

Reading for Joy and Records  
Kris Wiley for The News-Review

I'm going to make my reading goal of 200 books in 2024. That's the most I've ever read in a year, and I look forward to exceeding that goal in 2025.

My reading pace always picks up at the end of the year, maybe because of the colder weather, maybe because I'm feeling the pressure to read just one more book. Either way, I have a lot of titles to share.

If you want to get in the holiday spirit, try "The Most Wonderful Crime of the Year" by Ally Carter. The cover evokes the madcap romantic comedies of the 1950s, and that's the feel of the book – with a mystery to boot.

Maggie is a bestselling author who still is raw after divorcing her cad of a husband. Ethan is the bestselling, leather-jacket-wearing author she loathes.

When they are whisked away to England to hang out with a famous mystery writer (think Agatha Christie), sparks fly, especially when said writer goes missing.

If you like the enemies-to-lovers trope, holiday reads and locked-room mysteries, this is the book for you.

Booker Prize winner "Orbital" by British author Samantha Harvey is a quiet, brief novel that contemplates the big picture, and I can't stop thinking about it.

Set 250 miles above Earth on a space station, "Orbital" features a day in the life of six astronauts and cosmonauts who circle the planet 16 times. There is no discord among the characters. Rather, the conflict comes from what they see and perceive is happening at home, from a tsunami gathering force in the South Pacific to wars to the death of one of the crew's parents.

One more selling point: The cover, an abstract illustration of planets and moons, is stunning.

Readers interested in armchair traveling with a police procedural may enjoy "May the Wolf Die" by debut novelist Elizabeth Heider, a U.S. physicist who lives in Europe.

Set in a gritty Naples, Italy, the book introduces Nikki Serafino, a Neapolitan whose work intersects the worlds of local police and American troops based in the seaport.

Serafino and her friend share a sailboat, and the first body turns up while they're out in the water. Serafino discovers the next body in a car as she's driving by.

Serafino doesn't believe in coincidences, and she is tapped to help navigate the investigations. Her sleuthing uncovers connections with her family; her first boyfriend,

now part of the criminal underworld; and her current love, a nightclub owner with some red flags of his own.

With a quick pace, likable protagonist and great sense of place, “May the Wolf Die” is a winning mystery.

#### Next week’s library events

Tuesday, December 17, 10 a.m. – Grab-and-go craft kits for kids

Tuesday, December 17, 10:15 a.m. – Lap-Sit Storytime with Aurora

Wednesday, December 18, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Wednesday, December 18, 3-5 p.m. – Teen Volunteer Hours

Thursday, December 19, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, December 19, 4-5 p.m. – Seasonal kids crafts

Thursday, December 19, 6:30 p.m. – Author Discussion Group: Amy Tan (email [kwiley@roseburgor.gov](mailto:kwiley@roseburgor.gov) for the Zoom link)