

ADVERTISEMENT

 Search

SUBSCRIBE
4 weeks for only 99¢

LOG IN

CORONAVIRUS IN ILLINOIS UPDATES

Coronavirus in Illinois updates:
What's what's happening
Wednesday with COVID-19 in...



Illinois COVID-19 restrictions
will ease Friday for nonessential
retailers and animal groomers...



Two charities have bailed scores
of felony defendants out of Cook
County Jail. Some were soon...



Bears Q&A: Should Tar...
be traded? With no safe...
in the draft, what about...

BOOKS ENTERTAINMENT

Buy a book from your local indie bookstore. We're going to need them when the coronavirus lockdown is over.



By JOHN WARNER
CHICAGO TRIBUNE | APR 01, 2020



When it became clear that I would be sheltering in place for an extended period of time I knew I needed three things:

1. Baskin-Robbins mint chocolate chip ice cream.
2. Baskin-Robbins chocolate chip ice cream.
3. Books.

Baskin-Robbins ice cream has been one of my chief comfort foods ever since I can remember. I recognize there is higher quality ice cream in the world, but there is none better. I don't even eat it every day. I need to have it just in case.

ADVERTISEMENT



During the coronavirus lockdown, readers need to support local bookstores -- such as Evanston's Bookends & Beginnings shown here -- writes Bibliophile columnist John Warner. (Terrence Antonio James/Chicago Tribune)

Just like books.

The closing of non-essential retail stores is a necessity as we try to work collectively to minimize the hardship and death from the coronavirus pandemic, and as much as I believe books are essential, they aren't.

However, our independent bookstores are essential to the long-term health of our communities, and just like all local businesses, the current crisis is a threat.

[\[Most read\] Coronavirus in Illinois updates: Here's what's happening Wednesday with COVID-19 in the Chicago area »](#)

We are currently living through an object lesson in how important institutions are to the well-being of our communities and what happens when our most important institutions (like the presidency) don't uphold their responsibilities.

Promote health. Save lives. Visit who.int

ADVERTISEMENT

This is why I believe it is vital that those of us who are capable do what we can to help support our local businesses through this crisis. We're going to need them when we get the all-clear signal, and very few of them have the cushion to survive without revenue for weeks or months. Imagine leaving your home after a month inside and not having your favorite shop waiting for you.

The way to do that is to keep buying books. We've all got some extra time on our hands that needs occupying, so consider it a win-win.

Lots of [Chicago bookstores](#) are offering varieties of curbside pickup and home delivery.

For those who still prefer shopping online, now is a particularly great time to break any Amazon habit and switch to [Bookshop.org](#). [As I wrote previously](#), Bookshop is the Rebel Alliance to Amazon's Empire, and each purchase funnels proceeds to independent bookstores.

[\[Most read\] Illinois COVID-19 restrictions will ease Friday for nonessential retailers and animal groomers, but it won't be business as usual »](#)

Because of the crisis, Amazon has deprioritized the shipping of non-essential items, leading to potential month-long delays for books. For the time being, it is not the most timely and efficient way to get books shipped to your door. And sadly, Amazon workers are [falling ill](#) with the coronavirus, working in conditions that are likely not conducive to social distancing and infection prevention.

But Bookshop is filled with independent booksellers selling books. That's what they're there for.

To help encourage this transition and kick things off, I've opened the official The Biblioraacle Recommends Bookstore at [Bookshop.org](#). I'll have running lists of my most recent four weeks of recommended books from this space, as well as my steadily accruing books of the year.

I'll be adding more special lists as we go as I realize my dream of being a (virtual) bookseller. All the affiliate income I earn through The Biblioraacle Recommends Bookstore will be donated to Chicago's [Open Books](#), a non-profit literacy organization.

If you're anything like me, even if you are healthy and safe (knock wood), you've been feeling uncertain and overwhelmed about what's going on in the world, with more weeks of the unknown to come.

[\[Most read\] Two charities have bailed scores of felony defendants out of Cook County Jail. Some were soon charged with new crimes. »](#)

I know I feel better when I do what I can to help others. Helping our bookstores is something I can do.

ADVERTISEMENT

John Warner is the author of “Why They Can’t Write: Killing the Five-Paragraph Essay and Other Necessities.”

[Twitter @biblioracle](#)

Book recommendations from the Biblioracle

John Warner tells you what to read based on the last five books you’ve read.

1. **“The Rainbow”** by D.H. Lawrence

[\[Most read\] Bears Q&A: Should Tarik Cohen be traded? With no safety taken in the draft, what about free agent Tony Jefferson? And would the Bears add Cam Newton to the QB mix? »](#)

2. **“As I Lay Dying”** by William Faulkner

3. **“1984”** by George Orwell

4. **“The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power”** by Shoshana Zuboff

5. **“Cry. The Beloved Country”** by Alan Paton

— *Lucy D., Wheaton*

[\[Most read\] You voted for your favorite Chicago restaurants. Now meet the winners of our Readers’ Choice Dining Awards. »](#)

Yaa Gyasi has a new book coming out in the fall, which is exciting news for we fans of **“Homegoing”** — which I believe will appeal to Lucy.

1. **“The Western Wind”** by Samantha Harvey

2. **“Frankissstein”** by Jeanette Winterson

3. **“Nothing to See Here”** by Kevin Wilson

4. **“The Bear”** by Andrew Krivak