

OBC LIBRARY 2016 SUMMER READING LIST

What Oakhurst Members Are Reading

FICTION

The Clifton Chronicles, by Jeffery Archer
As Close to Us as Breathing, by Elizabeth Poliner
The Girl in the Red Coat, by Kate Hamer
Glow: A Novel, by Jessica Maria Tuccelli
The Gods of Gotham/Seven for a Secret/The Fatal Flame, by Lyndsay Faye (Timothy Wilde Mysteries, #1, #2, #3)
The High Mountains of Portugal: A Novel, by Yann Martel
Interpreter of Maladies, by Jhumpa Lahiri
Kane and Abel, by Jeffrey Archer
The Light Between Oceans, by M. L. Stedman
Millers Valley: A Novel, by Anna Quindlen
The Nest, by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney
The Portable Veblen: A Novel, by Elizabeth McKenzie
Refuge: A Novel, by Dot Jackson
Somewhere Safe with Somebody Good, by Jan Karon (Mitford Years, #10)
Word Puppets, by Mary Robinette Kowal
The Yoga of Max's Discontent: A Novel, by Karen Bejaj

NONFICTION

The Craving Brain: Science, Spirituality and the Road to Recovery, by Dr. W. Anderson Spickard Jr., James Butler, Barbara Thompson
Cure: A Journey Into the Science of Mind Over Body, by Jo Marchant
Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania, by Erik Larson
Holy Cow, by Sarah Macdonald
Hotel Florida: Truth, Love and Death in the Spanish Civil War, by Amanda Vaill
How I Shed My Skin: Unlearning the Racist Lessons of a Southern Childhood, by Jim Grimsley
The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World, by Andrea Wulf
Jerry Lee Lewis: His Own Story, by Rick Bragg
Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption, by Bryan Stevenson.
Mindwise: How We Understand What Others Think, Believe, Feel and Want, by Nicholas Epley
The New Jim Crow, by Michelle Alexander
Seven Brief Lessons on Physics, by Carlo Rovelli

Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement, by John David Lewis, John Lewis, and Mike D'Orso

DEVOTION AND SPIRITUALITY

Befriending Silence: Discovering the Gifts of Cistercian Spirituality, by Carl McColeman

The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus: What's So Good About the Good News, by Peter J. Gomes

Tiny Trumpets: Reflections on Life & God & Grace, by Lalor Cadley

Wherever You Go, There You Are, by Jon-Kabat Zinn

[NOTE: For specialized books for people interested in the Black Lives Matter movement, see list by Sally Sandidge.]

READERS' NOTES—LISTED BY FIRST NAMES

BUDDY GILL

Hotel Florida: Truth, Love and Death in the Spanish Civil War, by Amanda Vaill. This factual account centers on photographers Robert Capa and Gerda Taro, writers Ernest Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn, and loyalist news censors Arturo Barea and Ilsa Kulscar. Detailed, well researched, moving, beautifully written, and powerful.

The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus: What's So Good About the Good News, by Peter J. Gomes. The author was a Harvard professor and American Baptist minister. *Flyleaf*: "Why does the church insist upon making Jesus the *object* of its attention rather than heeding his message?"

I also have some tasty **David Baldacci novels** which I have yet to read.

CAROLYN COPENHAVER

Seven Brief Lessons on Physics, by Carlo Rovelli. "These seven short lessons guide us, with admirable clarity, through the scientific revolution that shook physics in the twentieth century and continues to shake us today." *Barnes & Noble*. Written for humanities majors, this short book is so astonishing that I'm passing the \$11 hardback around to all the teenagers and adults in my family. Highly recommended.

Mindwise: How We Understand What Others Think, Believe, Feel and Want, by Nicholas Epley. The author, a social psychologist at the University of Chicago, states his goal in the preface: "to reduce the illusion of insight you have into the minds of others." A *Scientific American* reviewer sums it up for me: "In short...a comprehensive and well-written overview of

things most people would rather not know.” A book that attempts to confer humility--and the strong urge to revisit Mathew 7:3-5. Bears re-reading, as I'm doing now.

DAVID RENSBERGER

I'd like to recommend to all and sundry two books I just came into possession of recently. Both are by local writers on spirituality who have spoken at Oakhurst.

One is by Lalor Cadley, and is called **Tiny Trumpets: Reflections on Life & God & Grace**. It's a collection of 15 very short essays on themes that have arisen in Lalor's practice of spiritual direction. They are simple, straightforward, and gracefully written. Each essay is accompanied by reflection questions and space for journaling.

The second is by Carl McColman, and is called **Befriending Silence: Discovering the Gifts of Cistercian Spirituality**. It speaks specifically to the contemplative tradition of Cistercian and Trappist spirituality, and shows how this monastic rhythm of prayer, work, and life can be valuable for all today.

DELLA SPEARMAN

I am a fairly new member at Oakhurst. I have not read this book, **The New Jim Crow**, by Michelle Alexander, but I heard the audio version. The author discusses race relations and the prison system. In some seminaries this book is required reading. I live in Fulton County and when I called the local library to place the book on hold recently, there were 48 holds system wide. This great book is for professionals and non-professionals alike.

DONNA WOOLF

I am currently finishing **The Clifton Chronicles**, a series of seven novels by Jeffery Archer: **Only Time Will Tell, The Sins of the Father, Best Kept Secret, Be Careful What You Wish For, Mightier Than the Sword, Cometh the Hour, and This Was a Man**.

There is no one who can spin a tale like this British author. Starting with his first novel that I read, **Kane and Abel** [1979, one of the top 100 bestselling fiction books in the world] I could not stop reading anything he has written. Fast paced, with multiple twists and turns, his novels will leave you hanging till the very end. Caution: I cannot tell you how many of his novels have kept me up till all hours because they were too exciting to put down.

ELAINE HOFFMAN

Millers Valley: A Novel, by Anna Quindlen. A great story of family dynamics, memory, love and loss--and what happens when a farm valley community is flooded to make a lake. Follows the life of one woman in the family.

Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania, by Erik Larson. Love all his historical accounts since they read like fiction. He makes historical happenings come alive with personality and detail that can make a real life event riveting.

The Light Between Oceans, by M.L. Stedman. Devastating life choices of a young couple who keep a dead man's infant while tending a remote lighthouse in Australia.

As Close to us as Breathing, by Elizabeth Poliner A multi-generational saga of a Jewish family and the long lasting reverberations of one tragic summer at the Connecticut shore in 1948.

JENNIFER HORNBUCKLE

I am currently reading a book that came out in 2012, **Glow: A Novel**, by Jessica Maria Tuccelli. This is the story of a family, centering around a young woman named Ella McGee, the daughter of an "outspoken pamphleteer for the NAACP," who in 1941 is sent to Georgia from her home in D.C., for safety. She learns the truth about her lineage, after having been raised by her grandmother, whom she believed was her mother.

Here is a description from the jacket: "Shot through with Cherokee lore and hoodoo conjuring, **Glow** transports us from Washington, D.C. on the brink of WWII to the Blue Ridge frontier of 1836, from the parlors of antebellum manses to the plantation kitchens where girls are raised by women who stand in as mothers." The author "reveals deep insight into individual acts that can transform a community and the ties that bind people together across immeasurable hardships and distances."

KAY MANN

My favorite author is Jan Karon. She wrote a whole series called **The Mitfords** about a small town in NC and many of its citizens. The main character is Father Tim, rector of the Episcopal church in town. After publishing seven or eight of the original series, Karon started writing specific novels about Father Tim. The last one is entitled **Somewhere Safe with Somebody Good**. It would mean more if you had read the whole series; however, it still has a fabulous message: everyone needs a community, and the plusses always outweigh the minuses.

Another book I finished reading recently is **Wherever You Go There You Are** by Jon Kabat-Zinn, about Mindfulness Meditation in everyday life. Chapters are short and full of thought provoking self-guided ways to meditate, so it is easy to pick up and put down. I know I'll keep it close by so I can reread meaningful portions.

I am in the process of reading **Cure: A journey into the science of Mind over Body**, by Jo Marchant. Here is the final paragraph from the jacket cover: "Drawing on the very latest research, Marchant explores the vast potential of the mind's ability to heal, lays out its limitations and explains how we can make use of the findings in our own lives. With clarity and compassion, **Cure** points the way towards a system of medicine that treats us not simply as bodies but as human beings."

MARTHA ENGLAND

Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement, by John Lewis with Michael D'Orso. The son of an Alabama share-cropper gives an unsanitized and detailed recounting of working with Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and the other icons of the civil rights movement. Profiles in courage, without airbrushing away the faults, follies and conflicts of the participants.

PAUL FICKLIN-ALRED

Word Puppets, by Mary Robinette Kowal is a collection of short stories by one of the cleverest writers in recent years. After reading *Evil Robot Monkey*, you'll wish Kowal would write entire novels about Sly and Vern.

The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World, by Andrea Wulf is a fascinating biography about the man who inspired Darwin, Thoreau, and Muir, and in many ways defined environmentalism as we know it.

The Portable Veblen, by Elizabeth McKenzie is a charming novel about life and love, with the highest squirrel-to-human ratio of any book in recent memory.

How I Shed My Skin: Unlearning the Racist Lessons of a Southern Childhood, by Jim Grimsley. The Emory professor reflects on growing up white and gay in a rapidly changing, post-Brown v. Board of Education North Carolina

The Gods of Gotham/Seven for a Secret/The Fatal Flame, by Lyndsay Faye. Protagonist Timothy Wilde seems in many ways anachronistic with his progressive views on class, race and gender. It's heartening to think that someone like him might have existed in antebellum New York. A great series for fans of Caleb Carr or the historical film *The Gangs of New York*.

PAULA BUFORD

I recommend two books about India. **Holy Cow**, by Sarah Macdonald, is a fascinating 2002 memoir by an Australian reporter who quit her job to backpack around India for two years. Funny and moving, this book reminds me a bit of *Eat, Pray, Love*, but funnier. According to one reviewer, this is "a wonderfully honest and soul-searching book...written with clarity and humor about India and its many paths to Enlightenment."

As a member of the Oakhurst Book Group, I am also reading a collection of nine short stories, **Interpreter of Maladies**, by Indian American author Jhumpa Lahiri. In 2000 this book won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the Hemingway/PEN Award, eventually selling over 15 million copies.

SALLY SANDIDGE

The Craving Brain: Science, Spirituality, and the Road to Recovery by Anderson Spickard Jr. and James Butler with Barbara Thompson. Barbara Thompson lives in Stone Mountain.

Many of us have lives touched by addiction. Authors are a medical doctor and a former addict who shed light on some of the mysteries of addiction:

- Why are some of us more at risk for addiction than others?
- Is uncontrollable craving a moral failure--or brain injury?
- Why can't addicts just quit?
- What critical role can science and spirituality play in recovery?

Below is a list of specialized books for people interested in the Black Lives Matter movement:

For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood, by Christopher Emdin.

Drinking Coffee Elsewhere, by Z.Z. Packer.

The Sisters are Alright, by Tamara Winfrey Harris.

The Light of the World: A Memoir, by Elizabeth Alexander.

The New Jim Crow, by Michelle Alexander.

Between the World and Me, by Ta-Nehisi Coates

The Mis-Education of the Negro, by Carter G. Woodson. (1933)

Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools, by Monique Morris.

Black Stats: African Americans by the Numbers in the Twenty-first Century by Monique Morris.

STEVE VELLINES

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption, by Bryan Stevenson. "A powerful true story about the potential for mercy to redeem us, and a clarion call to fix our broken system of justice—from one of our most brilliant and influential lawyers of our time..." *Goodreads*.

The High Mountains of Portugal, by Yann Martel. "Yann Martel returns to the powerful themes of *Life of Pi*, the Man Booker Prize and phenomenal bestseller in this allegorical novel that explores questions of loss and faith, suffering and love..." *Google Books*.

The Nest, by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney. "A warm, funny and acutely perceptive novel about four adult siblings and the fate of the shared inheritance that has shaped their choices and their lives." *Goodreads*.

The Girl in the Red Coat, by Kate Hamer. "A young girl is abducted at a storytelling festival in a gripping debut about separation and grief.... A powerful tale of loss." *The Guardian*.

Jerry Lee Lewis: His Own Story, by Rick Bragg. "The greatest storyteller of our time...tracks down the greatest rock star of all time...." *The New York Times*.

TERRI SARRATT

Refuge, by Dot Jackson. "Writer Dot Jackson and her friends celebrate mountain culture in Pickens County." *Sandpiper Magazine*.

TOM DENHAM

The Yoga of Max's Discontent, by Karan Bajaj. I just posted this review on Amazon.com. This book holds its own with the best adventure stories on the market today, while telling an honest, gritty story of a man growing spiritually. I enjoyed it so much that I wish it were the first of a series of Max stories.

What made reading the book especially fascinating were the various ways I could connect to it:

1) I recently served as the treasurer of a group that raised \$10,000 to send a friend to the United Theological College of Bangalore as Visiting Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling. She spent five months in Bangalore and traveling in Nagaland. I managed her Facebook page, *Paula Buford India*, and heard all the details of her adventures in India.

2) I practiced yoga for about one year. I made very rapid progress for a few months and had a profound spiritual experience at the close of an Iyengar class one night.

3) I am a financial forecaster and have made my living advising hedge-fund traders and others since 2003.

4) I am an ordained Baptist minister who has not made my living in ministry since 1997.

5) My spiritual growth has been accelerating lately.

My favorite moment in the book was when Max said, "I do not want to meet another great man. I want to be with you."

I received an advanced copy of this book in exchange for writing a review. I consider my time too valuable to finish reading books I don't like, but there was never any question that I would finish reading this one. I liked it from the first few pages.

**Compiled by Carolyn Copenhaver on behalf of the OBC Library
Committee Co-Chairs: Jan Murphy and Marjorie Hall Snook**
