Amy:** That's exactly what I'm gonna do. Yes. <affirmative> Because you, you rate them and they have a little bubble where you can enter your comments and your feedback and so I already tested it twice with different reviews and so that's how I'm gonna go forward. Yeah.

**Jennifer:** I have a couple of goals. One is I just want to read more about other cultures. So I was inspired by this book club that I belong to online. They have you read books from different countries and they're book lists from different countries around the world. So I really want to be more widely read on different cultures. But, in addition, I feel a real gap in the third and fourth grade, which Amy, you're very knowledgeable about those books. But I think most of our clientele is that age, and so I want to be more able to give them recommendations. So I'm going to try and read more on that age group, but I struggle with those books because I really like a meaty read. <affirmative> I like a lot of detail. And those books clearly are meant more to get kids excited about reading, so the writing is very different, the style. <affirmative>

**Blair:** Oh, very.

**Jennifer:** It's a challenge for me, but I'm going to try so I can be better able to recommend books to that age group.

**Amy:** That's awesome.

**Blair:** So mine is a little weird. I think truly this last year I felt like I overreached and I maybe overread as far as enjoyment level versus just volume. So I'm actually stepping back, I'm only asking a goal of 150 books instead of 200. <laugh> Which again...

**Amy:** Please, please say that you're gonna include picture books though, because otherwise that's...

**Blair:** Of course, I'm not gonna include picture books. That doesn't count.

**Amy:** That's like a book every two days, so you're still racing through and so soaking up beautiful...

**Blair:** That's so much less...

**Amy:** Language and things...

**Blair:** That's so much less. But I'm also gonna try and make a concerted effort to read more adult books <laugh> because I definitely felt multiple times this year that I was like, okay, I have brain drain. I need something grown up, please <laugh>, I need at least YA. I mean, I don't even feel like I read as much YA as I read middle grade this year. So it definitely felt like I was racing instead of reading multiple times. So it's just a little step back, little bit more conscious thought about some of the choices I'm making. And this is the big one, guys. I'm going to try to not take home more than 10 books at a time, says the person who currently has 16 books checked out. I'm going to try...

**Amy:** <laugh> I had to keep my mouth like pursed to not laugh. <laugh>

**Blair:** But it's, it's gonna be a trial, it's gonna be a struggle. But the goal is to not have more than 10 books home at a time once I get some of these home.

**Jennifer:** I just wanted to say in defense of picture books, my goal's been really high too over the last few years, but the only way I can ever meet it is to read picture books. But I enjoy them and there's so many great picture books.

**Blair:** So I'm still notating the ones that I'm reading that I really love. I'm still making the lists of them for myself and reading a boatload of them. I'm just not including them in the overall total. I'm trying to keep my overall total to chapters.

**Amy:** We hope this episode inspires you to reflect on the powerful role of books and libraries in your life and community.

**Music Transition:** “Ascending-marimba-notification” by Alexander from Orangefreesounds.com  
*(Description) Bright marimba scale.*

**Outro (33:58)**

**Blair:** Thank you for joining us today on Librarians Telling Tales. For the full list of books shared in this episode, check the link in our podcast bio.

**Jennifer:** Don't forget to subscribe to catch our next episode where we discuss inspiring reads for Black History Month.

**(34:05) Musical Outro:** “Uplifting 2463” by Twisterium from pixabay.com  
*(Description) Upbeat, piano and percussion. Music fades in and plays under.*

**Amy:** We'd like to thank our listeners—you!—for supporting this podcast. We would also like to thank the city of Prescott, friends of the Prescott Public Library, and all of our fabulous coworkers at Prescott Public Library.

**Blair:** Be sure to like and subscribe to Librarians Telling Tales. And until next time, we'll see you in the library.

**Total Runtime (34:37)**