

News

Visiting authors to share newest books

BY SANDRA JENSON  
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School is back in session, and students aren't the only ones continuing their education while connecting with their peers.

The Sibley Public Library has organized three fall events that extend beyond the summer programs usually focused on younger readers.

Library director Catherine Nasers used a personal connection with one author and another author's contact to schedule two guest speakers just days apart.

Deb Mortensen

10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 27

Deb Mortensen will draw from 39 years of experience as an elementary educator to share a fun, family-friendly story hour featuring her book, "Not Me!," at the Sibley Public Library.

"Deb Mortensen is a friend of my mom, Julie Schuller," Nasers said. "My mom was mentioning she met up with Deb recently to celebrate her new book getting published. That immediately perked up my ears, so I got her business card from my mom and reached out to Deb."

Her years in the kindergarten classroom inspired the storyline for "Not Me!"

The students' tendency to deflect blame from themselves, often to an invisible instigator, provided



The Sibley Public Library has several programs planned for the fall, including presentations by two Iowa authors, Deb Mortensen and James Kenyon. File photo

a learning opportunity to help students take ownership of their actions, admit mistakes and tell the truth.

Her love of writing began early in life as she carried books, her Big Chief tablet and crayons wherever she went.

The retired teacher from Storm Lake has written hundreds of poems, skits and music programs and loves to journal daily.

She received recognition as "Iowa's Reading Teacher of the Year" in 1999 and has spoken on various literacy topics throughout the Midwest.

Reading and spending time with

children remain favorite activities, along with travel and music.

A copy of Mortensen's book is available for checkout at the library.

James Kenyon

5:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 29

The Sibley Public Library and the Ocheyedan Public Library are teaming up for an author visit from James Kenyon.

"James Kenyon reached out to us about speaking at our library. He let me know what his book was about, and that our local communities were included," Nasers said. "Other Iowa librarians have had

him speak at their library and had good experiences, so we decided to get something set up."

The retired veterinarian and writer hails from Cedar Falls.

His latest work, "Echoes in the Hallways," is a historical account of 102 former high schools in the state of Iowa that are no longer open.

He traveled to all of Iowa's 99 counties to visit at least one closed high school over 18 months. While some schools were still standing, many were long gone.

Kenyon supplemented county historical records with interviews of former students and staff members as he researched the book.

More than 1,000 Iowans shared their memories and the history of their towns and schools.

A story from each county is told in his book.

Kenyon also used interviews with 31 people when compiling a previous book, "The Immigrant Next Door." Four additional books have been penned by Kenyon on the topics of closed Kansas schools, animals and farm life in the 1950s.

He is a seven-time veterinarian for the Alaska Iditarod Dog Sled Race, was named Iowa Veterinarian of the Year in 2009, and was the state president of the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association as well as the chairman of the Iowa Veterinary Medical Examining Board.

Kenyon continues his family tra-

dition of community involvement with 24 years of service as a school board member.

Nasers plans to add Kenyon's book to the library's collection when he visits.

"Authors often have books available for purchase when they do talks like this and we like to purchase directly from them because it ensures the majority of the profit goes directly to them," she said.

Community Book Club

3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 25,  
at McCallum Museum

Join Sibley Public Library staff and book club participants for an afternoon at the museum for the next #SibleyReads Community Book Club event.

The club format allows for one-time-only attendance or coming to the quarterly meetings throughout the year.

"We have three incredible titles to choose from for our fall meetup with copies available at the library," Nasers said. "Pick one up and join us on Oct. 25."

The book selections are:

■ "Clara and Mr. Tiffany" by Susan Vreeland (historical fiction).

■ All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me" by Patrick Bringley (autobiography).

■ "The Book Thief" by Markus Zusak (historical fiction).

Program addresses those facing loss during holidays

BY SANDRA JENSON  
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As fall weather begins to settle in, many people start looking ahead to holiday preparations.

For some, however, the season portrayed as the most wonderful time of the year is anything but if they find themselves in the midst of grieving the loss of a loved one.

Causes of grief can come suddenly or after a period of preparation but may result in an overwhelming experience for many as they adjust to loss.

First Presbyterian Church in Sibley is offering the GriefShare program to provide support to those coping with grief. It will be led by Dean Popkes and youth pastor Jordan Geffre.

"It gives a helping hand to those that are having trouble coping with grief and it gives a boost and comfort and peace," Popkes said.

The fall program consists of a one session evening on Tuesday, Nov. 4, to introduce the program and help new or former GriefShare participants learn ways to cope during the upcoming holiday season, especially if it's the first holiday

AT A GLANCE:

What: GriefShare

When: 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 4

Where: First Presbyterian Church,  
601 Sixth Ave., Sibley

Registration: Free

Contact: First Presbyterian Church,  
712-754-3126

Online: [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)

without their loved one.

"It gives you ways to kind of change up your celebration and make it more comforting for you and tells you it's all right to skip something if that will bring discomfort," Popkes said.

Program support can also help cope with the question of why.

"Do not forget to talk about it. A lot of people will lock it in, won't talk, won't even mention their name," Popkes said. "They're not here, but they're still in your heart and in your mind."

There is no registration fee, but organizers request that those planning to attend contact the church office at 712-754-3126 to ensure there are sufficient materials. The program is open to all ages, and to



First Presbyterian Church in Sibley will host a single-night session of GriefShare on Tuesday, Nov. 4, to help people prepare for the holiday season after losing a loved one. A full series of GriefShare will be held in early 2026. Photo by Sandra Jenson

everyone in the surrounding area, not just Sibley.

GriefShare is designed for those grieving the passing of someone close to them. While individuals experience other losses that can cause grief, such as a job loss, divorce, estrangement or physical separation, these are not the types

of situations discussed in the GriefShare sessions.

After a loss, friends and family often want to help but don't know how. GriefShare can fill that gap with caring leaders who have experienced grief and have persevered. They are ready to give their support on the long path through grief

toward healing.

A full series of 13 GriefShare sessions will begin early in 2026.

During each weekly session, participants view a video seminar by leading grief recovery experts. Other aspects of the GriefShare experience include small group discussions in a supportive setting and a workbook for journaling and personal study exercises.

Popkes has helped lead several sessions of the program and sees improvement in those attending during the duration of the program. He said it is beneficial to talk to people who have been through a loss and added the videos are a wonderful help.

"The more people that come, the better the discussion, because you have more variety in there," Popkes said. "You don't have to talk, but most of the time, you'll end up saying something. By the end, everyone has comfort and peace."

GriefShare is a nondenominational network of more than 15,000 churches worldwide that features biblical concepts for healing from grief.

Learn more at [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org).

To my family  
and friends,  
  
Thank you  
for making  
my birthday a  
memorable event.  
  
May the Lord  
bless you,  
  
Shirley  
Hindt

e-Editions  
available online  
  
PHOENIX  
Sioux Center  
SHOPPER  
  
Golden Shopper  
  
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We can stop HIV, Iowa—  
by using the prevention  
methods that work best for us!

- Find a healthcare provider  
you can talk to openly about  
your sexual health.
- Make HIV prevention &  
testing part of your journey.
- Practice safer sex by using  
condoms correctly every time.
- Get in care. Stay in care.  
If you're living with HIV, take your  
HIV medicine as prescribed to  
protect your health & your partners.

Learn more at  
[stophiviowa.org](http://stophiviowa.org)

NOTICE  
TO ALL PROPERTY TAXPAYERS  
TAXES ARE  
NOW DUE

The 1st installment of the 2025-2026 property tax is now due. Taxes must be paid by Tuesday, September 30, 2025, or have a September postmark to avoid penalty, except when the last day of September falls on a Saturday or Sunday, in which case taxes become delinquent on the 2<sup>nd</sup> business day of the following month. Interest of 1½% per month will apply October 1, 2025, to any unpaid taxes. \*Credit and debit cards are now accepted in the office and e-check and credit card payments are accepted online at:

[www.iowatreasurers.org](http://www.iowatreasurers.org)

Becky S. Marco  
Osceola County Treasurer

\*A user convenience fee will apply.

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