



### **For more information**

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## **Orange County Library System to kick off 2022 NEA Big Read**

*Orange County book lovers will come together to read and celebrate Jack London's *The Call of the Wild**

[Orlando, Florida — December 7, 2021] Orange County Library System launches its National Endowment for the Arts Big Read program exploring *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London on Sunday, January 9, at 2 p.m. with a Q&A with Iditarod champion Libby Riddles. The NEA Big Read in Orange County is presented in partnership with Valencia College, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The kick-off event will feature a livestreamed Q&A with Riddles, who became the first woman to win the Iditarod, a 1,000-mile sled dog race in Alaska, in 1985. Riddles will share stories from her career and answer questions. The event will be available virtually, and it will also be livestreamed in person in Library Central at Orlando Public Library.

*"The Call of the Wild* is a story about survival against all odds, and it has captured people's imaginations since it was first published in 1903," said Vanessa Neblett, Learning Central Manager for Orange County Library System. "Our Big Read programming will explore topics that relate to survival, adventure and our relationship with the outdoors. We look forward to seeing the kinds of conversations and discussions this year's Big Read inspires."

An initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book.

Orange County Library System is one of 61 communities nationwide participating in the 2021–2022 NEA Big Read. From January 9, 2022 through February 9, 2022, our community will celebrate *The Call of the Wild* with a full calendar of events, including *Dogs and Writing: A Very Brief History*; *Ordinary Wolves*, *Extraordinary Art*; *Two Old Women: An Athabaskan Legend* and more. There will also be book talks, Project WILD events for children and sewing classes focused on *The Call of the Wild*-themed projects. On February 5, Chickasaw Branch will host a livestreamed keynote presentation with Les Stroud, creator and star of Discovery Channel's *Survivorman*.

You can view a full calendar of events for the NEA Big Read in Orange County at [ocls.info/bigread](https://ocls.info/bigread) or call the library at 407-835-7323 for more information.

**About Orange County Library System**

*Orange County Library System is a public library system that operates 15 locations in Orange County, Florida. Its mission is to create a learning environment that fosters personal growth and development so that customers have opportunities to learn, explore and become the best that they can be. For more information about the Orange County Library system, visit [ocls.info](http://ocls.info). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*

**About the National Endowment for the Arts** *Established by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit [arts.gov](http://arts.gov) to learn more.*

**Arts Midwest** *promotes creativity, nurtures cultural leadership, and engages people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people's lives. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six non-profit regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest's history spans more than 35 years. For more information, visit [artsmidwest.org](http://artsmidwest.org).*

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