

**Oakhurst Library Committee**

**2010 Summer Reading Recommendations**

Compiled & Edited by Carolyn Copenhaver, Member of OBC Library Committee

Co-Chairs: Harold Hoffman & Jan Murphy

**The Oakhurst Library Committee Congratulates**

**Melissa Range**

**On the March Publication of Her Book of Poetry**

***Horse and Rider***

**Every so often, one is reminded why poetry matters, how poetry makes matter, how it provides to our experience such substantial and necessary weight with so light a thing as breath. Say these poems aloud, and witness a joy that fills the mouth, delights the heart, and nudges the imagination to respond in kind. This is the best collection I’ve read in many years. —Scott Cairns**

***(For more reviews, go to*** [***http://www.ttup.ttu.edu/Book%20Pages/9780896727021.html***](http://www.ttup.ttu.edu/Book%20Pages/9780896727021.html)

**adult fiction**

ANIMAL DREAMS by Barbara Kingsolver (OBC LIBRARY)

THE APPEAL by John Grisham

AS I LAY DYING by William Faulkner

THE CAT WHO COULD READ BACKWARDS by Lillian Braun

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF FLANNERY O’CONNER (American Library)

THE CONFEDERATE GENERAL RIDES NORTH by Amanda Gable

CUTTING FOR STONE by Abraham Verghese

DREAMERS OF THE DAY by Mary Doria Russell

THE ELEGANCE OF THE HEDGEHOG by Muriel Barbery

A FINE BALANCE by Rohinton Mistry (OBC LIBRARY)

GILEAD by Marilynne Robinson

THE GIVEN DAY by Dennis Lehane

THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATOO by Steig Larsson (OBC LIBRARY)

THE HELP by Kathy Stockett (OBC LIBRARY)

LUNCH AT THE PICADILLY by Clyde Edgerton

THE MARCH by E.L. Doctorow. (OBC LIBRARY)

OLIVE KITTRIDGE by Elizabeth Strout

PARDONABLE LIES by Jacqueline Winspear (OBC LIBRARY)

PRODIGAL SUMMER by Barbara Kingsolver (OBC LIBRARY)

RAINEY by Clyde Edgerton

SARAH’S KEY by Tatiana de Rosnay

SOUTH OF BROAD by Pat Conroy

SUITE FRANCAISE by Irene Nemirosky

THIS IS WHERE I LEAVE YOU by Jonathan Tropper

WALKING ACROSS EGYPT by Clyde Edgerton (OBC LIBRARY)

WHERE TROUBLE SLEEPS by Clyde Edgerton

RECOMMENDED SERIES:

 The Cat Who….Mysteries by Lillian Jackson Braun

Mysteries of Elizabeth George

Mysteries of P.D. James (Death in Holy Orders in OBC Library)

Kurt Wallender Mysteries by Henning Mankell

**10 BESTSELLING NOVELS RECENTLY ADDED TO LIBRARY**

A THOUSAND ACRES by Jane Smiley

ATONEMENT by Ian McEwan

CHRIST THE LORD: THE ROAD TO CANA by Anne Rice

DEATH OF AN IRISH SINNER by Bartholomew Gill

THE FIVE PEOPLE YOU MEET IN HEAVEN by Mitch Albom

HALF BROKE HORSES: A TRUE LIFE NOVEL by Jeanette Walls

LONELY BONES by Alice Sebold

MYSTIC RIVER by Dennis Lehane

THE STORY OF EDGAR SAWTELLE by David Wroblewski

TEA TIME FOR THE TRADITIONALLY BUILT by Alexander McCall Smith

A THOUSAND ACRES by Jane Smiley

**ADULT NONFICTION**

AMERICAN PIE: SLICES OF LIFE AND PIE FROM AMERICA’S BACK ROADS by Pascale LeDraoulec

AT CANAAN’S EDGE: AMERICA IN THE KING YEARS by Taylor

BLACK WORKERS REMEMBER: AN ORAL HISTORY OF SEGREGATION, UNIONISM AND THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE by by Michael Honey

CUBA AND ITS MUSIC: FROM THE FIRST DRUMS TO THE MAMBO by Ned Sublette

THE EVOLUTION OF GOD by Robert Wright

THE HIDDEN BRAIN: HOW OUR UNCONSCIOUS MINDS ELECT PRESIDENTS, CONTROL MARKETS, WAGE WARS, AND SAVE OUR LIVES by Shankar Vedantam,

MASTERING THE ART OF FRENCH COOKING by Julia Child

THE NEURO REVOLUTION: HOW BRAIN SCIENCE IS CHANGING OUR WORLD by Jack Lynch

NICKEL AND DIMED: ON (NOT) GETTING BY IN AMERICA by Barbara Ehrenreich

SLAVERY BY ANOTHER NAME by Douglas A. Blackmon (OBC LIBRARY--Multiple Recommendations)

UPDATING CLASSIC AMERICAN RANCHES : DESIGN IDEAS FOR RENOVATING, REMODELING, AND BUILDING NEW by M. Caren Connolly and Louis Wasserman.

THE WORLD THAT MADE NEW ORLEANS by Ned Sublette

**MEMOIRS**

DON’T LET’S GO TO THE DOGS TONIGHT by Alexandra Fuller (OBC LIBRARY)

THE INVISIBLE SISTERS by Jessica Handler

THE YEAR OF LIVING BIBICALLY by A.J. Jacobs (OBC LIBRARY)

**INSPIRATION AND RELIGIOUS**

AN ALTER IN THE WORLD: A GEOGRAPHY OF FAITH by Barbara Brown Taylor (OBC LIBRARY)

NOT GOD: A HISTORY OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS by Ernest Kurtz

SEVEN SACRED PAUSES by Macrina Wiederkehr

THE SPIRITUALITY OF IMPERFECTION: STORYTELLING AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING by Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham.

**POETRY**

EMILY DICKENSON POEMS (Castle Books)

HORSE AND RIDER by Melissa Range (Texas Tech University Press)

RUMI Read by Coleman Barks: <http://www.google.com/search?q=coleman+barks+rumi+poems&hl=en&rlz=1T4ADRA_enUS358US361&prmd=v&source=univ&tbs=vid:1&tbo=u&ei=0lgFTJqnK8L68Ab8_-TVDQ&sa=X&oi=video_result_group&ct=title&resnum=10&ved=0CEoQqwQwCQ>

RUMI read by Coleman Barks and Robert Bly: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJjuTNVs9MI>

**COMMENTS FROM OBC READERS (Alphabetical by last name)**

**MARGARET BLEVINS**

I think Barbara Kingsolver's book**, The Prodigal Summer**, is beautifully written, with sensitivity to the unique culture of the people of the southern Appalachian mountain area. Since I was raised there, it made it very meaningful to me. Just for fun, I have been reading a series of cat mysteries by **Lillian Jackson Braun**, such as **The Cat Who Could Read Backwards**, and many more. This author is also living in the NC mountains. It is fun to read these books while we are traveling.

I am just starting **The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Search for Meaning** by Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham. Kurtz also wrote **Not God**, a history of AA.  He is not in the program, but he understands a lot about the 12 steps, and has done a thorough job of looking at all the world religious, and found those qualities that can bring miraculous ways of freeing all of us from destructive thinking.

**PAULA BUFORD**

A.J. Jacob’s memoir, **The Year of Living Biblically,** is hilarious.

**Carolyn Copenhaver**

Books I enjoyed this year included **Pardonable Lies** by Jacqueline Winspear, **The Hidden Brain: How Our Unconscious Minds Elect Presidents, Control Markets, Wage Wars, and Save our Lives** by Shankar Vedantam, **The Neuro Revolution: How Brain Science Is Changing Our World** by Jack Lynch**,** and **The Evolution of God** by Robert Wright

**Lou clymore**

**Sarah's Key** by Tatiana de Rosnay. The author said she was not writing an historical novel but it is one. She managed to make a shameful time in the history of the French come alive and keep me not wanting to lay the book down.

**MARY JO CRAWFORD**

My guilty pleasure reading genre is a mystery by a woman author. My two favorites are **P.D. James** and **Elizabeth George**. I would recommend anything by either of them. They novels are intricately conceived and generally set in England, which is one of my favorite countries to visit. There is always just enough of the familiar and just enough of the foreign to add an extra level intrigue for me as a reader.

I also love to laugh at us as Southerners. An author that captures that spirit is **Clyde Edgerton**. Yes, he draws his characters right up to the line of caricatures, and his plot lines are reminiscent of Flannery O’Connor. He is fun to read, and you will find yourself nodding your head as you laugh at the familiarity you are experiencing while you read. I suggest you start with **Rainey**, the story of what happens when a small town Southern Baptist girl marries a Durham Episcopalian boy. Another of his books that I particularly enjoyed was **Lunch at the Piccadilly**, the story of a loyal nephew who continues to watch over his aunt who lives in a nursing home and dotes on him, maybe a bit too much. Other titles I have particularly enjoyed were **Walking Across Egypt** and **Where Trouble Sleeps**. All of these titles are quick reads. While we’re focused on southern gothic humor, we might as well add **The Collected Works of Flannery O’Connor** published by the Library of America,

My favorite novel by William Faulkner is **As I Lay Dying**. **The Appeal** by John Grisham represents another of my guilty pleasure reading genre the law or political novel. What I like about this story is that it starts where most of these stories end, with the verdict. This novel follows the appeal process and reveals the politics and the extremes some will go to influence the process.

My next recommendation comes from seeing the film “Julie and Julia”. The film is about a woman who blogs about cooking her way through Julia Child’s cookbook**, Mastering the Art of French Cooking**. I was inspired by the film to buy the cookbook for myself. I am reading—not cooking-- my way through it. It is well written and interesting. It is not as dated as I thought it might be, nor is it as exclusively high brow as I thought it might be.

I am currently re-reading all of the poetry of **Emily Dickinson**. I have a volume containing all her works sorted thematically. **Emily Dickinson Poems** was published by Castle Books (2006). She can be a complex poet clothed in a deceptive simplicity. There is a lot of depth in much of her work, and at the same time, there is a good bit straightforward exuberance.

I recommend **Updating Classic America Ranches: Design Ideas for Renovating, Remodeling, and Building New** by M. Caren Connolly and Louis Wasserman. Other books in this series include housing styles capes, bungalows, and colonials. I have truly learned to appreciate the design behind the three bedroom all brick ranch in which we currently live.

**JACKIE DIAL**

I recommend **The Help** by Kathy Stockett

**LYNN DONHAM**

I recommend **Gilead** by Marianne Robinson. The novel is Incredible. I am also getting hooked on the **Kurt Wallender Mysteries** by Henning Mankell. PBS has made a Mystery series out of a couple of his books. I always enjoy the Elizabeth George books. She is a character-driven mystery writer with a vocabulary that always sends me to the dictionary a couple of times. She sets her novels in Britain but she lives in LA half the time and England half the time. She is an Edgar award-winner. **American Pie: Slices of Life and Pie from America's Back Roads** by Pascale LeDraoulec.is one of my favorite books. It's a true story of a road trip across the country in search of homemade pie.  It's certainly about pie, but on many different levels -- as food, as a symbol of a way of life I have read it several times and find something new every time.

**CARLA DUDECK**

My friend Amanda Gable wrote **The Confederate General Rides North**, and I recommend it. I am proud to say I knew her when she was writing short stories back when we were in college at Stetson. A good review is available at <http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/riding_north_with_amanda_c_gable/Content?oid=933015> There are several other reviews at <http://amandagable.com/news.html>

**MARTHA ENGLAND**

Two of my favorite books I have read this year are **The Help** by Kathryn Stockett and **South of Broad** by Pat Conroy.

**Kate Hauk**

I've been reading **Invisible Sisters** by Jessica Handler (an essay extracted from this story was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2008.) As a rule, a book's tragic subject-matter is not enough to make me want to read it and this book was pushed on me by a writer-friend. In spite of my reluctance, this memoir has been a sweet surprise. I think the writer's exquisite narrative style is why I suspect she can write well about anything. I particularly love her humor, her meticulous attention to detail and the strength of her honesty (which is both tender and vivid at the same time. Coleman Barks, too, is a delight--particularly his translation of **Rumi**. But I like his own poems too, especially when he reads them out loud. Here's a wonderful reading of Rumi that he did with Robert Bly at the Mythic Journeys gathering (and I got to see it...sigh...) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJjuTNVs9MI>

**JIM HOLMES**

I recommend three books on the Georgia list, including Barbara Brown Taylor's **An Altar in the World,** the subject ofa review I wrote for the 2009 summer reading list*.* Here is the excerpt I particularly liked from her chapter entitled "The Practice of Carrying Water":

“Many readers of this story [Genesis] have somehow gotten the idea that physical labor is part of God's curse--labor pains for the woman and field labor for the man--until labor itself gets all mixed up with the punishment. Clearly, this is not so.  The earthling's first divine job is to till the earth and keep it. If you have ever tilled a rose garden, much less a Garden of Eden, then you know that this is difficult to do without getting sore shoulders. Keeping the earth is hard work. You get dirty doing it. You break fingernails and wear holes in the knees of your pants.  You wear yourself out. You also remember where you came from, and why. You touch the stuff your bones are made of. You handle the decomposed bodies of trees, leaves, birds, and fallen stars. Your body recognizes its kin. If you have nerve enough, you also foresee your own decomposition. This is not bad knowledge to have.  It is the kind that puts other kinds in perspective. Feel that cool dampness. Welcome back to earth, you earthling. Smell that dirt Welcome home, you beloved dust-creature of God." [p. 151]

Taylor Branch's **At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years 1965***--*I must confess that I have not read the entire Branch trilogy of the King Years.  However, I have all three in my classroom and regularly read sections to my classes when discussing the Civil Rights Movement.  My favorite one to read is from **Parting the Waters** *[the first of the trilogy and the one which won him a Pulitzer Prize]* in the chapter entitled "First Trombone" where Branch describes King's first public appearance as the newly designated leader of the Montgomery Improvement Association at Holt Street Baptist Church on the eve of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. **At Canaan's Edge**is the concluding volume covering the last three years of King's life and the parallel course of the civil rights movement and the rising opposition to the Vietnam War.  In the Introduction, Branch says "Torment over distant Vietnam will destroy a historic collaboration between King and Lyndon Johnson at the signal divide from the 1960s--whether to pursue democracy by force of arms." By 1968, this signal divide will lead to the assassination of King and the political death of President Johnson.

**Slavery by Another Name**by Douglas A. Blackmon--I just recently purchased this book.  It is an account of the southern penal system which essentially took black prisoners and forced them to work as essentially slave laborers in the emerging industries of the south.  Many of these prisoners were charged with "vagrancy"--a convenient charge against out of work blacks --used to incarcerate them and thus use them as slave labor.  This went on after reconstruction all the way up to World War II.  Blackmon documents this extensive practice that affected thousands of black males and ultimately millions of black family members.

**PETER JUNKER**

I would put in a strong recommendation for **Horse and Rider**, a selection of poems by our own Melissa Range, published by Texas Tech University Press. Speaking strictly geographically (which is to say, over-narrowly) it's more a "Tennessee" than a "Georgia" book. It's also a profound statement of struggle with our human and specifically Christian legacy of violence and war. My rhyming review: It's a book that ought to be bought and taught.

Note--Publisher’s Bio: Melissa Range was born and raised in East Tennessee. She is the recipient of a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers’ Award, a “Discovery”/The Nation prize, and a writing fellowship from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Her poems have appeared in the *Hudson Review, Image,* the *Paris Review,* and other journals. Currently she is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Missouri–Columbia, where she is a David R. Francis Fellow. <http://www.ttup.ttu.edu/Book%20Pages/9780896727021.html>

**BOB LOUGH**

Here are two books, both by Ned Sublette. The first is **Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo (2007)**. His book provides a thoughtful, detailed and exhaustive history of Cuba from the pre-Hispanic era up until the 1950s, including political, cultural, religious, linguistic information and fascinating information on importation of Africans, incorporation of Africans into society, and influence of all on the unique music of Cuba. This is a huge amount of information (688 pages), but very readable and also a good reference tool.

The second book is  **The World That Made New Orleans:  From Spanish Silver to Congo Square (2009)** This book traces the history of New Orleans, including its establishment, its governance by French, Spanish, British, the Confederacy and the U.S.  Includes much about why New Orleans is so different from the rest of the Eastern half of the U.S., the influence of the types of people who settled there, including French convicts & prostitutes, slaves of various African origins, and especially the influence on New Orleans by Cuba during its years of governance by the Spanish.  Both Cuba and New Orleans had a large percentage of free blacks, and even those not yet free were permitted to mingle, socialize, drum and play music together.  As Sublette says, Africans in New Orleans (and Cuba), unlike the Africans in other parts of the American colonies, brought their past with them as they were to a much greater extent permitted to bring into their new lives the traditions, beliefs and practices from their place of origin; and they also had a future because there was the opportunity to purchase their own freedom.  (311 pages)

**SONJA NEELY**

I recommend **This Is Where I Leave You** by Jonathan Tropper. This book, wry and irreverent, is a funny read with surprisingly tender moments. I also enjoyed **Seven Sacred Pauses** by Macrina Wiederkehr. This is a very beautiful little book and a great resource that I turn to regularly for guidance in living mindfully.

**SALLY SANDIDGE**

I recommend **Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America** by Barbara Ehrenreich**.** This book is about working low wage jobs. I also recommend **Black Workers Remember: An Oral History of Segregation, Unionism and the Freedom Struggle** by Michael Honey**,** a collection of interviews and short memoirs**.**

**Terri Sarratt**

I thought the book, **The Given Day** by Dennis Lehane, author of **Mystic River**, was awfully good.Although none of these writers' books are light beach writing, I love anything by Rohinton Mistry or Mary Doria Russell. I also enjoyed **Animal Dreams** by Barbara Kingsolver and **The March** by E.L. Doctorow.

**Karen Thomas Smith**

I LOVED **Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight** by Alexandra Fuller. This memoir is about growing up in Southern Africa in a highly dysfunctional (and racist) family, but finding grace.