

You've gotta read this!!



Summer Reading @ Musselman Library

"We should choose our books as we would
our companions, for their sterling and intrinsic merit."

~Lord Chesterfield

Summer 2004



Summer is upon us again! As you journey through the months ahead, be sure to take some time out to enjoy those warm summer evenings with a great book in hand...

Need help choosing a title? Not to worry! Musselman Library asked Gettysburg College faculty, staff, and administrators for their top choices of great summer reading materials. From poetry to mysteries – and a little bit of drama to spice up the mix – these picks are guaranteed to offer something for everyone. Enjoy your summertime adventures. We'll see you in the fall!

*From the staff at Musselman Library
May 2004*

Organized alphabetically by faculty/administrator/staff member:

Sally Abma, Chemistry

Title: *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown

"I highly recommend *The Da Vinci Code* (or anything else) by Dan Brown. It is a great read, captivates your attention and really makes you think. The book dives into some pretty deep theological issues and can spark some interesting discussions." ~ Sally Abma

Cathy Bain, Sunderman Music Conservatory

Title: *Missing Heaven* by Caroline Wagner

"I recommend *Missing Heaven* by Caroline Wagner not only because the author is my mother, but also because it's a beautifully written, engrossing story of a young woman with miraculous powers of healing who wants only to lead a quiet, normal life. The story is set in southeastern Pennsylvania, and begins with a plane crash just north of Gettysburg." ~ Cathy Bain

Lisa Becker, Programmer / Analyst

Title: *Murder on a Girls' Night Out* by Anne George

"This book is about 2 southern sisters in their senior years who always stumble upon murder. These sister sleuths are hilarious. It's definitely a laugh-out-loud book." ~ Lisa Becker

Temma Berg, English / Women's Studies

Title: *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy

"I would like to suggest Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, a difficult but beautiful book about life and memory which takes place in India. Looking at history, identity, "Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks, and Limits" of all kinds, the book suggests what happens when people put limits on who shall love whom and what happens when such limits are challenged."

~ Temma Berg

Jennifer Bloomquist, African American Studies

Title: *The Known World* by Edward Jones

(no comments provided)

Gabor Boritt, Civil War Institute / History

Title: *One True Thing* by Anna Quindlen

Title: *The Miracles of Santo Fico* by D.L. Smith

“Anna Quindlen, *One True Thing*, perhaps my favorite book by a contemporary American author. A novel about a mother and daughter, and peripherally about a College Prof. father/husband. In the end about the meaning of life and love.

If I'm allowed another book then D.L. Smith, *The Miracles of Santo Fico* not in Quindlen's class but wonderful--Tuscany, a small village, almost today but seems like long ago, Italy at its best.”
~ Gabor Boritt

Bill Bowman, History

Title: *Showdown* by Jorge Amado

“Amado won the Nobel Prize for literature for his body of work, which includes this book, the story of the making of a frontier town in late imperial Brazil. The book is filled with vivid characters and scenes and is a wonderful read. Ultimately, *Showdown* is also a remarkable tale of what is won and lost in the creation of modern towns, societies, and nations.” ~ Bill Bowman

John Commito, Environmental Studies

Title: *The Corrections* by Jonathan Franzen

“I recommend the novel *The Corrections* by Jonathan Franzen, a story about a dysfunctional family. Sure -- this is a trite theme in current American novels and films. But Franzen's excellent writing -- an odd mix of Jane Austen, Jack Kerouac, Anne Tyler, John Updike, and Don DeLillo -- saves the book. It is bleak. It is intense. It terrified me. Yet it also made me laugh, mostly at how touchingly inept we are in our dealings with the very people who matter to us the most.” ~ John Commito

Don Cooney, Capital Giving Office / Development

Title: *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes (translated by Edith Grossman)

Grossman's new translation brings reviving freshness to this fountainhead of modern literature. Cervantes' humor, perspicacity, and wisdom flow naturally through every mad adventure of the Knight Errant. If you loathed reading this classic in high school (as I did), you owe it to yourself to pick it up again for the first time. You'll be hard pressed to put it down. ~ Don Cooney

Brendan Cushing-Daniels, Economics

Title: *Saving Social Security: A Balanced Approach* by Peter A. Diamond and Peter R. Orszag

"For a good discussion of the issues facing Social Security..." ~ Brendan Cushing-Daniels

Pam Dalrymple, Civil War Institute

Title: *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving

"I would like to recommend *A Prayer For Owen Meany* by John Irving for the summer reading list. This wonderfully written book about a young man's incredible journey through life and the impact he has on others, made me laugh out loud at times yet brought me to tears at others."

~ Pam Dalrymple

Sunni DeNicola, Musselman Library

Title: *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America* by Erik Larson

"If your interest is history, architecture, World's Fairs, or murder, this is the pick for you. This is the story of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. The book is non-fiction, but you'll have to keep reminding yourself of that. There are two intertwining story lines and each seems unreal.

The first focuses on Daniel H. Burnham, the architect responsible for constructing the fair. Considering the time and place, the construction of this World's Fair makes the creation of Disneyland look easy! The obstacles Burnham faced seem insurmountable and his "White City" is a true miracle.

Meanwhile, in the shadow of this great man lurks a "devil." H.H. Holmes is a charming doctor, a real lady killer, if you will. The Fair becomes his feeding ground and years go by before it comes to light just how many women are missing. I can't believe I had never heard of Holmes when I started this book; he is far more sinister than the notorious "Jack the Ripper."

Once I finished I couldn't wait to get my hands on more information about the Fair and Holmes. I recommend starting at this web site

<http://www.randomhouse.com/crown/devilinthewhitecity/home.html>, which also provides links to other sites. Also, don't miss this seriously cool Interactive Guide to the fair (World's Columbian Exhibition): <http://users.vnet.net/schulman/Columbian/columbian.html>." ~ Sunni DeNicola

Eric Egge, Mathematics

Title: *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell

“Mary Doria Russell is a paleoanthropologist and (as she puts it) a recovering academic. *The Sparrow*, her first novel, is the story of a Jesuit mission to make first contact with an extraterrestrial civilization and the impact of that mission on its only survivor. You might call it ‘Jesuits in space’, but it is not light reading. Instead, it’s a meditation on the nature of God, the meaning of faith, and the myriad ways two cultures, in spite of their best efforts, can misunderstand one another. I found it a fascinating novel, but please be warned: it has several violent scenes, including a brutal rape.” ~ Eric Egge

Charlie Emmons, Sociology

Title: *Expecting Adam: A True Story of Birth, Rebirth, and Everyday Magic* by Martha Beck

“My favorite book ever is *Expecting Adam* by Martha Beck (Random House, 1999). Summer is a good time to reexamine your philosophy of what’s important in life. Beck is a PhD in sociology and women’s studies from Harvard who decided not to abort her Down’s Syndrome fetus (who became Adam). Whether or not you “believe” her account of her spiritual experiences, you might find her style wickedly funny and inspiring. I did.” ~ Charlie Emmons

Kris Eyssell, Psychology

Title: *The Earthsea Cycle* (series) by Ursula LeGuin

(Titles in *The Earthsea Cycle* series are: *A Wizard of Earthsea*, *The Tombs of Atuan*, *The Farthest Shore*, *Tehanu*, and *Tales of Earthsea*.)

“Confining myself to ONE book suggestion is nearly impossible, so I’m nominating a series: *The Earthsea Cycle* by Ursula LeGuin... Not only did LeGuin craft a wonderous and rich locale for her tales, the stories themselves demonstrate great insight into the human condition and foresight for social changes to come.” ~ Kris Eyssell

Sharon Gratto, Music

Title: *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in our Busy Lives* by Wayne Muller

Title: *There are No Shortcuts* by Rafe Esquith

Title: *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* by James W. Loewen

“One book I would suggest is *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in our Busy Lives* by Wayne Muller... It is a non-sectarian self-help book with excellent ideas for people who lead frantic lives.

Here are two others:

There Are No Shortcuts by Rafe Esquith, who was interviewed recently on NPR. Rafe is an inner-city elementary teacher in LA who won the American Teacher Award, and this book is about his rather revolutionary ideas on the education of children, including increased time in school (longer days, weekends) and a strong work ethic. Most of his 4th and 5th grade students have English as their second language and live in challenging environments.

Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong by James W. Loewen – a book for everyone about common myths and misconceptions that are taught year after year in school history courses; Loewen also talks about the way history is not made interesting or memorable in the classroom; this book is about the need for academic truth in the curriculum.” ~ Sharon Gratto

Jen Chesney Harp, Musselman Library

Title: *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James

“*The Portrait of a Lady* is one of the most beautifully written novels of the 19th century. I love the strength and independence of the protagonist and the passion that James infuses in her character as she grows into womanhood.” ~ Jen Chesney Harp

Eleanor Hogan, Asian Studies

Title: *Out* by Natsuo Kirino

Title: *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibo (translated by Royall Tyler)

"*Out* by Natsuo Kirino. This gruesome story probably fits in the murder mystery genre, but readers immediately know who commits the crime. Thus, the novel itself is more about the investigation into the murder. Natsuo Kirino is "all the rage" in Japan now as a new, popular, woman novelist... What is shocking about this novel is that is so un-Japanese, that is to say there really isn't a lot in the novel that speaks to you and makes you say, "Wow, how representative of Japanese culture." With no samurai and cherry blossoms, this novel shocks its readers with an inside look into the underside of Japanese society. Not for the faint of heart, *Out* has some gory descriptions that might be skimmed for those without iron stomachs. *Out* is a thought provoking read that will leave you with more questions than answers and asking, 'Is Japan really like that?'

The Tale of Genji by Murasaki Shikibo. Available in a new translation by Royall Tyler, this is the quintessential Japanese novel (and the first modern psychological novel). Written by Murasaki Shikibu in circa 1000, *The Tale of Genji* is filled with poetry, cherry blossoms, and affairs of the heart. Take heed: Some sections are scandalous, and a few sections can be offensive to the modern reader.

As a pair, *Out* and *The Tale of Genji* will keep you very busy over the summer. Both are about 1000 pages.” ~ Eleanor Hogan

Molly Hutton, Visual Arts

Title: *I Don't Know How She Does It: The Life of Kate Reddy, Working Mother* by Allison Pearson

"This is the funniest book I've read in a long time, even though I am not a high-powered investment banker! If you work and have children you must read this soon." ~ Molly Hutton

Deb Hydock, Dining Services

Title: *The Human Stain* by Philip Roth.

"Story of a college Professor, also the Dean, who kept his true identity a secret. Additional story line of a Vietnam Vet and how the war affected his life. The two story lines intertwine through the ex-wife of the Vietnam Veteran. Recently made into a movie starring Nicole Kidman and Anthony Hopkins." ~ Deb Hydock

Florence Journey, French

Title: *The Dew Breaker* by Edwidge Danticat

The Dew Breaker by Edwidge Danticat: the latest of Danticat's novels, and as always a pleasure to read. As the cover says: "a work of fiction that explores the world of a "dew breaker" --a torturer [during Papa Doc's and Baby Doc's dictatorships]-- a man whose brutal crimes in the country of his birth [Haiti] lie hidden beneath his new American identity." The symphony of voices and patchwork of points of views are intriguing not to say well weaved together. A little heavy maybe for the beach, but definitely a wonderful summer read."
~ Florence Journey

Larry Marschall, Physics

Title: *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson

"Bryson is a thoroughly entertaining travel writer, whose book on misadventures along the Appalachian trail, *A Walk in the Woods*, was a smash best-seller. His latest is a trip through space and time, from the Big Bang up to the Big Mac, written with his usual humor and flair. It's great beach reading, and will tell you about life, the universe, and everything." ~ Larry Marschall

Kurt Mills, Political Science

Title: *Antarctica* by Kim Stanley Robinson

“I would like to suggest *Antarctica*, by Kim Stanley Robinson. It takes place in the near future in, as the title suggests, Antarctica. The Antarctic Treaty, which has protected this so-called “common heritage of mankind,” is falling apart and transnational oil and mineral corporations are getting ready to exploit the wealth of the continent. Environmental activists, adventure tourists, transnational corporations, and politics all intertwine in this fascinating book. Besides the politics, Robinson also mixes in liberal doses of science and the history of the early exploration of the continent. An excellent beach book – read about the frozen Antarctic while baking yourself on the beach.” ~ Kurt Mills

Elizabeth Morey, Psychology

Title: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston

“One of my favorites is *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston. It's one I pull off my bookshelf time and again when I want something good to read! I think it is a wonderful piece of African-American literature as well as feminist writing. It highlights the dilemma of doing what others expect of us versus following our hearts (something college students often struggle with!). The characters are strong yet fallible, and I always enjoy the poetry of the author's writing.” ~ Elizabeth Morey

Kenneth Mott, Political Science

Title: *American Dynasty: Aristocracy, Fortune, and the Politics of Deceit in the House of Bush* by Kevin Phillips

“Whether you like a political yarn, American history, or just a fascinating family biography, *American Dynasty* by Kevin Phillips is a must read. Phillips, a former White House strategist and a fine political and economic commentator, weaves a biting tale of the Bush family from the turn of the last century to the present. All the players are here, cozily bound together by their common links to Yale, big oil, Skull and Bones, Wall Street, the CIA, the diplomatic corps, and two world wars. This story examines privilege, deceit, disinformation, and White House policy. It reads like good fiction, and I wish it were.” ~ Kenneth Mott

Sheila Mulligan, English

Title: *Claudine at School* by Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette

“I recommend *Claudine at School* by Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette; the author's husband locked her in a room and forced her to write this book, and how come that doesn't happen more often?” ~ Sheila Mulligan

Donna Perry, Sociology / Anthropology

Title: *Atonement* by Ian McEwan

“This is a phenomenal book--beautifully written, emotionally intense, and the best thing I've read in years. The characters are complex and the plot is unlike any other. Much of it takes place during World War II so you get an amazingly vivid feel for the horrors of that time. But the real value is its portrayal of one woman's inner conflict--something that consumes her throughout her entire adult life.” ~ Donna Perry

Jan Powers, Global Studies

Title: *Crescent* by Diane Abu-Jaber

“*Crescent* by Diane Abu-Jaber is a beautifully written and moving novel about a young California woman from a Lebanese family, the sensuous delights of Middle Eastern food, and a mysterious professor from Iraq. The milieu is a small ethnic restaurant surrounding a major research university with a cast of endearing people who cook there and come to eat. Abu-Jaber is an exquisite prose stylist with considerable skill at slowly unraveling a mystery and leaving her readers aghast at our nation's earlier Iraqi escapades.” ~ Jan Powers

Kathryn Rhett, English

Title: *Where I Was From* by Joan Didion

“In Didion's latest nonfiction book, she considers the myth of California, where she grew up. She brings her usual irony to bear on the contradictions of American life, and the book is also unexpectedly emotional, as she assesses her own life, work, and beliefs. This late-life reflection is an autobiography of a self and a place.” ~ Kathryn Rhett

Susan Roach, Musselman Library

Title: *Chasing the Sea: Lost Among the Ghosts of Empire in Central Asia* by Tom Bissell

“Uzbekistan isn't on many off-the-beaten-path travel plans, at least not for this summer. But what a fascinating place to visit vicariously! Tom Bissell travels to Uzbekistan as a journalist to write a story about the Aral Sea and to encounter the ghosts of his past as a Peace Corps volunteer who washed out after several months of service. The irony of the post-Soviet era are quite humorous and his recounting of Asian history is understandable and informative.”
~ Susan Roach

Timothy Sestrick, Musselman Library

Title: *Berlioz: The making of an artist, 1803-1832* by David Cairns

"Don't be put off by the size of this work, the first of David Cairn's two volume biography of the great 19th century French composer. It's extremely readable, and has everything: a son's struggle to defy his parent's expectations and become a composer instead of a doctor; love and betrayal; the battle between musical innovation and conservatism; as well as providing a fascinating glimpse into the origins of Romanticism in music and literature, and the birth of works like the *Symphonie Fantastique*." ~ Timothy Sestrick

Charlie Saltzman, English

Title: *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson

Title: *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections on Sixty and Beyond* by Larry McMurtry

"I found Bill Bryson's book titled *A Short History of Nearly Everything* delightful. He can make science intelligible even to ignoramuses like me. As a writer he has abundant grace and wit. Another work I enjoyed a while ago is the famous Larry McMurtry's non-fiction work, *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen*. Cheers." ~ Charlie Saltzman

Andy Shaw, Visual Arts

Title: *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder* by Lawrence Weschler

"In this book Weschler narrates his visit to the oddest little museum, The Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles. This museum features (from the cover) "pronged ants, horned humans, mice on toast, and other marvels of jurassic technology." David Wilson, the host of the museum, is a curious man who frequently plays the accordion while giving excessively detailed facts about each exhibit. What's odd about the museum is that each exhibit on its own seems so absurd that you wouldn't believe it, but Wilson's descriptions, complete with references to various scientific studies, pacify suspicion and draw your interest to the unbelievable qualities of reality. As Weschler does a little behind-the-scenes investigation to verify the truth in these exhibits he uncovers the history of museums and "cabinets of wonder" and poses questions regarding human curiosity and why we are drawn to the incredible. This book is brilliant fun and reads somewhat like a mystery. And if you're in LA for the summer, you can visit the museum yourself." ~ Andy Shaw

Allison Singley, English

Title: *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich.

"This might be one that many have already read. If you haven't, I highly recommend it, and, if you have, I suggest a re-read or a foray into the later novels by Erdrich (*The Beet Queen*, *Tracks*, and *The Bingo Palace*) that elaborate on the interrelated stories of the Kashpaws, the Lamartines, and other fictional Native American (Chippewa) families living on a reservation in North Dakota or in the Twin Cities. The characters are rich and fascinating, the stories and

stories within stories, compelling, the sense of place evocative, and the themes devastating and yet redemptive. Some have compared Erdrich's fictional community to that of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, and I love the fact that a family tree is necessary to keep the characters and their relationships straight--it appeals to my desire to know personal details about people/characters!" ~ Allison Singley

Maggie Smith, English

Title: *Field Guide* by Robert Hass

Title: *Praise* by Robert Hass

"My recommendation is actually a double-header: both *Field Guide* and *Praise* by poet Robert Hass. The poems in both books are rooted in the landscape of Northern California, and are rich with vivid natural imagery that seems right for summer reading. Hass has a knack for describing setting, and the speaker's emotions in the context of that setting, in a fresh and memorable way. You won't see the summer around you the same old way after reading his poems. I'll certainly have these two with me as the weather warms up." ~ Maggie Smith

Ralph Sorenson, Biology

Title: *Twelve Bar Blues* by Patrick Neate

"A tour de force on the history of the African diaspora told through the story of one family in search of itself. The plot weaves back and forth from precolonial Africa to contemporary New York City to New Orleans during the birth of jazz. The startling imagery of this heartbreaking and heroic tale is spell-binding." ~ Ralph Sorensen

Joyce Sprague, Women's Studies

Title: *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown.

"I really liked *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown. Easy reading (I couldn't put it down). I read it while I was out recovering from surgery. There's a new book out on it about what is truth and what is fact in the book (I haven't read it yet)." ~ Joyce Sprague

Peter Stitt, English / Gettysburg Review

Title: *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* by Alexander McCall Smith

"The book I recommend is *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* by Alexander McCall Smith, first entry in the series devoted to the crime-solving skills of Mma Ramotswe, Botswana's number one sleuth, of any gender whatsoever. You will learn many new things from this book, important information about life in southern Africa and about how life ought to be lived everywhere."

~ Peter Stitt

Randy Wilson, Environmental Studies

Title: *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold

“How about *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold? A classic in environmental/nature literature, filled with beautiful prose and presented in short vignettes that are easy to 'swallow' even for the most squirmy of Spring semester seniors. As you follow mouse tracks through the snow, go on an early morning walk with Aldo and his dog, or read history in the growth rings of a fallen tree, before you know it, you'll be rethinking such lofty ideas as the appropriate place of humans in nature! All of that and you can buy for less than six bucks!” ~ Randy Wilson