

According to the Library Journal the following books are considered to be the best of 2009 in the Science-Tech field.

The book, *Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human*, by Richard Wrangham, shows how cooking has been a vital part of humanity and will always continue to be. Wrangham presents an alternate way of thinking about how cooking food contributed to the evolution of humans. When our hominid ancestors began cooking and eating food, their digestive tracts shrank and their brains grew. Spending less time chewing raw food allowed more time to hunt and tend to the camps. According to the author, cooking became the basis for bonding, pairing up and marriage. It also created the household and led to the sexual division of labor. The information in this book will surely cause some controversy, but it will also fascinate those who are interested in ancient origins and perhaps our own modern eating habits.

*Reading in the Brain*, by Stanislas Dehaene, investigates how ink applied on paper and put together with a particular sound can suggest meaning to the entire universe. The brain's cortex is the product of millions of years of evolution in a world that was originally without writing. How does the brain recognize words and symbols? How is language processed? The book reveals the hidden logic behind spelling and the decoding of words in any font or size. This cutting edge research by a renowned cognitive neuroscientist is both fascinating and informational.

*Collider: The Search for the World's Smallest Particles*, by Paul Halpern starts off with a crash course in physics. The author then explains what the collider is, how it works, and what scientists hope to discover by using it. Can colliding particles at ultra high speeds cause mini black holes in space? Is the collider really thought of as the doomsday machine? Find out these answers and more by reading this unbelievable book.

*On Thin Ice: The Changing World of the Polar Bear*, by Richard Ellis, brings to the forefront the seriousness of global warming and the effect it has had on the polar ice regions. The ice in the arctic is melting fast, compromising the polar bears ability to search for food. Their strength is incredible but without the floating ice, they are unable to pursue any food. They often drown because the swim between the ice can be long. The population of the polar bear today is half of what it should be. Unfortunately for the polar bears, they reside on top of oil and other natural resources. The author explains that if the polar bear were to become a protected endangered species, their living territory would become off limits to the oil rigging companies, and the government is not willing to interfere with that effort just yet. This is an excellent read with full color photographs of some very majestic bears.

Other books of interest are: Paradise Found by Steve Nicholls, Storms of my Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity by James Hansen, The Department of Mad Scientists: How Darpa (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) is remaking our world, from the internet to artificial limbs by Michael Belifore, Rewilding the world: Dispatches from the Conservation Revolution by Caroline Fraser. All of the above mentioned books can be found at the Manistee County Library. For more information please call the library at 723-2519.