

Love is in the air (and not in a Harlequin novel kind of way). February may be one of the dreariest months in New England, but we can try and make the best of it. Personally, I like to take on a new challenge in February. I recently read David Sax's "Revenge of Analog." Sax makes some decent arguments for the comeback (or staying power) of some of our favorite pastimes including listening to vinyl records, shooting film photography and using paper and pen. In this fast-paced, digital age, some of us might yearn for a more quiet and fulfilling hobby. I am immersed in technology most of the day, so there is something nostalgic about using my hands and mind to complete a project.

Now might be the time to learn a new language. If you can't seem to tear yourself away from that smartphone or tablet, try *Mango Languages*. This program is free, thanks to your local library. Two years ago I took a chance with French and was able to learn *très vite!* While you listen and recite French, occupy those hands with a beginner's knitting project. If you find yourself tangled in yarn, stop by a local library's knitting group. Members can help you with that drop stitch and give you some tips to take home.

During winter, I like to flip through old family albums. As the years pass, we forget when, where or why. Heart-warming stories are shared over holiday dinner, but how will we ever remember it all? Try writing in a journal. You don't have to pen your memoir. Just write down your favorite memories. If you wish to travel a bit deeper into your family history, the local library offers free access to [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com). Perhaps now would be a great time for a genealogy project.

Looking for something a bit more quirky? Try browsing the stacks of non-fiction at the library. There are copious numbers of books on popular hobbies and maybe even some with a niche that might suit you. Kaori Tsutaya's "Crafting with cat hair: cute handicrafts to make with your cat" is unbelievable. Even if you aren't a cat lover, check out this book. You won't believe the crafts Tsutaya makes using her cat's fur.

For you real book lovers out there, maybe you'd like to share books with your community. Try building your very own little library. Little libraries became popular in 2009. Essentially you build a small wooden box on a post, full of books that you leave at the edge of your property. Passersby can take and leave a book as they please. Margret Aldrich's "The Little Free Library Book" is a great way to start. Aldrich shares her reasoning for why these little libraries are so important and will lend (excuse the pun) you the basic guidelines on their construction.

And finally, this is undoubtedly the best time of year for cooking and baking. Cooking (and eating) happen to be two of my favorite pastimes. I am simply overwhelmed by the number of cookbooks out there. While at a library conference in 2016, I learned that library cookbook clubs are very popular right now. Generally the librarian assigns a book and members sign up for a recipe. I never would have imagined in a million years I'd be allowed to eat in the library. Shakespeare once wrote "small cheer and a great welcome makes a merry feast." So please do join us at the library!

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