

January 2026

Kia ora koutou,

Hope you have all had a lovely month and found some sunshine during this particularly rainy January.

We have an exciting year coming up at the Athenaeum. I will be connecting with Melbourne UNESCO City of Literature for their annual Literary Programmers Roundtable event in May.

I am looking into organising some creative writing workshops, which will be accessible to anyone interested. I will also be planning a steady stream of interesting events. All updates will be on our social media pages, website and monthly newsletters.

If you would like to start a book club or host a meeting in the library, then please feel free to get in touch.

Holly

### What's Happening

AGM followed by a Salon for Athenaeum members.

Join us for a celebration of our library and some of its treasures.

Refreshments provided.

Thursday March 19<sup>th</sup>

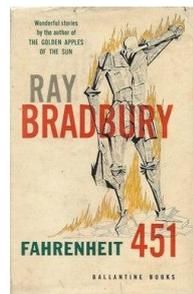
Times and RSVP email will be sent out in February.

As of the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, we will be opening the library every Friday between 10am- 2pm.

### Book Review

**Fahrenheit 451**  
By Ray Bradbury

While reshelving some books last week I came across *Fahrenheit 451* tucked in amongst the sci-fi fantasy section. It's one of those novels that's been on my *must read* list. And here it was, a slight sized book that has sparked a lot of controversy since its first publication in 1953.



Several months back, I learned about a group of American librarians who are pushing back against the removal of literature from school libraries. More information on this can be found [here](#). The banning of literature is deeply troubling and reflects an archaic mentality that seeks to repress society. Ray Bradbury explores this mindset in *Fahrenheit 451*. Like Orwell and Huxley, Bradley writing has an uncanny resonance with the world we live in today.

The book is a fantastic imagining of a dystopian American future— particularly from a writer in the 1950s—a future devoid of individuality, empathy, intellectual nourishment and freedom. The characters are completely absorbed within their parlors, spaces designed for total immersion in audio and visual media. Constantly occupied by the noise of their parlors and the pursuit of entertainment, people have become deeply disconnected from themselves and from the terrifying reality of the world.

Guy Montag is a fireman whose job is to burn books. Unable to ignore a growing sense of unease, he begins to question his loss of memory, his sense of self and why he burns books. He meets a man called Faber who further inspires him to take action – “I don't talk *things*, sir... I talk the *meaning of things*. I sit here and *know* I'm alive”

Amidst some wonderful quotes, there are also patches of clumsy dialogue. Whether this was intentional or there to reiterate the depletion of language is debatable. The novel is very much of its time regarding women. However, despite these failings, the book is a reminder that the loss of power is as much the responsibility of the individual as it is the governments.

This edition includes an interesting reflection from the author, describing his time writing the book at the University of California, library.