

Joy of Reading: The OBC Library 2014 Christmas Booklist

Fiction

Above the East China Sea by Sarah Bird
Andrew's Brain/Homer and Langley by E. L. Doctorow
All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr.
The Bridge/Magic Time by Doug Marlette
The Camerons: A Novel by Robert Crichton
Coming Home/September/Wild Mountain Thyme by Rosamunde Pilcher
Cloud Atlas: A Novel by David Mitchell
Gilead/Home/Lila by Marilynne Robinson
The Goldfish/The Secret History by Donna Tart
I Still Dream About You: A Novel/Standing in the Rainbow by Fannie Flagg
The Landbreakers by John Ehle
Larger than Life by Jodi Picoult
The Name of the Wind/The Wise Man's Fear by Patrick Rothfuss
One Foot in Eden/ Saints at the River/ Serena/The Night the New Jesus Fell to Earth by Ron Rash
Outlander by Diana Gabaldon
The Patron Saint of Liars by Ann Patchett
Slow Walk in a Sad Rain by John P. McAfee
Snakeskin Shamisen by Naomi Hirahara [A Mas Arai mystery]
The Valley of Amazement by Amy Tan
The Wee Free Men/A Hatful of Sky/Wintersmith/I Shall Wear Midnight (in this order) by Terry Pratchett (Young Adult)
Who Will Run the Frog Hospital by Lorrie Moore

Memoirs/Spirituality/Religion

Bird By Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life/Travelling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith by Anne Lamott
Convictions: How I Learned What Matters Most by Marcus Borg
The Five Things We Cannot Change: And the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them by David Richo
God Grew Tired of Us: A Memoir by John Bul Dau
The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church by Shane Hipps
Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror by Mahmood Mamdani
The Liar's Club: A Memoir by Mary Karr
No Act of Love Is Ever Wasted: The Spirituality of Caring for Persons with Dementia by Jane M. Thibault and Richard Morgan,
Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner & Saint by Nadia Bolz-Weber
Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus by C. Christopher Smith
When Religion Becomes Evil by Charles Kimball

Other Non-Fiction

A Season for Justice: The Life and Times of Civil Rights Lawyer Morris Dees by Morris Dees and Steve Fiffer
Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen by Christopher McDougall
The Eastern Stars: How Baseball Changed the Dominican Town of San Pedro de Macoris by Mark Kurlansky
The Greater Journey by David McCullough
The International Bank of Bob: Connecting our Worlds One \$25 Kiva Loan at a Time by Bob Harris
In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts by Gabor Mate M.D.
Invictus by John Carlin
Lincoln by Doris Kearns Goodwin
Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now by Douglas Rushkoff
The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation by Gene Roberts & Hank Klibanoff
The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History by Elizabeth Kolbert [Will be a TV miniseries]
The Story of Earth: The First 4.5 Billion Years, From Stardust to Living Planet by Robert M. Hazen
Thinking Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman [In the OBC Library]

What Jesus Meant/What Paul Meant by George Will
Why Geography Matters: More Than Ever by Harm de Blij
Your Body Keeps Score by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.

Poetry

Aimless Love: New and Selected Poems by Billy Collins
The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine by Kathleen Raine
Poems to Live By In Uncertain Times by Joan Murray
Reflections of a Peacemaker: A Portrait Through HeartSongs by Mattie J.T. Stepanek and Jennifer Smith Stepanek

About These Books....By Contributor's First Name

Adelia Ann Dozier

I recommend **Larger than Life** by Jodi Picoult. If you love tales of elephants and family connections, this is the novella for you.

Buddy Gill

Here are some very good books I have read within the last couple of years. Fiction: **Saints at the River, Serena, and One Foot in Eden** by Ron Rash (a mighty fine writer about western NC). **The Night the New Jesus Fell to Earth** also by Ron Rash (mostly funny short stories). **Homer and Langley** by L. L. Doctorow (strange and different, but that is true of all his books). **Standing in the Rainbow** by Fannie Flagg (wonderful small town life story). **Slow Walk in a Sad Rain** by John P. McAfee (a very tough Vietnam combat story by someone who lived it). **Magic Time** by Doug Marlette (the civil rights times in Mississippi). **The Bridge** by Doug Marlette (textile mill strikes in North Carolina). **The Landbreakers** by John Ehle (probably the best book ever about the people who first came to make a life in the mountains of NC). Anything by Graham Greene; he is just a wonderful writer. Anything by John LeCarre, probably the most literate of all the spy writers.

Nonfiction: **Lincoln** by Doris Kearns Goodwin (much more than was in the movie on which it was based). **What Jesus Meant** and **What Paul Meant** by George Will (approaches exactly what the titles suggest. Interesting and controversial). **A Season For Justice** by Morris Dees (Civil Rights lawyer, still active) and Steve Fiffer. **God Grew Tired of Us: A Memoir** by John Bul Dau (autobiographical account of the "lost boys of Sudan." Tough). **Invictus** by John Carlin (Nelson Mandela and the rugby team. Basis for the movie). **The Greater Journey** by David McCullough (learn more than you ever imagined about mid-19th century in the US and Europe). **No Act of Love is Ever Wasted** by Jane M. Thibault and Richard Morgan (for anyone who has experienced or wonders about Alzheimer's).

Carolyn Copenhaver

The Wee Free Men, A Hatful of Sky, Wintersmith, and I Shall Wear Midnight by Terry Pratchett comprise a four-book YA fantasy series about a young witch, Tiffany Aching, who learns to be wise. This is a sub-series of Pratchett's justly famous adult comic/fantasy Discworld books. He has sold over 85 million books worldwide in 37 languages. Sadly, in 2007 Pratchett was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. **Andrew's Brain: A Novel** by E. L. Doctorow spoofs both neuroscience and the George W. Bush administration. **The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History** by Elizabeth Kolbert and **Why Geography Matters: More Than Ever** by Harm de Blij take on urgent climate change issues. **Thinking Fast and Slow** by Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman explores conscious and subconscious thinking. I am currently reading **The Story of Earth** by Professor of Earth Science Robert M. Hazen, about which paleontologist Neil Shubin writes: "You will not see Earth and life in the same way again." **Love: New and Selected Poems** by Billy Collins (a gift from my sister) offers wise, sardonic, and sometimes humorously tender poems.

Carolyn Hall

The book I am recommending is **All the Light We Cannot See** by Anthony Doerr. A blind French girl and a German boy encounter each other in occupied France, as both attempt to survive WWII. There is a legend involving a valuable and dangerous jewel that is a part of the collection of the Museum of Natural History in Paris that is a large part of the plot. The two main characters are powerful examples of the way average people in difficult times must decide daily between morality and survival. Everyone in my book club liked this book, which is extremely unusual!

Elaine Hoffman

Who Will Run the Frog Hospital? by Lorrie Moore. In this lyrical, evocative, and intense novel set in the 1970s, a middle age woman remembers her 15th year and her best female friend. **The Liar's Club: A Memoir** by Mary Karr, tells the story of her

dysfunctional Texas family in the early 1960s. The author is a scrappy Daddy's girl. I found the *New York Times* bestseller **Goldfinch**, by Donna Tart, a very engrossing read with a well-developed plot and characters and many twists and turns. I was sad to finish this book. **The Valley of Amazement** by Amy Tan is an engrossing story of a woman growing up in the Chinese courtesan houses in the last century. This is amazing historical fiction.

Jennifer Hornbuckle

It's so hard to choose only a few! Here's a great book for hearty laughs: Fannie Flagg's **I Still Dream About You**. For the writers, book lovers, and anyone whose heart is drawn to ponderings: Anne Lamott's **Bird by Bird** and **Traveling Mercies**. For the travelers, the romantics, or anyone who loves stories that blend healing and hope: Rosamunde Pilcher's **September, Coming Home** and a short read entitled **Wild Mountain Thyme**.

And then, there's poetry: 1) **Poems to Live By in Uncertain Times** by Joan Murray is a small volume that packs a big wallop offering poems by W.H. Auden, Gwendolyn Brooks, Wendell Berry, Mary Oliver, Czeslaw Milosz and others. 2) **The Collected Poems of Kathleen Raine**. Any volume of poetry of Kathleen Raine...wonderful. 3) **Reflections Of A Peacemaker: A Portrait Through Heartongs** by Matthew (Mattie) J.T. Stepanek (1990-2004), "an extraordinary young poet, peacemaker and MDA National Goodwill Ambassador." I love this book, and this little boy, who left us much too soon, but gave us so much.

Jonathan Spencer

Above the East China Sea by Sarah Bird. This novel weaves together the stories of Tamiko, an Okinawan girl during the final, bloody battle of WWII and an American teen-age girl Luz, a contemporary Air Force "brat," whose military mom is stationed on the island. It is a story of family systems, cross-cultural encounters, spirituality and the struggle for peace. **The Camerons** by Robert Crichton. A powerful novel about a coal-mining family in Scotland and their struggle, led by the matriarch Maggie, to break free from grinding poverty and back-breaking labor. **Convictions: How I Learned What Matters Most** by Marcus Borg. This latest book by progressive biblical scholar Marcus Borg was inspired by his reflections on turning 70. It combines aspects of his personal story with a kind of summary of what he considers to be the most important life lessons he has learned from experience and scholarship.

The Eastern Stars: How Baseball Changed the Dominican Town of San Pedro de Macoris by Mark Kurlansky. The fascinating story of a small region in the Dominican Republic from which seventy-nine baseball players have gone on to play in the major leagues. The book is about more than baseball. It's about wealth and poverty, as well as colonialism and capitalism. **Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror** by Mahmood Mamdani. This is a valuable study of international dynamics and policies, particularly those of the U.S., that helped set the stage for the rise of violent, radical expressions of political Islam. Mamdani is a political scientist from Uganda. **The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church** by Shane Hipps. This book, by a young, urban Mennonite pastor, deals with the subject of the interplay of electronic media and communities of faith. Among other resources, Hipps draws from the thought and writings of Marshall McLuhan to deal with questions such as "Are media and technology value neutral?" And "How should the church position itself to take advantage of coming cultural trends?"

The International Bank of Bob: Connecting our Worlds One \$25 Kiva Loan at a Time by Bob Harris. A kind of travelogue and globe-trotting adventure tale featuring an amazing array of personalities that the author originally got to know through giving \$25 microloans through the website Kiva. The author is a TV personality and political humorist who has been a frequent competitor on "Jeopardy." **Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now**, by Douglas Rushkoff. Futurist and media theorist Rushkoff asks important questions about the dissonance between our digital selves and analog bodies that may be leading us to a new state of anxiety in an "always on" world. The author explores subjects from zombie apocalypse fiction to Occupy Wall Street. **Snakeskin Shamisen** by Naomi Hirahara. A Mas Arai mystery. Featuring the unlikely hero, Mas, an elderly Japanese-American gardener in L.A., who finds himself involved in a murder mystery and who uses his ingenuity and patience to find the truth.

Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus by C. Christopher Smith. An expression of the value of community, listening, deep fellowship and sabbath practices in the life of the church. **When Religion Becomes Evil** by Charles Kimball. The author, the Dean of the Department of Religion at Wake Forest University, articulates five warning signs of religious faith leading to violent extremism. **Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen** by Christopher McDougall. A narrative about an indigenous people group in Mexico who produce world-class ultramarathon runners combined with the author's research about the anthropological roots of distance running and questions about human health in general.

Mark Reeve

Outlander by Diana Gabaldon, is not exactly something you'd expected a hard-core pacifist to recommend. It is chock full of violence as we romp through the Scottish Highlands (and beyond) with Jamie Frazier and his partner, time-traveling, healer extraordinaire Claire, fighting the English red-coats for independence. (Reading this book while actually in Scotland just prior to the

recent independence vote made me appreciate how peaceful the modern process was!) Steamy romance, historical fiction, fantasy & science fiction. *Outlander* has it all. Be warned, though – it’s the first of a series of 8+ books, and they’re addictive!

Martha England

The Patron Saint Of Liars, the first novel written by Ann Patchett, became a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. The author focuses on a young woman named Rose who abandons her life in California as a married woman. She leaves for Kentucky and takes residence at a home for unwed mothers owned by the Catholic Church. As she watches girls give birth and disappear from the home, she must think of her own plans and what the future has in store for her. The question I remember most from this enjoyable book is “When, if ever, it is okay to lie?”

Paul Ficklin-Alred

Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner & Saint by Nadia Bolz-Weber--If you ever imagined having a genuine, heart-to-heart talk with the Apostle Peter while he was still nicknamed Rocky, before he was immortalized in stained glass, you should read this book. **Gilead/Home/Lila** by Marilynne Robinson--With this year's publication of *Lila*, Robinson's lyrical trilogy is complete. As much as I wish she would write more, I am grateful for these three trips to Gilead, Iowa. **The Name of the Wind/The Wise Man's Fear** by Patrick Rothfuss--Rothfuss is classified as a fantasy author, but should be more accurately described as an author who creates real people who live in a fantastic world. Kvothe, the protagonist in the two books, is a hero for the ages, a character who could have emerged from a Dickens/Tolkien collaboration.

Paula Buford

Here are two important books on mental health, written for lay and professional audiences: **Your Body Keeps Score** by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D. A riveting story of van der Kolk’s personal and professional journey to work with traumatized and abused persons, beginning with his job as a VA psychiatrist in the 1970’s with Vietnam vets with PTSD through his becoming one of the top researchers in the field of brain/body work. It’s like a whole library on trauma from 3 new disciplines of neuroscience, developmental psychopathology and interpersonal neurobiology. And it’s under \$20 in the hardback version. **In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts** by Gabor Mate M.D., an empathetic, wise, and funny non-fiction book, reads like a novel. Mate is a Canadian physician who works as a primary medical provider to addicts in Canada and in the Portland Oregon Hotel Society. He experiences his patients as real people with significant trauma histories who are self-medicating. He cites the same trauma studies as does van der Kolk. I almost cried when I read of Mate’s own significant struggle with his classical music CD addiction and his descriptions of how this addiction impacts himself and his family. (He spends thousands of dollars a year of his habit.) He understands that his compulsion stems from his birth in Auschwitz and being raised by parents who were too traumatized to allow healthy attachments to their child.

Renee Kirlin

The Five Things We Cannot Change: And the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them by David Richo. The front book flap reads: “Blending Western psychology and Eastern spirituality, and including practical exercises, Richo shows us how to open up our lives—including to what is frightening, painful, or disappointing—and discover our greater gifts.”

Sam Collier

I read non-fiction (mostly), with an emphasis on the history of the mid-20th Century in US, particularly the Civil Rights Movement. The latest book I am reading is **The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation**, a very informative story of the media coverage of the Civil Rights Movement. It covers how the early black press was way ahead and had great access to stories, then how the mainstream press started to pick stories up, how some Southern editors reported well, while others resisted, and how the rise of television changed the nature of the reporting in ways no social movement had experienced previously. And last Friday, I had the privilege of meeting the authors, Gene Roberts & Hank Klibanoff. Roberts grew up with my father in the town of Pikeville, NC (pop. 500 - for decades) and his family and mine went way back. (The authors were in town to honor Claude Sitton, Conyers native, Emory graduate, who tenaciously and courageously covered the movement for the NY Times during the period 1956-1964. Sitton was just inducted into the Atlanta Press Club Hall of Fame alongside Tom Brokaw)

Sherrie Crow

I have read two books by Donna Tartt this year and loved them both: **The Secret History** and **The Goldfinch**. I also thoroughly enjoyed **Cloud Atlas: A novel** by David Mitchell.

List gently compiled by Carolyn Copenhaver, member, OBC Library Committee
Jan Murphy and Marjorie Hall Snook, Library Committee Co-chair