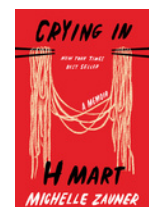
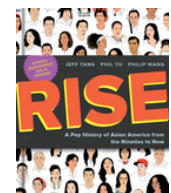
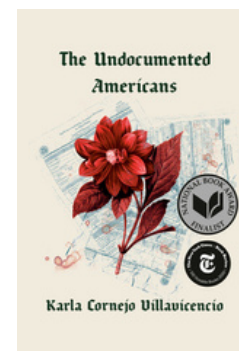
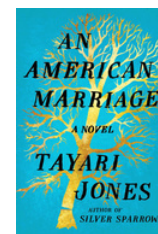
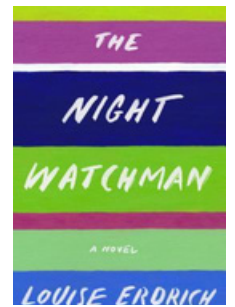


GRDIA QUARTERLY



Summer Reading

Suggested titles by GRDIA members. Find these books at the Glen Ridge Public Library or shop local with Watchung Booksellers.



It's the end of the 2021-22 school year! We want to begin this newsletter by saying THANK YOU teachers, administrators, staff, students, parents, community members, board of education members . . . everyone who keeps our community together with open, honest and positive communication. Each year we face new challenges that impact our community but if we continue to work together with these three tenets of communication, we can minimize negative disruption and empower an inclusive community.

We hope everyone has a safe, healthy and enjoyable summer!

Best,
GRDIA team

GRDIA Community Events



GRDIA hosted its very first **Learn to Play Mahjong Night** on May 20. Eight generous local businesses and families sponsored this fun-filled evening. GR teens assisted with set up and breakdown. GRDIA entertained, fed and taught a full-capacity crowd filling fourteen tables. The town's interest and support was so overwhelming that we were able to raise a generous amount of funds to put towards our next community event.



Forest Avenue School welcomed Archana Athalye of **Kulture Kool** for a Discover India program. Pre-K thru 2nd graders learned about Indian and Indian American culture, including geography, languages and history. The presentation also included a saree tying demonstration, dance-along, and student reenactment of a folktale. Many thanks to Montclair AAPI and to FAS Enrichment Committee for funding this event.



In June, students at **Central School** are taking part in a **Caribbean Heritage activity**. They will make masks with feathers and jewels to express their individuality. Caribbean Heritage month is a celebration of freedom from colonial rule which is celebrated throughout the world most prominently in the US, UK and Canada where the festival is known as Carnival.

Pride Month

GRDIA interviewed Madeline Bettenbender, the Vice President of the **GRHS Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)**, to talk about their most successful club year to date, with over 100 members signing up at the beginning of the year. Madeline noted that this year, in addition to the LGBTQ+ students, they had more allies than ever joining. She pointed out that young people are generally becoming more comfortable coming out and feeling supported, and that movements such as BLM have spurred kids to lend more visible support to all marginalized communities.



One of the things Madeline was most proud of this year was the club's ability to **build community and give students a positive, safe, fun space to be with their friends and meet new people**. She also spoke about how the GSA met with Principal Lawlor to discuss a list of issues based on input from their membership. Their list included changing Skyward to allow a non-binary gender option; requesting educational reforms to increase LGBTQ+ representation in literature, health, and history classes; and requesting that the administration take stronger action when students use anti-LGBTQ+ slurs. Madeline and the President of the GSA, Rylee Allen, are both graduating seniors and hope that the new officers and members will continue the work they started this year and maintain the strong sense of community that they've built. Madeline said the younger kids are passionate and motivated, and she has faith that they'll continue making progress, so that GSA, and GRHS as a whole, becomes a better place for all students.

The History of Juneteenth



June 19, 1865 is known as Emancipation Day because it marks the true ending of slavery. On this date, the Union Army arrived in Galveston, Texas to announce that all African-American slaves were free in accordance with President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Texas was the last state in the Confederacy to receive word that the Civil War was over and that slavery had been abolished.

Last year (2021) Juneteenth became a federal holiday.



On June 14, the 4th graders at **Ridgewood Avenue School** welcomed local author Alliah Agostini in celebration of Juneteenth. Ms. Agostini read passages from her book, **The Juneteenth Story**, and answered questions. The funding support for this U.S. History learning activity was provided by the RAS HSA.

In case you missed it in November 2021...



Inclusion isn't just about a larger group reaching out to a small one, it is a dialog that can start from either side.

On Sunday November 28, 2021, the occasion of the **"first ever first night" lighting of the Glen Ridge town's chanukiah (more known as a menorah)** occurred. Several members of the town's Jewish community organized a gathering in front of the municipal building.

All Ridgers were invited and many came to enjoy real sufganiot (jelly donuts) and learn how to play the dreidel game. Betsy Ginsburg, our BOE president, was given the honor of lighting the first candle in recognition of her personal and the entire district's efforts to create a community of respect and friendship. The "December Dilemma" is a time of great stress for many families that either identify as Jewish or seek to incorporate traditions and sensibilities of family members. This public recognition of Chanukah sent a message to the Jewish community that we are beloved full members of the community. Many people who never knew much about Chanukah were excited to be invited into the tradition and have the opportunity to ask the questions that sparked their curiosity. Chanukah means rededication and the holiday served to be a moment of re-dedication of all Ridgers' commitment to an open community with room for all.

Local Summer Events

Listing of Essex County happenings in the coming months.

Community Day: Juneteenth
June 18, 12 pm-5 pm

Bloomfield Juneteenth Celebration
June 18, 12 pm-6 pm

Dinosaur Discovery Family Field Trip
June 22, 5:30 pm-7:30 pm

Zoo-vies
July 7-August 17 at 7:30 pm

Summer Music:
Food Truck & Jazz Festival
July 9, 11 am-9 pm

4-H Young Gardeners Club
July 23, 10 am-11 am

Summer Music at Clipper Pavilion:
Apex Ensemble/
The Montclair Orchestra
August 2, 7 pm

SummerMusic: Latino Festival
August 27-28, 12 pm-8 pm

Coming this Fall
SEPTEMBER 17, 2022
Glen Ridge Diversity and
Inclusion Association
Family Picnic!