

Celebrate women through your reading list

March is National Women's History Month, an annual celebration that draws attention to the women who have impacted history and contemporary society. It corresponds to the International Women's Day celebration observed in more than 100 countries March 8. In 1981, U.S. Congress designated the second week of March as National Women's History Week, and in 1987 Congress expanded it to a monthlong observance.

To commemorate this celebration, I'd like to offer my pick of six exciting and great books that are coming to our library soon. The topics of these books could not be more different, but what unites them is the inspiration and persistence behind the stories of women' struggles and successes. These are books by women and about women.

In the first book, "Educated: A Memoir," Tara Westover tells her incredible story of how she was 17 when she set her foot inside a classroom for the first time. Born to survivalist parents in the mountains of Idaho, who avoided schooling and doctors, she taught herself as a way of rebelling against her family and not was only able to get into college at Brigham Young University, but eventually went on to get a Ph.D. from Cambridge University. This book is an unbelievable account of the triumph of the human mind and spirit.

LIBRARY MATTERS

BY LANA PEKER

The second book I would like to recommend is called "Enough As She Is: How to Help Girls Move Beyond Impossible Standards of Success to Live Healthy, Happy, and Fulfilling Lives," by Rachel Simmons. For way too many teenage girls today, the drive to achieve is powered by harsh self-criticism and a strong fear of failure. While outpacing boys in grade-point averages and college enrollment, girls nowadays feel the constant burden of not being enough. Not smart enough, not successful enough, not pretty enough, not skinny enough, not sexy enough. Well, we've had enough. This book is a much needed and urgent primer for the parents of high school and college girls. It analyzes the incredible pressure girls feel from all possible directions and contains plenty of real life stories, interviews, advice and strategies on how to transform the "not enough" mentality into fuel, positivity and success.

Have you ever wondered about the inside world of TV and sitcom writers? The third book, "Just the Funny Parts: And a Few Hard Truths About Sneaking into the Hollywood Boys' Club," is a funny and brutally honest memoir by Nell Scovell, whose

career as a writer, producer and director behind the scenes of many iconic TV shows spans more than three decades. She successfully tried her hand at many things, from producing shows to collaborating on books to writing jokes for Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and other prominent figures. In this timely book, she sheds light on what it really takes to be a successful female writer in highly competitive, male-dominated field like entertainment.

The fourth title on my list is "Black Girls Rock!: Owning Our Magic. Rocking Our Truth." It's an inspiring book from Beverly Bond, the founder of the "Black Girls Rock!" movement. The book is full of incredible stories and photographs of more than 60 successful black women around the globe. Coming from all walks of life — politicians, actresses, writers, athletes, singers and others — these women share anecdotes, affirmations, inspirational essays and unforgettable testimonies to inspire the next generation of female black leaders.

Reading the fifth book, "Broad Band: The Untold Story of the Women Who Made the Internet," by Claire L. Evans, will probably make you think of the film "Hidden Figures," but for the internet and computer industry. It's a fascinating book that shows how women were at the front lines of every

important step in technology from the first computer program written in the Victorian age to the most complex, modern technological advances. I'm happy to see another book show that, given the right tools and equal opportunities, women are as good as men in every endeavor.

Finally, the sixth and last book on my list is "The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote," by Elaine Weiss. It's a great historical account reconstructing the events leading up to the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920. The book chronicles the crucial and contentious struggle to make Tennessee the final state to ratify the amendment and grant women the right to vote. Although we all know the amendment was ratified, the author skillfully shows how tight the vote actually was by the Tennessee legislature and expertly builds enough suspense that you won't be able to put the book down.

For these and many other exciting new books, come to the library, call us or check our online catalog anytime. Also, if you ever need recommendations for a great book, don't hesitate to ask the librarians at the reference desk.

Lana Peker is a reference librarian at West Orange Public Library.

The folly of arming school teachers

The idea of arming teachers to prevent mass shootings in American schools springs more from romanticized fancy than reality. The John Wayne/Rambo fantasy of stopping the bad guys with guns blazing is still alive and well in the American psyche. However, I find it hard to believe that armed teachers with minimal training at random locations in a school building during a high stress active shooter scenario would be an effective measure to solve the problem.

POINT OF VIEW

BY DONALD DABORN

Though I have no doubt that there are some teachers in some schools who would be willing to carry guns on the job, that does not mean that they would be able to successfully intervene in school shootings. Take a look at statistics concerning firearm use by trained police both on the target range and on duty.

In a study published in the International Journal of Police Science & Management in 2015, shooting accuracy was compared between expert, intermediate and novice level shooters — experts were those who had completed law enforcement firearms courses, intermediates were those with recreational experience and novices were those with minimal experience. The accuracy percent overall from a variety of distances was 48.73 percent for the experts and intermediates, and 39.91 percent for

the novices. However, at a distance of 18 to 45 feet, which more realistically reflects an active school shooter situation, the accuracy percent falls to 39.4 percent for experts and intermediates and only 27.6 percent for novices. Remember that this is in a target range situation, not a real life one in which the research shows that an officer's performance is greatly affected.

John C. Cerar, a retired commander of the New York Police Department's firearms See **ENSURING**, Page 12

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thoughts and prayers

To the Editor:

The West Orange Board of Education wants to extend our thoughts and prayers to Ms. Patricia Villarosa, a teacher at Washington Elementary School. Ms. Villarosa was struck by a car (Feb. 26) as she was trying to attend the Board of Education meeting.

The Board of Education respectfully asks that the West Orange community keep Ms. Villarosa and her family in their thoughts and prayers.

We wish her a speedy recovery and hope she is back to work soon.

Ron Charles, President
Mark Robertson, Vice President
Ken Alper
Sandra Mordecai
Irv Schwarzbaum
West Orange Board of Education

Gun walkout

To the Editor:

Following the recent shooting tragedy in a Florida high school, students all across America have decided to partake in school walkouts. WOHS students had one themselves last Wednesday. I'm all for this, but there is still something about it that concerns me: How many of these students are participating in these walkouts just so that they can get out of class?

This isn't the first time this possibility has crossed my mind. Last year, many of the students at West Orange High School joined in a walkout in the middle of the day to protest the whole teacher-contracts issue. While this was well-intended, this problem was not really the students' business. Let the teachers handle their own dilemmas.

However, I think this upcoming walkout makes more sense for the student body to

join because it deals with keeping our physical safety in check, which does affect everyone. But, this does still raise the question: It is worth it for us specifically?

According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are approximately 26,407 public secondary schools and 10,693 private secondary schools in the United States. That's a total of 37,100 schools, which makes the chances of a gunman attacking WOHS about 0.00269542 percent. Now, taking out the fact that there's almost a 0 percent chance that our school would be attacked, how many of the students actually care about the walkout's purpose? WOHS has more than 2,000 students, and I know for a fact that not every single one of them enjoys all of their classes, so they'd use this meaningful walkout as a strong alibi for skipping it for the day.

I really hope that's not the case here,

because these protests possess two qualities that many other protests have been lacking for the past few years: They're peaceful and organized. Many protests in the past have erupted into riots, resulting in even more injury or death, property damage and the failure to justify the point the protesters were trying to get across. This protest is against the No. 1 tool of physical violence, so there's really no way for this to get away. The other important aspect of protests is organization; whenever a protest, or anything for that matter, is well-organized, the greater its effectiveness. Since there's really no motivation for revenge here, there's a good chance that these protests and walkouts will have a more systematic and methodized conception. In fact, the first WOHS walkout from a few weeks ago in response to the Florida

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