



## Meet One Book author J. Ryan Stradal

J. Ryan Stradal grew up in the Midwest, in the southern Minnesota town of Hastings, where he often failed his driver's license exams, and graduated from Northwestern University, where he often slipped on the ice. He does not own a gun and a motorcycle, which makes him unique among the men in his extended family.

His first novel, *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*, was published by Viking/Pamela Dorman Books on July 28, 2015, and reached *The New York Times* Hardcover Best Seller list at #19 on its third week of release. So far, *Kitchens* has been acquired for publication overseas in ten countries (Brazil, Finland, Germany, Holland, Israel, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom). In November 2014, the Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society awarded *Kitchens of the Great Midwest* first prize in their annual novel competition. In September 2015, Warner Bros. optioned the film/TV rights. He's grateful for the places that have put it on their 2015 best-of lists. All of this feels really, really strange to him.

His shorter writing has appeared in Hobart, The Wall Street Journal, The Guardian, The Los Angeles Review of Books, Buzzfeed, Joyland, McSweeney's Internet Tendency, The Rattling Wall, The Nervous Breakdown, Goodreads, Monkeybicycle, The California Prose Directory (2013), American Short Fiction (online), Knee-Jerk Magazine, This Recording, NFL.com, and in McSweeney's The Goods. He also contributed field reports for the serialized iPad/iPod novel "The Silent History."

A selection of his short stories, compiled under the title *Nerd & Whore are Friends*, was a 2013 finalist in the Dzanc Books Short Story Collection Competition. His short fiction has also been anthologized, nominated for a Pushcart Prize, and named a finalist for the James Kirkwood Literary Prize.

He works as the fiction editor at *The Nervous Breakdown* and as an editor-at-large at Unnamed Press in Los Angeles. He was also editor of the 2014 California Prose Directory, an anthology of writing about California by California writers, published by Outpost19.

He has often worked in television, story editing or producing shows for VH-1, MTV, ABC, FOX, TLC, A&E, Discovery, and History. Since 2008, he's worked as the senior story producer on Deadliest Catch and Ice Road Truckers and as a supervising producer on IRT: Deadliest Roads, Storage Wars, and Storage Wars: Texas.

He was also associate producer on Chad Hartigan's film *This Is Martin Bonner*, which won the Audience Award for Best Of NEXT at the Sundance Film Festival in 2013.

He likes books, wine, sports, root beer, and peas.

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#### KITCHENS of the GREAT MIDWEST

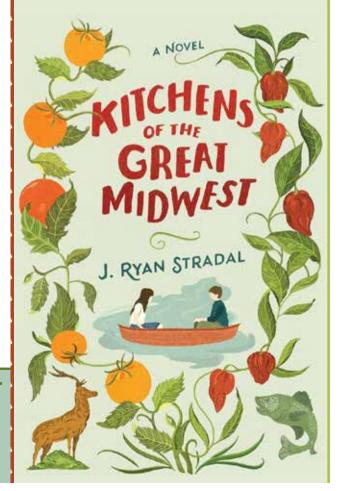
is available in multiple formats at Mesa County Libraries.

Multiple copies of this year's One Book selection are available in hardback, large print, and audiobook. We also have several copies available in e-audio and ebook for checkout. All you need is a library card, available at no charge at your nearest library location.

The title of J. Ryan Stradal's Kitchens of the Great Midwest would suggest that this may be a novel that has something to do with food. Wow, does it ever. There is the popular polar delicacy known as lutefisk (if you don't know, don't ask). There are conversations breaking down the minutiae of fine wines. There is the exotic extravagance of "pop-up" dining. There's even a good ol' hot sauce eating contest. And these are but a mere sampling of the epicurean adventures to be found within its pages. It's like being handed a remote control to the greatest food channel ever.

But it would be a mistake to give the impression that food is all the novel is about. Even if you aren't a "foodie," and have no desire to become one, the book has much to offer. The writing style is engaging and accessible; Stradal is able to evoke a place or person with just a few, deftly drawn strokes. The story is very relatable but not without its quirks and surprises. However, the characters are the real heart of the book. Just the sheer number and variety of them in a relatively average-sized novel is impressive. But it is how Stradal choreographs their movements during the course of the narrative that is the book's biggest strength. Characters' lives intertwine as they move in and out of the story. They come and go, occurring and reoccurring, and just when you think one is out of the picture for good—there they are again.

The novel's main character in this coming-of-age story is Eva. Eva, orphaned as a very young child, finds herself in a world of caring people who largely do not appreciate or know what to do with her almost superhuman sense of taste and an imaginative palette that allows her to conjure up incredible food. The book follows chapter by chapter, ingredient by ingredient, the journey Eva's gift takes her on.







# OF WHAT'S TO COME

This year's One Book selection is unlike any other. Centered around its connection between family and food, Kitchens of the Great Midwest is a delectable piece of fiction.

To help bring the book to life, this year's event lineup

covers everything from northern Europe's influence over midwestern culture to the family and community dynamics of adoption.

Discuss the literary merits of the book with CMU English professors T.J. Gerlach and Jennifer Hancock, and fellow community members. Watch films exploring the themes of this year's selection. As with all One Books, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

A major theme of Kitchens of the Great Midwest centers around the world of culinary art. Many of our events explore food as both a tasty treat and as a bigger cultural influence.

As many of you know, western Colorado is home to

some of the nation's best farms and orchards. What may come as a surprise though is the region is also celebrated for its vintners, brewers, distillers, and

Learn about locally sourced food options from

nationally recognized, local chefs Matt Chasseur, Executive Chef at High Lonesome Ranch in De Beque, and Josh Niernberg, Executive Chef and owner of Bin 707 Foodbar

Celebrated chefs Brunella Gualerzi. executive chef and owner of Il Bistro Italiano, and Wayne Smith, executive chef and professor at the WCCC Culinary Arts program, help explain both the science behind taste and also

the culinary influences behind midwestern cooking.

All One Book programs are open to the public at no charge and, unless noted, take place in the Central Library Community Room.

Good reading and bon appétit!



#### DOKDISCUSSION

Book discussions are hosted by One Book committee members and are open to the public at no charge. Share your thoughts about Kitchens of the Great Midwest, or just listen to learn more about the book.

CLIFTON BRANCH - 3 p.m., Tuesday, February 9 COLLBRAN BRANCH - 6 p.m., Thursday, February 18 DE BEQUE BRANCH - 11 a.m., Saturday, February 20 FRUITA BRANCH - 3 p.m., Tuesday, February 9 ORCHARD MESA BRANCH - 1 p.m., Saturday, February 20 CENTRAL LIBRARY - 6 p.m. Thursday, February 25 PALISADE BRANCH - 10 a.m., Saturday, February 27

#### SCHEDULE

ALL EVENTS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT NO CHARGE

#### FEB 4 - the UPPER MIDWEST and its SCANDINAVIAN INFLUENCES

6 p.m., Thursday, Central Library

Join us for a broad conversation about the upper Midwest, especially its Scandinavian-American culture. The panel features two Midwesterners with Scandinavian ancestry: Dr. Brenda Wilhelm, a sociologist from Wisconsin and Minnesota, and Dr. Erika Jackson, a historian from Michigan. Then Dr. Isabella Kasselstrand, a sociologist from Sweden, will compare this culture with that of contemporary Sweden.

#### FEB 7 - MOVIE SERIES

1:30 p.m., Sunday, Central Library

Explore the themes of Kitchens...through film. Visit the One Book website or your local branch for movie description and title.

#### FEB 11 - SCIENCE of TASTE

6 p.m., Thursday, Central Library

Explore how and why humans taste, how different foods and spices combine to create flavors, and how wine and beverages enhance the total experience. Panelists include Josh Matteson, the wine manager at Fisher's Liquor Barn, who has extensive wine-and-food pairing training; Dr. Kelly Craig, Assistant Professor of Biology at CMU with a specialty in mitochondria, thus taking food consumption down to the cellular level; and Wayne Smith from the Culinary Arts program at WCCC, who is a Certified Executive Chef and has 30 years' experience in food service.

#### FEB 14 - MOVIE SERIES

1:30 p.m., Sunday, Central Library

Explore the themes of Kitchens...through film. Visit the One Book website or your local branch for movie description and title.

#### FEB 16 - the ADOPTION PROCESS: IMPACTING INDIVIDUALS. FAMILIES, and the COMMUNITY

6 p.m., Tuesday, Central Library How does adoption change a child's life? How often do adult children and their birth parents connect? Join local adoption experts Kathy McCoy, Adoption Program Supervisor at Ariel Clinical Services, and Elizabeth Shaver, a local family practice attorney who guides families through the adoption process, to discuss adoption in Eva's life and here in Mesa County.

#### FEB 21 - MOVIE SERIES

1:30 p.m., Sunday, Central Library

Explore the themes of Kitchens...through film. Visit the One Book website or your local branch for movie description and title.

#### FEB 23 - LOCAL FOODS: FROM FARM to PLATE

6 p.m., Tuesday, Central Library

Learn about our amazing local food variety from Matt Chasseur, Executive Chef at High Lonesome Ranch; Josh Niernberg, Executive Chef/owner of Bin 707 Foodbar; Blaine Diffendaffer, owner of Blaine's Tomatoes & Farm; Erin McIntyre, features reporter and Home and Garden columnist at The Daily Sentinel; and Robin Brown, owner of West Slope Events and organizer of several successful local pop-up dinner events.

#### FEB 28 - MOVIE SERIES

1:30 p.m., Sunday, Central Library

Explore the themes of *Kitchens*...through film. Visit the One Book website or your local branch for movie description and title.

#### MAR 1 - a LITERARY LOOK at "KITCHENS of the **GREAT MIDWEST"**

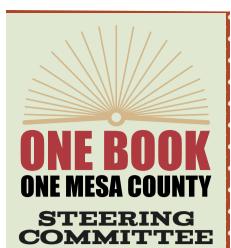
6 p.m., Tuesday, Central Library

Since Kitchens of the Great Midwest came out last summer, the book has received much praise and has been on many "Top Reads of 2015" lists, including Amazon's best 100 books of the year, and an Editor's Choice book in The New York Times. Join three expert readers in a discussion of the literary merits of the book: CMU English professors T.J. Gerlach and Jennifer Hancock, and Il Bistro Italiano owner and chef, Brunella Gualerzi. **Event Sponsored by The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel.** 

#### MAR 5 - J. RYAN STRADAL AUTHOR EVENT

7 p.m., Saturday, Avalon Theatre

Hear author J. Ryan Stradal talk about Kitchens of the Great Midwest. There is no charge for this event. Doors open at 6 p.m.



Angie Allen, co-chair Rachel Hanson, co-chair Janine Rider, co-chair Donna Bettencourt **Esther Broughton** Betsy Brodak Lynn Silipigni Connaway Betsey Dick TJ Gerlach David Goe Laura Mettauer Barbara Roberts

#### SPECIAL **THANKS**

Barnes & Noble Cat Mayer City of Grand Junction Dufford, Waldeck, Milburn & Krohn Friends of the Mesa County Libraries **Beckie Giles** Lori Henricksen

**Contact One Book through Mesa County** Libraries, 970-243-4442, or visit mesacountylibraries.org.



**Mesa County** PUBLIC LIBRARY **FOUNDATION** 





## Celebrating 12 YEARS of ONE BOOK

### Memorable moments from twelve great One Books

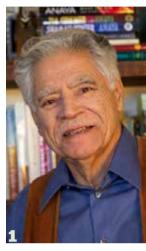
One Book. One Mesa County thanks you. our faithful readers, for twelve years of stimulating literary company.

Thanks to Mesa County's wonderful readers, One Book has enjoyed 12 successful years. You have supported reading in our community with your thoughtful discussions, insightful questions and strong attendance at programs.

From our first book, Bless Me, Ultima, which featured Chicano culture and folk medicine. to last year's Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?, we have journeyed around the world and have discussed themes such as grief, love, tragedy, honor and happiness.

One Book, One Mesa County believes that a community that reads together grows together. We have all grown together in each other's company. We are thankful for all your support and we hope you enjoy Kitchens of the Great Midwest as much as we did.

- 1. Rudolfo Anaya kicks off One Book with one of his last public presentations in 2004.
- 2. Readers pack the Avalon Theatre for John Grogan's author presentation.
- 3. Home-grown author Aryn Kyle returns to Grand Junction for year four.
- 4. Jonathan Safran Foer speaks to high school and college writers at the CMU campus.
- 5. Ruth Ozeki leads a 400-person meditation session before her author presentation.
- 6. Author Roz Chast cracks up the audience with her brilliant and colorful cartoons.













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# SPIRITS, SAVORIES & SONGS

#### **RESERVE YOUR TICKETS TODAY! \$30** for one **\$50** for two

Sample the best food and craft drinks from Mesa County's best restaurants, breweries, wineries, and distilleries, and mingle with One Book author J. Ryan Stradal. All proceeds support the Mesa County Public Library Foundation.

6:30 P.M., FRIDAY, MARCH 4 **CENTRAL LIBRARY** 

For tickets and more information call 970-243-4442

