The Open Door
Newsletter
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Holiday 2026
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Editor: Lynn Blankman



Season's greetings to all

We say this every year and we mean it: Books make the best gifts! Start your list-making here: (Available now or as noted.)

✳ Julianne Edwards's unforgettable début novel ***Odette Rising*** (my fave of the year!) is the story of an extraordinary French woman in 1896 who goes from having hidden herself away in her home for 10 years to finding her courage and a new life, engaging with the world, and becoming part of a found family of women willing to flout tradition and take their fates into their own hands. $30

✳ Bestselling author Michael Lewis (*The Big Short*, *Moneyball*) turns his focus to the federal civil servants who resisted The Department of Government Efficiency in ***Blockers***, following a small cast of civil servants – a tax official, a scientist, a security guard, and others – who frustrated the administration's worst impulses as they were wiped out by DOGE. $29.99

✳ In Kim van Alkamede's poignant and heartwarming new novel, ***Upstate***, 34-year- old Audrey is a grieving writer who uproots her life during lockdown to reopen an old bookstore in upstate New York and uncovers a series of letters chronicling a sapphic relationship starting in 1956 between a librarian and a magazine writer. Woven across two timelines, this beautifully written story affirms our shared humanity, the power of stories, and the saving grace of opening our hearts. 10/27 $19.99

✳ In his real, raw, and deeply honest memoir, ***One Helluva Ride***, Hollywood icon Michael Douglas breaks down 12 of his most iconic films, and gives us the full, unfiltered story of the chaos – the difficult childhood, broken marriage, addiction, cancer – that was unfolding behind the scenes. $35

✳ The California gold rush is an origin story of modern America: a tale of dizzying wealth accumulation, private-sector impositions on democracy, and xenophobia weaponized by opportunists. Nathaniel Philbrick's revelatory ***The Rush*** suggests how this pivotal period in U.S. history edged a still-new nation closer to civil war. $38

✳ Imagine how legendary playwright and poet Oscar Wilde would have lived his life had he not been imprisoned, exiled from England, and died in his forties. Now John Boyne's magnificent novel ***The Weight of Angels*** creates the life he could have led. Boyne imagines what would have happened if Oscar were alive to bear witness to the momentous events of the first half of the 20th century – how would his life have turned out, what might he have written, whom might he have met? This is one of the greatest "what if" stories ever, giving Oscar a new voice and the opportunity to take an entirely different path through a world that would change beyond recognition in a few short decades. $30.99

✳ From Alexander Graham Bell to Steve Jobs – with many detours along the way – James Gleick's ***The Telephone*** offers an exhaustive history of the little rectangle in your pocket that reshaped the modern world. 11/10 $35

✳ ***America Obscura***, edited by Doug Baldinger and Louise Story, is a journey to the strange, fantastic, and beautiful corners of the United States in search of the country's folk rituals and roadside museums, its outsider artists and eccentric prophets, its forgotten dreamers and improbable visionaries. Equal parts travel companion and cultural almanac, this is the definitive guide to America's hidden marvels. 11/10 $40

Lily Bartels
Book buyer

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Books for young people

✳ ***Tom and Momo***, Akiko Miyakoshi. Tom and Momo have moved to the same apartment building, but they haven't met yet. We see them in spread after spread just missing each other. Then, on Christmas Eve, Tom sees a girl wearing yellow, just like him. Later, Momo sees a boy wearing yellow, just like her. Will this be the day they finally meet? A heartwarming story that captures the joy of making a new friend. $19.99

✳ ***It's Christmas Time***, Birgitta Sif. Little Bear and Mom are getting ready for Christmas. When their tree is a little wobbly, their homemade ornaments make the tree perfect. When Little Bear doesn't want to leave an afternoon of sledding, Mom reminds her that the memories will always stay in her heart. And when they bake Christmas gingerbread, Little Bear realizes the most important ingredient in the recipe is love. A beautiful collection of stories, recipes, and craft activities that celebrate the joy of being together at Christmas. $19.99

✳ ***Hector Fox and the Snowy Surprise***, Astrid Sheckels. Winter has come to the Green Wood, and Hector and his friends are busy preparing for a festive celebration. But when howling winds and wild snows arrive, the friends get lost in the storm. In their newest, snowiest adventure, Hector and his woodland crew must rely on each other and their courage more than ever as they discover that friendship is one of the greatest gifts of all. $19.95

✳ ***This Is Not a Christmas Book* (*This Is a Book About Rocks)***, Jory John, Pierre Collet-Derby. This is not a Christmas book. Just so you know. Just so we're clear. This is a book about rocks. But wait. Why is there an elf hiding behind that piece of granite over there? And what are those reindeer doing? And … just a minute … who's that guy with the twinkle in his eye? Could it be … Santa? This laugh-out-loud picture book will bring giggles to everyone. $19.99

✳ ***Jingle, How the Littlest Reindeer Earned Her Bells***, MacKenzie Cadenhead, Erin Kaan. In the magical North Pole, little Jingle has one big dream: to earn her magic bells and fly with Santa's team. But in a world full of mighty and strong reindeer, Jingle is a little … well, small. When the annual Reindeer Games put her to the test, will Jingle be able to show there's more than one way to shine? $18.99

✳ ***A Snowy Hanukkah for Luz***, Ruth Behar, Marjorie Priceman. Luz is helping her Abuelito and Abuelita celebrate the festival of lights. As Luz and Abuelita walk to the bodega to buy potatoes for latkes, they talk about the miracle of Hanukkah – and how each of the candles represents an everyday miracle ... like the kindness of community and the tradition of sharing stories. A joyful multi-generational story that celebrates both Ashkenazi and Sephardic traditions. $18.99

Kathleen Kemp
Children's book buyer

Dear friends,

We love the holiday season every year – seeing happy reunions in our aisles *and* helping you find that perfect book or gift.

Check out "Holiday Shopping –2026" on the opposite page to see the many ways you can shop at The Open Door and what our staff can do to help make your shopping less stressful and more fun. Of course, a book is always the perfect gift!

Is your favorite non-profit organization looking for a fun way to raise funds? Ask us about our popular "Shop-2-gether" program in December. "Shop-2-gether" and our annual "Giving Tree" program, which provides books for children at Northeast Parent and Child Society (Northern Rivers), are our way of giving back to the community with our thanks for supporting local businesses.

We hope that you and your friends and family have a wonderful holiday season with plenty of time to relax – and enjoy a good book!

Janet Hutchison
Owner



'Tis the season for toys

Need toys? We have them! Check out our new and unique selection for holiday gift giving.

✳ **Sensory and developmental**: tactile and visual toys for the young

✳ **Art**: sketchbooks, paints, color-by-number kits

✳ **Puzzles**: wide range in number of pieces and scenes from eeBoo and Petit Collage

✳ **Games**: plentiful!

✳ **Silly fun:** lots!

✳ **Folkmanis puppets:** wild and wondrous!

✳ **Stocking stuffers**

And **yes**, we have **JELLYCATS!**

Lynnea
Toy buyer



Holiday shopping – 2026

The Open Door Bookstore and Gift Gallery make holiday shopping fun!

✳ Our carefully curated selections of books, home and personal accessories, toys, cards, jewelry, gourmet food items, and sweets offer a gift for everyone on your list.

✳ Holiday items? We carry poppers, mugs, wrap, gift bags, and more for home festivities or gift giving.

✳ We open daily at 10 am.

✳ We are happy to ship books and unbreakable items within the United States via FedEx or US Priority mail.

✳ We offer ready-made gift bundles or can assist you in creating a bundle or basket of your own choosing.

✳ Books and gift certificates can be ordered on our website (www.opendoor-bookstore.com). We can also offer assistance by phone (518-346-2719) or e-mail (general@opendoor-bookstore.com).

✳ We offer gift certificates that do not expire.

✳ Our knowledgeable, friendly staff is here to personally assist you for stress-free shopping.

Shop local and support your community!

Calendar

Holiday Open House:

✳ **Saturday, Nov. 14, 10 am-5 pm**: 20% off holiday items.

✳ **Sunday, Nov. 15, 10 am-2 pm**: 20% off holiday items, prize drawings, refreshments.

Saturday, Nov. 21, 1-2:30 pm: Phil Bailey will sign ***A Southern Slope, A Murder on Skis Mystery***.

Saturday, Dec. 5, 1-2:30 pm: Kim Van Alkemade will sign ***Upstate: A Novel***. (*See review on page 1.*)

Saturday, Dec. 12, 1-2:30 pm: Paul O'Brien will sign ***Soft Earth Beneath the Plow.***

Join us this year in lending a hand

Please join us in helping others in our community during the holiday season. Buy a children's paperback book (at 20% off) for **The Giving Tree** project by Dec. 15, and we'll deliver it to Northeast Parent and Child Society (Northern Rivers).



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Gifts that give back

The holidays are a time for sharing. We carry a diverse selection of **Fair Trade** items, and many of the companies whose merchandise we offer support worthwhile causes. Here are a few:

Blu Bags and dishtowels	Ocean conservancy
Blue Q	Doctors Without Borders and wildlife preservation
Conscious Step Socks	Various ecological and humanitarian organizations
Danica Now Designs	Giving World Foundation
E. Frances	Multiple organizations
Folkmanis Puppets	Wildlife rehab, schools, zoos, shelters
Jasey's Toy Chest	Youth mental health and suicide prevention
North Ave Candles	Books for prisoners and other organizations
Positively Green greeting cards	Conservation efforts
Scout Curated Wears	Organizations that support women
Seattle Chocolate	Hunger
Swahili Imports items	Harambee Centre
Werkshoppe	Nationwide art education programs

In addition, many of our companies are eco-friendly, sustainable, woman-owned, and not on Amazon.