



A Word from...YOUR Library

Thanks to all of the faculty and staff who contributed to this issue of Bookwatch! Be sure to check in at the library for some great fall reading.

Congratulations to Jill Evans, this month's winner of the Learned Owl gift card.

Faculty and Staff Recommendations:

Patty Campbell recommends:

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

"Death is the narrator of this lengthy, powerful story of a town in Nazi Germany... Death focuses on a young orphan, Liesl; her loving foster parents; the Jewish fugitive they are hiding; and a wild but gentle teen neighbor, Rudy, who defies the Hitler Youth and convinces Liesl to steal for fun." (Booklist)

Gerard Manoli recommends:

The Bottoms by Joe R. Lansdale

"A trip into the woods proves a learning experience for 13-year-old Harry in this latest coming-of-age mystery yarn from Lansdale... When Harry and his sister Thomasina (Tom) strike out into the woods, they confront not only the myth of the Goat Man, who is said to inhabit those woods, but also some myths about the nature of justice and race in their 1930s East Texas community." (Library Journal)

The Master of the Delta by Thomas H. Cook

"Edgar-winner Cook...examines the slow collapse of a prominent Southern family in this magnificent tale of suspense set in 1954." (Publisher's Weekly)

Sherry Chlysta recommends:

7th Heaven (and the rest of the series, too!) by James Patterson

"At the start of the gripping seventh Women's Murder Club thriller..., San Francisco is still haunted by the disappearance of Michael Campion, the much-adored teenage son of a former California governor, three months earlier." (Publisher's Weekly)

Jeanne Kidera recommends:

The Bend for Home by Dermot Healy.

"A charming memoir from Irish poet and fiction writer Healy." (Library Journal)

Faculty and Staff Recommendations continued..

Dan Dyer recommends:

The Witches of Eastwick by John Updike

“**Witches** is set in the fictional town of Eastwick, RI, at the turn of the 1960s into the 70s. Three divorced women with supernatural powers encounter a satanic figure named Darryl Van Horn--and the town has, uh, a few problems as a result.”

The Dying Animal by Philip Roth

“The basis for the very fine current film “**Elegy**” with Ben Kingsley and Penelope Cruz. An aging professor involved with a young woman (who'd been in one of his classes) confronts death and morality in this slender tale of great significance.”

August: Osage County by Tracy Letts

“A powerful family drama...”

All 12 thrillers by **Lee Child** (featuring his hero, Jack Reacher) Library owns Bad Luck and Trouble

“I started one this summer, then ate the rest of them like pretzels.”

Jill Evans recommends:

Out Stealing Horses by Per Petterson

“In this quiet but compelling novel, Trond Sander, a widower nearing seventy, moves to a bare house in remote eastern Norway, seeking the life of quiet contemplation that he has always longed for. A chance encounter with a neighbor—the brother, as it happens, of his childhood friend Jon—causes him to ruminate on the summer of 1948, the last he spent with his adored father, who abandoned the family soon afterward.” (The New Yorker)
(Reviewed in Summer 2008 issue of Bookwatch)

Ray Campbell recommends:

Deja Dead and other “**Temperance Brennan**” novels by Kathy Reichs

“For those who like mystery and forensics...”

Dynamite Road by Andrew Klavan

Private investigator Jim Bishop and his employee, ex-cop Scott Weiss, hunt for an assassin in this series debut.

Rich Hoffman recommends:

Suck it Up by Brian Meehl

“If you hadn't guessed, it's about vampires. Actually, it's about a vampire who graduates from Vampire University and is assigned to New York City. I won't tell you any more, but...it's not your 'typical' vampire story. Hardly gothic...”

Chuck Schmitt recommends:

Julius Caesar by Philip Freeman

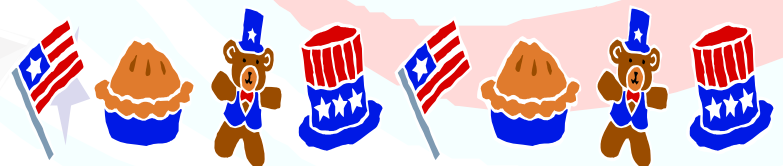
“Historian Freeman...paints a flattering portrait of Caesar in this admirable biography, exalting his cunning, military skill, political insights and allegiance to the plebeian class.” (Publisher's Weekly)

Universe of Stone: A Biography of Chartres Cathedral by Philip Ball

“In this lively biography of Chartres Cathedral, Ball explores the configuration of cultural and technological factors that enabled Europe to achieve a 'liberation from gravity' in the twelfth century, including the rise of scholasticism, Platonic obsessions with light and proportion, and heroic masons who 'turned geometry into stone.’” (The New Yorker)

Museum: Behind the Scenes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Danny Danziger

“The Metropolitan Museum of Art is a grand, inviting, and endlessly inspiring treasury of myriad forms of art from nearly every culture on earth. Much has been written about the museum's vast holdings and rise to prominence. Now Danziger...captures the spirit of the living museum in a fresh and intimate oral history portraying 52 out of 2,000 full-time employees.” (Booklist)



Faculty Reviews continued...

Dana Cunningham recommends:

Moscow Rules by Daniel Silva

“A terrorist plot in London leads Israeli spy Gabriel Allon on a desperate search for a kidnapped woman, in a race against time that will compromise Allon’s own conscience—and life...” (From the publisher)

Jim Fraser recommends:

Arundel by Kenneth Roberts

“An account of Benedict Arnold’s failed attack on Quebec City as [his army] trekked through the swamps and lakes of Maine one autumn. Unbelievable were the hardships they encountered and overcame along the way!!”

Tom Moore recommends:

Bloody Confused!: A Clueless American Sportswriter Seeks Solace in English Soccer

by Chuck Culpepper

“In the throes of becoming jaded and cynical about the American sportswriting scene, Culpepper...writes about the internationally known Premiership soccer league and its overzealous fans. He falls under the spell of the struggling Portsmouth squad, realizing that the die-hard fans live and die with the fortunes of their players and teams, describing vivid action scenes as thrilling as any in American hockey or football.” (Publisher’s Weekly)



NON-FICTION REVIEWS:

The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch

This little book is a wonderful journey of an amazing man. Professor of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon, Dr. Pausch was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer at age 46. Until his death almost two years later he continued to optimistically embrace life and live it with enthusiasm and hope. As he said, he had too much to live for to give up. The life lessons that he passed onto his very young children through his “Last Lecture” delivered at Carnegie Mellon are timeless lessons for all people. (Review by Melissa Slager)

Stolen Lives: Twenty Years in a Desert Jail by Malika Oufkir

The title alone drew me in. What kind of crime must one commit to spend twenty years in jail and then get out and write about it? The author of this shocking biography, a Moroccan woman, actually did not commit a single crime. Her father, General Oufkir, was charged with plotting against the Moroccan government. He was executed, and the rest of the family, including six Oufkir children, their mother, and two “faithful family retainers,” spent twenty years moving from jail to jail in the desert until the story of their incarceration became public and they were ultimately released. Conditions were deplorable for these innocent victims, an example of men’s cruelty and human rights violations. I recommend this book for its Moroccan cultural insights and a view of people surmounting horrific conditions. (Review by Sue Donnelly)



NON-FICTION REVIEWS CONTINUED...

Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking by Malcolm Gladwell

In this thought-provoking book, Gladwell, a reporter for *The New Yorker* and author of *The Tipping Point*, decides to investigate the ability of the human mind to make snap judgments after a quick first impression. Gladwell encourages his readers to think small (or as Gladwell calls it “thin slicing”) and rely on those first instincts to help predict peril and to react to new people and/or situations. He cites some interesting and entertaining cases, supporting his findings with research from several experts. Gladwell also clearly states, however, that the first reaction may not be correct as in the case of the Pepsi Challenge of the 1980’s which led to the disastrous New Coke formula. It was interesting to discover that a large corporation could be easily persuaded by a public snap judgment leading to a mistake that cost the Coca-Cola Company big and led it back to Classic Coke. (Review by Holly Bunt)

FICTION REVIEWS:

Twisted by Laurie Halse Anderson

Tyler Miller is no stranger to bullying as he has been picked on by many of his classmates since the third grade. His home life is no better—his mother and father haven’t gotten along in years, and he can often hear their “All-Star cage matches with the Out-of-Control Dadman versus the GinandTonica Momster.” Hopefully things will improve during Tyler’s upcoming senior year. He is now a respectable 6’3”, has gotten in shape through his summer landscaping job, and has the attention of the beautiful star tennis player, Bethany. Unfortunately, you can change yourself, but you cannot change how others will react. This book is a quick read filled with emotion, humor, scandal and images of teen suicide. (Review by Kim Barsella)

Case Histories by Kate Atkinson

Weaving together several plotlines, Atkinson offers an engaging novel that underscores family relationships and the impact of loss. Beginning with the mystery of a young girl who goes missing from her tent in the backyard and its devastating effect on her family, Atkinson adds the stories of others who have also experienced loss. The narrative twists and turns as the fate of these characters is played out—and the result is a truly satisfying tale of life’s sorrows and joys. (Review by Jacque Miller)

The Emperor’s Children by Claire Messud

Aspiring writer Marina Thwaite and her two best friends from Brown, Danielle and Julius, are almost thirty and trying to find their way in NYC pre-9/11. Marina is living in the shadow of her father, Murray Thwaite, a famous writer and critic, as she struggles to distinguish herself beyond her natural beauty and privileged upbringing. Through the entanglements of Marina and her friends we explore the idea that perhaps it’s not what truly happens to us that matters most but what we think has happened. It is a fascinating and thought-provoking look at the subjective truth of a public persona versus the thoughts and actions of a private individual. A timely reflection in the season of a Presidential election.

(Review by Paula Campanelli)



Audiobook Review :

The Forgery of Venus by Michael Gruber

Eric Conger (WRA Class of 1964) shares Michael Gruber’s new suspense novel *The Forgery of Venus*. It is a tale of art, secrets, genius and conspiracies. Conger’s skill drew me into a wonderful and chilling story. You’ll enjoy listening to this one!

(Review by Jane Spencer)

FICTION REVIEWS CONTIUES...



Fearless Fourteen by Janet Evanovich

Are you like me and can not get enough of that zany, New Jersey, bail bonds woman Stephanie Plum? Then you'll love the new ***Fearless Fourteen*** by Janet Evanovich. Stephanie is back with her usual cast of characters as she reluctantly agrees to be a bodyguard for an aging rock star. Muddying the waters are the complications that she has "custody" of a teenage boy (who may be Joe Morelli's son), someone keeps breaking into Morelli's house, and her face is stained blue.

(Review by Holly Bunt)

Black and White by Dani Shapiro

Clara Dunne daughter of a famous photographer, has been the subject of Ruth's Dunne's photographs from the time she was very young child to a young teenager—photographs in which Clara was naked. Now as an adult and estranged from her mother for 14 years, Clara is forced to face her past and confront Ruth when she returns home to reconcile with her after learning of her mother's imminent death from cancer. I could not put this book down... It was so compelling and disturbing in many ways. (Review by Melissa Slager)

The Secret River by Kate Grenville

Grenville's look at her family's history was the impetus for writing this powerful novel about the settling of New South Wales (Australia) by English convicts in the early 1800's. In a hasty trial, illiterate bargeman William Thornhill is convicted of stealing and is sent to New South Wales. Taking his family with him, Thornhill works to fulfill the terms of his sentence and then, as he eyes property he wants for his own, does everything in his power to make his dream of land ownership a reality. The portrayal of the English settlers, the Aborigines, and the clash between the two societies as the English claim Aboriginal land is thoughtful and insightful.

(Review by Jacque Miller)

The Eye of the Leopard by Henning Mankell

Departing from his outstanding Kurt Wallander police procedural series, Mankell writes a fascinating psychological novel centered on Hans Olofson, a Swede who finds himself in Zambia shortly after its declaration of independence in the 1960's. Chapters interweave Olofson's years in Sweden as a child, teenager, and young adult with his nearly 20 adult years in Africa as he tries to come to grips with his past—and his present. (Review by Jacque Miller)

The Abstinence Teacher by Tom Perrotta

When suburban teacher Ruth Ramsey sees her daughter's soccer coach, Tim Mason, leading the team in prayer, she gets steaming mad and makes a scene. Tim, a former rocker and drug addict, has pulled his life together through his involvement with the Tabernacle, a Christian evangelical church. Ruth's clash on the soccer field is only the beginning and, when she's asked by the school Superintendent and her high school's new "Virginity Consultant" to change the way she teaches her human sexuality classes, she finds herself the focus of an attack by the town's new religious conservative movement. What she doesn't expect is that her ongoing encounters with Tim lead to a new understanding for the both of them. The story, told from both Ruth and Tim's perspectives, opens the politics of religion and sexuality beyond the mere black and white as Perrotta, the author of ***Little Children*** and ***Election***, brings his characteristic compassion and thoughtful wit to his latest satire. (Review by Cathy Fahey-Hunt)

