

First, we were in your community. Now, we're in your ears. Sound travels at around 343 meters per second, so if I sound out of breath, that's why. This is Pager, a podcast brought to you by the West Bend Community Memorial Library. It's like talking to your favorite librarian, but easier to understand because I don't have a mask and shield over my face. I'm your host, Hannah, young adult services librarian and audio enthusiast. Thanks for tuning in to Pager.

There are lots of neat monthly observances in July. As a librarian, I'm a big fan of National Cell Phone Courtesy Month - while you are allowed to use your phone in the library, please keep the volume down, and keep calls brief!

Several other monthly observances go hand in hand. For example, July is National Culinary Arts Month, AND National Grilling Month, AND National Hot Dog Month, AND National Picnic Month. I love grilling out, and I really love being a little unconventional on the grill. Nothing else can really beat that grilled flavor, you know? In addition to putting things directly on the grill, I like to experiment with foil packets, and the cast iron skillet, and even dessert on the grill. If you're looking for a great grilled dessert, celebrate National Peach Month by grilling some peaches! You can combine that with your celebration of National Ice Cream Month for a truly icy and fiery summer treat.

If you're new to the grill, check out some of our cookbooks! You can browse online at monarchcatalog.org, or head to the stacks on our second floor in the adult nonfiction area, under 641.5784. If you do decide to browse in person, please mask up, wash your hands, or at the very least cover your mouth if you cough!

If you want to get into grilling but aren't sure where to start, the library is delighted to offer you free access to Consumer Reports. You can stop by the library to browse and even check out physical copies, or you can take advantage of free online access through BadgerLink. Simply visit badgerlink.dpi.wi.gov/resource/consumer-reports-magazine. If you don't have a library card and need one to sign in, you can snag a temporary card at monarchcatalog.org and consumer report to your heart's content!

It's just me this month, as everyone's schedules are pretty topsy turvy, and basically every single person I know is exhausted. This episode's title is "A Pod of Ice and Fire," so I'd like to give you the rundown on some books and series I've enjoyed, the binge-worthy adaptations of those books and series, and probably a couple of other things.

"Game of Thrones" is the obvious first contender here. George R. R. Martin's immensely popular fantasy epic was originally supposed to be a trilogy, but there are currently five books, with at least two more on the way. Martin stated last month that he hopes to have the next book finished by next year, so this is a great time to get caught up! The first book, "A Game of Thrones," came out in 1996. Set primarily in the magical world of Westeros, the series is full of court intrigue as different noble families compete for political power and debate succession. In the shadows, each house wrangles different magical forces, with varying levels of competence and success. Dragons, zombies, shapeshifters, spells, priestesses, armies, navies, and even a sort

of air force contribute to the action in this intricately-woven epic fantasy. The HBO adaptation set records upon records, and is already finished - whether the books end the same way the show does, of course, remains to be seen.

If you're a Game of Thrones fan - or you've been on the hunt for something similar, but with less, shall we say, adult content - I highly recommend the Wheel of Time series by Robert Jordan (and, later, Brandon Sanderson). This is a great series to pick up while you're social distancing; its 14 books (plus a prequel) combine for over 10,000 pages of reading, or almost 20 days of audiobook listening. The story follows Rand, a young man from a sleepy, isolated rural village, and several of his friends as they discover and develop various magical abilities such as communing with wolves, walking in dreams, manipulating luck, and channeling a force called the One Power on their way to defeat the Dark One at the Last Battle. Like "A Song of Ice and Fire," Wheel of Time has a large and well-developed cast of characters, but one of the things that makes me prefer Wheel of Time is the detailed and well-explained magic system. Rereading these books, for me, is like coming home to another world; the universe is so well-crafted that it's almost like going on vacation to visit some old friends.

Wheel of Time is currently being adapted for the streaming screen by the folks over at Amazon Prime Video, and I'm cautiously optimistic. It's one of my favorite series of all time, and I wouldn't trust just anyone to adapt it - except Prime Video also adapted another of my favorite series, "The Expanse" by James S. A. Corey. In the world of "The Expanse," humans have colonized Mars and branched out even further into our solar system. Mars has fought for its independence from Earth, but both planets have it easy compared to the Belters, hardworking folks who eke out a living by transporting water, mining asteroids for ice and minerals, and generally enduring dangerous working conditions for insufficient compensation. At the beginning of the series, political tensions are rising; the Belters want better treatment, Earth is getting too comfortable, and Mars doesn't think it owes the Belters anything. I love the epic scope of this story - which currently has eight novels, as well as several novellas and shorter stories - as well as the various characters. Longtime listeners know me as a big Star Trek fan, and The Expanse scratches my Star Trek itch for space travel, diplomacy, new worlds, and ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. In the midst of the political tensions, a private detective searches for the missing daughter of a prominent Earth CEO - and her fateful encounter with an alien entity will shape the future of the entire human race.

Speaking of private detectives, one of my favorite series of all time recently got a reboot - or a prequel, depending on who you trust. I caught reruns of Perry Mason on TV as a kid, and the title character's style immediately caught my attention. I didn't realize until I was an adult that the Perry Mason episodes are all based on books, so I haven't read them yet, but I've added them all to my TBR pile. I've always enjoyed the episodic nature of the original TV series, watching attorney Perry Mason and his helpful supporting cast gather the evidence and defend their sometimes morally grey clients. The new HBO series takes a less episodic approach, showing Mason before he becomes a formidable defense attorney as he tries to get to the bottom of one

mystery over the course of the season. I was a little worried HBO might make it TOO gritty, but they handle the original show's themes with deft aplomb. The classic series is available on CBS All Access - or free on DVD from your friendly local library - and HBO is releasing episodes of the new series every week on their streaming services.

Last but not least, one of my favorite series of all time has finally returned to online streaming. Hannibal is available on Netflix, and it's based on the book series that also inspired films like "The Silence of the Lambs" and "Red Dragon". I've been rewatching Hannibal, which originally aired in 2013, and it holds up so well that it can only be described as ahead of its time. With just three seasons and 39 episodes, the show tells the story of Hannibal Lecter before his capture, following his journey from psychiatrist and serial killer to the incarcerated occasional FBI consultant we know from the movies.

Now, I may be a librarian, but I also have a degree in film, so I'm not going to tell you the book is always better. The books are almost always super interesting ways to explore screen worlds you know and love. Plus, the wait lists are usually shorter, and you can check them out for longer! If you don't subscribe to streaming services, the library's selectors do our level best to stay on top of DVD releases. We have books in every series I've talked about today, and once streaming series become available on DVD, we make sure to buy copies and make them available to you! TV series from our library can be checked out for two weeks at a time, giving you plenty of time to relax and watch an episode or two a night.

That's pretty much what I've been reading and watching! If you want more recommendations, check out the library's blog - we post staff picks each month - and your YouTube channel, where adult fiction librarian Sara periodically posts recommendations, and I sometimes suggest books, movies, anime, music, and activities for teens.

There's still time to participate in our 2020 Summer Learning Program! Visit westbendlibrary.beanstack.org to get started. We also have reading records and activities available to print from our website, and to pick up from the library, but everything is available online this year - so you won't miss out if you decide to stay home! We have new activities available for all ages each week - and yes, that includes adults! (Please follow the appropriate distancing and sanitation guidelines if you do decide to pick up materials from the library.) Kids of all ages - even teens - have until July 31 to finish logging your reading and enter the prize drawings.

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Our children's librarian, Miss Terika, has planned a ton of amazing activities for kids this summer. We have weekly guessing contests, writing prompts, and Lego challenges, with prizes for each winner. Visit our website, stop by the library, or check out Beanstack to get the weekly topics and enter. Thanks to our sponsors, we have a family-friendly virtual program each week!

On Thursday, July 16th, we'll be live on Facebook at 6:30 p.m. with the Magic of Isaiah, and on July 30th we'll wrap up summer reading with Miller and Mike, also on Facebook Live. We really couldn't have summer reading without the amazing support of our local businesses - thanks everyone!

We have another big announcement. Starting Monday, July 20, the library will return to regular open hours. So, we'll be available by email and phone from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9:00-6:00 on Fridays, and Saturdays from 9-1.

Feel free to give us a call at 262-335-5151 if you have any questions. You can also follow us on YouTube for craft ideas, program updates, reading suggestions, and more! Once a month, the library sends out an email newsletter. Just call or email a librarian to sign up, or scroll down to the bottom of our website and enter your email address where it says JOIN OUR MAILING LIST. All the latest news is available on our website at westbendlibrary.org. You can also visit our Facebook page at West Bend Community Memorial Library, and follow our Instagram page [@westbendlibrary](https://www.instagram.com/westbendlibrary) for up-to-the-minute info.

Once again, thanks for tuning into Pager, and for being so awesome. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions! If you want to make a librarian smile, go ahead and subscribe to us wherever you listen to podcasts.