



Summer 2003

You've Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library (2003)

Musselman Library
Gettysburg College

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Musselman Library, "You've Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library (2003)" (2003). *You've Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library*. 8.
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You've Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library (2003)

Abstract

Each year Musselman Library asks Gettysburg College faculty, staff, and administrators to help create a suggested summer reading list to inspire students and the rest of our campus community to take time in the summer to sit back, relax, and read. These summer reading picks are guaranteed to offer much adventure, drama, and fun!

This first issue of *You've Gotta Read This* was published in May 2003 and featured fabulous clip-art for the cover and recommendations from 37 faculty members. The most popular title for this year? *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver.

Keywords

Musselman Library, summer reading, fiction, non-fiction

Disciplines

English Language and Literature | Library and Information Science

Comments

This title can be found on Musselman Library's website at: <http://www.gettysburg.edu/library/information/general/browsing/index.dot>.

You've gotta read this!!



Summer Reading @ Musselman Library

"That is a good book which is opened with
expectation and closed with profit."

~A. Bronson Alcott



As summertime approaches, so do visions of lazy days spent relaxing in the yard and reading a good book. A wonderful vision, but what to read?

Musselman Library asked Gettysburg College faculty members to help create a list of suggested summer reading materials to help inspire students and the rest of our campus community to find some time this summer to sit back, relax, and read. These summer reading picks are guaranteed to offer much adventure, drama, and fun. Choose one, choose three, and enjoy those lazy summer days to come! We'll see you in the fall!

☺

*From the Staff of Musselman Library
Spring 2003*

Organized alphabetically by faculty member:

Matthew Amster, Sociology / Anthropology

Title: *The Beach* by Alex Garland

“I want to recommend *The Beach* by Alex Garland. Despite the fact that most people probably associate it with the Hollywood adaptation starring Leonardo DiCaprio (which changes many key story lines and leaves out many of the most important) this is an amazing book about a failed utopia. It takes place on a remote island off the coast of Thailand and is just one of those books that you can't put down. Perfect summer reading.” ~ Matthew Amster

Temma Berg, Women's Studies / English

Title: *Daniel Deronda* by George Eliot

“Reading this novel is entering the world of Victorian England in all its complexities and contradictions. This is Eliot's last novel, so she is at her triumphant best. It's a long novel, so it's best to read it in the summer when there is world enough and time to read it slowly and to relish its density.” ~ Temma Berg

Michael Birkner, History

Title: *Of Time and the River* by Thomas Wolfe

“The book I'll suggest ... is from an author once widely admired but now rarely read: Thomas Wolfe. No, not the Tom Wolfe of *Bonfire of the Vanities* fame. I'm referring to North Carolina born Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938) who emerged like a thunderbolt on the literary scene with publication of *Look Homeward Angel*. I loved that story of growing up in rural North Carolina in the early 20th century, but if I'm forced to name only one book for Summer reading I'd pick the sequel, *Of Time and the River* -- a massive, sprawling account of Eugene Gant's struggle as a university student to come to grips with the world and to forge a sensibility. As a college student more than three decades ago I was most engaged with questions of sincerity and authenticity. (Remember, I grew up in the age of Johnson's credibility gap and Nixon's pathological lying.) Wolfe's narrative engages these issues with rare intensity and painful veracity. Enmeshed in the tangled sentences and somewhat fevered narrative is one of the greatest set pieces in American fiction: the twenty page section on the death of Eugene Gant's father. Thirty-five years later I cannot recapture how I felt when I read that transcendent section of this remarkable book, but I can readily recommend *Of Time and the River* to college students interested in exploring their personal identity. One caveat: be prepared to take much of your summer with this book. It is longer than *War and Peace!*” ~ Michael Birkner

Robert Bornstein, Psychology

Title: *The Honk and Holler Opening Soon* by Billie Letts

“*The Honk and Holler Opening Soon* by Billie Letts is just terrific. She has a Steinbeckian gift for delving into the world of people living on the edge of mainstream society. By the end of the book, you feel as though you've really come to know these people, and seen the world through their eyes.” ~ Robert Bornstein

William Bowman, History

Title: *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture* by Carl E. Schorske

“A collection of essays in cultural history which discuss the rise of modernism and modernity in a wide variety of fields, including music, architecture, politics, psychology, and literature. The essays also give a vivid and expert view of the capital of the Habsburg monarchy at its cultural height, namely, in the period between 1870 and 1930. Based largely on this book, the author was awarded a MacArthur Grant.” ~ William Bowman

Leslie Cahoon, Classics

Title: The Bible's Song of Songs (King James Version)

“I recommend the Bible's Song of Songs -- also called the Song of Solomon -- in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)--especially in the King James Version --it's a short book of gorgeous passionate amazing poetry that celebrates sex and marriage as well as the intensity of love between God and His people -- people who have never read it are always blown away by discovering it in the first place and by its incredible sensual beauty.” ~ Leslie Cahoon

John Commito, Environmental Studies

Title: *Cryptonomicon* by Neal Stephenson

“I recommend Neal Stephenson's novel *Cryptonomicon*. It's a wild, fractured, post-modern story with everything you might want in a summer book -- great dialogue, WW II code-cracking espionage, high-flying dotcoms, California hipsters, math geeks, and sex. Imagine "The Matrix" co-written by John Barth and Ian Fleming on amphetamines and starring the young Sean Connery. Yeah, that's the ticket!” ~ John Commito

Nancy Cushing-Daniels, Interdisciplinary Studies / Spanish

Title: *A Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing* by Melissa Bank

“This is a perfect summer book - not light reading, but not too heavy. It presents us with a lot of real life relationship situations, some of which are humorous, some of which are very poignant, all of which are very well-written. And it's not just for women!!!” ~ Nancy Cushing-Daniels

Chris Ericson Hansen, History

Title: “Stephanie Plum” series by Janet Evanovich

“I would like to suggest the “Stephanie Plum” series written by Janet Evanovich. (It's not just one book: there are actually eight in the series currently, with #9 scheduled to come out in July 2003.) The books are witty, fast-paced "suspense" novels with offbeat characters and hilarious situations. The protagonist is a female bounty hunter from Trenton, New Jersey, who doesn't like guns and who somehow manages to get herself embroiled in some pretty fantastic jams. Some of the books are better than others (my favorite is *Hot Six*), but all are laugh-out-loud funny.” ~ Chris Ericson Hansen

Kay Etheridge, Biology

Title: *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino

“This little book is a jewel of poetic prose, ideas, reality and imagination. I am not eloquent enough to describe it concretely and do it justice. The plot device is simple: Marco Polo is describing cities (such as Venic) that he has seen to Kublai Khan. These are not literal descriptions in any way, but they are amazing and memorable.”

Here is a brief excerpt:

"... the special quality of this city for the man who arrives there on a September evening, when the days are growing shorter and the multicolored lamps are lighted all at once at the doors of the food stalls, and from a terrace a woman's voice cries ooh!, is that he feels envy toward those who now believe they have once before lived an evening identical to this and who think they were happy, that time."

~ Kay Etheridge

Ann Fender, Economics

Title: *A Beautiful Mind* by Sylvia Nasar

"This biography of Nobel prize winner John Nash captures the very special intellectual environment of post World War II science, mathematics, and economics. It also captures the poignant story of a brilliant mind disordered by disease and how Nash, his family, and friends managed a return to a tolerable life." ~ Ann Fender

Jean Fletcher, Economics

Title: *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver

(No comments provided)

Mark Hopkins, Economics

Title: *Buck Passes Flynn* by Gregory McDonald

"This campy detective novel by the author of *Fletch* is perfect for relaxed & fun summer reading, but it may be out of print now. I read it one summer more than a decade ago, and it was the first and only time I've read a whodunnit about monetary economics. The mystery starts out: why is somebody mysteriously leaving deposits of \$100,000 in cash randomly at people's doorsteps? What nefarious plot is afoot, and what is the rationale???" ~ Mark Hopkins

Scott Hancock, History / African American Studies

Title #1: *The Miracle of Castel di Sangro* by Joe McGinniss

Title #2: *No Matter How Loud I Shout* by Edward Humes

"*The Miracle of Castel di Sangro* is a story at times so outlandish that it would make ridiculous fiction--except it is all too true. Joe McGinniss tells an almost whimsical story of a soccer team from a small town in Italy that has a great cast of characters who attempt to beat the odds in their attempt to stay in a professional league usually reserved for rich clubs from big cities."

"*No Matter How Loud I Shout* chronicles the experiences of young men and women during one year of a juvenile court in Los Angeles. Edward Humes draws you into the lives of these teenagers as they attempt to work out their hopes and failures in a court system weighed down with a flood of human frustration." ~ Scott Hancock

Molly Hutton, Visual Arts

Title: *My Son's Story* by Nadine Gordimer

“Although not really "light" summer reading, all of Gordimer's novels are beautifully crafted. *My Son's Story* is wonderful in that almost every sentence is a work of art. It's both a love story and a powerfully political novel, set in apartheid-plagued South Africa.” ~ Molly Hutton

Sally Keith, English

Title: *Desperate Characters* by Paula Fox

“Paula Fox's *Desperate Characters* is a beautifully written novella about fate, a woman, and a cat bite. My attention was riveted, sentence by sentence, and scene by scene. By the story's final image, I was perfectly stunned and can still say that this is the best fiction I've read this year.” ~ Sally Keith

Shawna Leigh, Classics

Title: *The Tao of Inner Peace* by Diane Dreher

“Dreher takes ideas from the *Tao Te Ching* and discusses how one can make these simple principals part of our everyday modern existence. From guided meditations to suggestions as to how we can each help to preserve our earth's resources, this book gives the reader a positive, nurturing message - perfect for these tumultuous times.” ~ Shawna Leigh

L.C. Leinbach, Computer Science

Title: *The Code Book* by Simon Singh

“This book traces the history of secret codes starting with Mary, Queen of Scots, and gives a good, readable introduction of the various coding schemes and the role that they played in military history, archeology, and scientific history. Particularly interesting is the cracking of the Egyptian Heiroglyphics, Linear-B, and the Enigma Machine Codes. It also gives a very readable account of Public Key Cryptography, and concludes with Quantum Codes. It is dedicated to code makers and code breakers. Singh is a Ph.D. Physicist and former Scientific Advisor for the BBC.” ~ L.C. Leinbach

Lisa Liebetrau, Theatre Arts

Title: *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver

“My favorite book is *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. It made me think about material things and our need for stuff, and also my need for less 'things' and more people. It may be especially appropriate during wartime.” ~ Lisa Liebetrau

Larry Marschall, Physics

Title #1: *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene

Title #2: *Travels With My Aunt* by Graham Greene

“Let me suggest two books by Graham Greene that would make good summer reading. *The Quiet American*: a book about how good intentions in foreign affairs can have disastrous consequences. It's a cautionary tale with an obvious application to the current situation in the Mideast, but it is particularly sobering to realize that it was meant to be a cautionary tale about a previous war, several wars ago. And *Travels With My Aunt* so that you don't go away thinking that Greene is all gloom and guilt. This is a very funny book.” ~ Larry Marschall

John Messier, Economics

Title: *The Palace of Dreams* by Ismail Kadare

“It is a subtle and thought provoking view of life in a totalitarian regime. Extremely well written fictional account of a regime that monitors the dreams of citizens through a mind numbing bureaucracy.” ~ John Messier

Jackie Milingo, Physics

Title: *Longitude* by Dava Sobel

“I might change my mind next week but right now I would have to suggest *Longitude* by Dava Sobel. Minimally it's an interesting history of the maritime chronometer BUT where I think this book truly shines is how it portrays the totally human feelings, interactions, and protocol that went into creating this clock! The history of science (specifically astronomy, used here for navigation) can be just downright shocking when one discovers the true impetus behind so much of the problem solving, invention, and exploration. Not to mention who is rewarded for the hard work (often NOT the hard workers!). The astronomers are just ghastly in this story... I was ashamed for my peoples. But I love this story because the lifelong work and ultimate achievement of John Harrison is so beautifully portrayed...” ~ Jackie Milingo

Ken Mott, Political Science

Title: *Up Country* by Nelson DeMille

“It is a marvelous mystery, travelogue, and history of Vietnam in the late 1960s and 1990s. DeMille is one of the best writers on the current scene.” ~ Ken Mott

Sheila Mulligan, English

Title: *Women* by Charles Bukowski

“I would like to recommend the book *Women* by Charles Bukowski. I picked up a thrift store copy of the book with contempt, rage and trepidation--I mean, how dare he call a book WOMEN, after all. I have been in love with Bukowski--regardless of his status as a dead outlaw poet, ever since.” ~ Sheila Mulligan

Jonelle Pool, Education

Title #1: *In the Heart of the Sea* by Nathaniel Philbrick

Title #2: *Ahab's Wife* by Sena Jeter Naslund

“For pure adventure, I enjoyed *In the Heart of the Sea*, book that contains some of the original information Melville used to write *Moby Dick*. I also enjoyed *Ahab's Wife*, the same *Moby Dick* story, but from the women's perspective.” ~ Jonelle Pool

Jan Powers, Global Studies

Title: *Cane River* by Lalita Tademy

"I recommend *Cane River* by Lalita Tademy as a great summer read, which covers several generations of a black Creole family in Louisiana from the women's perspective. One gets a slightly different picture of slavery and its aftermath, under French colonial masters, in this lengthy but absorbing novel." ~ Jan Powers

Michael Ritterson, German

Title#1: *Annals of the Former World* by John McPhee

Title #2: *Without End: New and Selected Poems* by Adam Zagajewski

Annals of the Former World by John McPhee:

"Back in September 1992 The New Yorker printed, in three installments, an essay by John McPhee called "Annals of the Former World: Assembling California," which caught my eye with a color topographical map of the western U.S. and the promise of geoscientific news. McPhee made fascinating global geological connections, with the narrative skill of a mystery writer. It turns out that the New Yorker article represented one chapter of a book (John McPhee, *Annals of the Former World*, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1998), which I later bought and was hoping to read a couple of summers ago, but there was never time. I plan to try again this summer, I guess because I have to see just how much of what I learned in college geology courses has given way to new understandings of the structure and workings of the earth."

Without End: New and Selected Poems by Adam Zagajewski:

"Adam Zagajewski is a wonderful poet whom I first read in the New Yorker issue that followed September 11, 2001. The poem printed there, "Try to Praise the Mutilated World," was one of the two or three most meaningful responses to that day that I have seen or heard. The poem is now included, with many other fine examples of Zagajewski's work, in the volume: *Without End: New and Selected Poems*, translated from the Polish by Clare Cavanagh and others (NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2002).

And no, I am not on the staff of either The New Yorker or Farrar, Straus." ~ Michael Ritterson

Susan Russell, Theatre Arts

Title: *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver

"This book is a tiny bit hard to get into, but once you've gotten used to the fact that different chapters are written by different characters, it's hard to put down. I recommend it because it is beautifully written and because it is a compelling story of a missionary family's journey to Africa, and the story of the mother's and daughters' reactions to the culture and people they encounter." ~ Susan Russell

Charles Saltzman, English

Title: *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* by Kiran Desai

"I heartily recommend a short novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, by Kiran Desai. I see that we have it. It is one of the funniest, most charming novels I have read in recent years." ~ Charles Saltzman

Andy Shaw, Visual Arts

Title: *Elect Mr. Robinson for a Better World* by Donal Antrim

"I would highly recommend Donald Antrim's *Elect Mr. Robinson for a Better World*. It is satirically funny and frequently crosses into the absurd. Entertaining, thought provoking, and highly imaginative." ~ Andy Shaw

Allison Singley, English

Title: *The Dive From Clausen's Pier* by Ann Packer

“I found this to be one of the best works of contemporary American fiction that I have read in quite a while. While the premise of the novel may be off-putting to some, the story is exceptionally well-crafted--in part because of its lack of sentimentality relative to the subject. This novel is about choices, debunked dreams, growing up, families, carving an identity. While it doesn't take on heavy social issues, it does tell an engaging story. My only disappointment came at the very end, but this disappointment won't let me stand in the way of exclaiming with enthusiasm that this was the best summer read of 2002 for me.” ~ Allison Singley

Sharon Stephenson, Physics

Title: *Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science* by Atul Gawande

“As long as you aren't scheduled for any major medical procedures in the summer months, it should prove to be enjoyable not only because it is so well written, but also because it lends itself well to reading a chapter at a time. It explores the human side of medicine honestly but also without being overly dramatic or alarming.” ~ Sharon Stephenson

Richard Stevens, Political Science

Title: *Seabiscuit: An American Legend* by Laura Hillenbrand

“I have never had any interest in horse racing or in horses but circumstances led me to read Laura Hillenbrand's *Seabiscuit* and, as the cliché goes, I couldn't put it down. It is an intricate web of the biographies of the horse, its owner, its trainer, and its two chief jockeys. All of their stories are compelling and Hillenbrand's writing won't let go of you. I have no doubt that I will read it again after an interval.” ~ Richard Stevens

Peter Stitt, Gettysburg Review / English

Title: *Shot In the Heart* by Mikal Gilmore

“Deeply moving, deeply tragic story of dysfunctionality in a family and a society.” ~ Peter Stitt

Jacquelyn Tuerk, Visual Arts

Title #1: *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky

Title #2: *Middlemarch* by George Eliot

“Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* challenges readers to address difficult moral dilemmas, and outlines compassion as a universal ethical response. George Elliot's *Middlemarch* explores various psychological types with great sensitivity, and provides a rich detailed narrative.” ~ Jacquelyn Tuerk

Cheryl Vogel, Biology

Title: *A Free Man of Color* by Barbara Hambly

“This is a murder mystery and the first novel in an ongoing series of seven set in New Orleans shortly after the Louisiana Purchase. Well written with attention given to historical details. New Orleans in the 1830s is a place of change mixed with tradition. Benjamin January, a free man of color, has returned home after many years in Paris, fleeing a city that seems to speak his dead wife's name every time he turns around. A musician and doctor, Benjamin

is en route to play at a Carnival octaroon ball when a masked young woman calls for help in the street, shouting his name. When Angelique disappears before the evening's planned tableaux, Benjamin watches with amusement as his sister Dominique, and her friends, search frantically for the girl - amusement that turns to horror when Angelique is found dead. When the police come to investigate, January realizes that he is the last person to have seen the girl alive, since the young man she was with when he left the room has fled to a country estate and is hiding from questioning. The social climate is already chilly toward men of color, even free ones, and January finds himself having to go to great lengths to have to clear his name - and to find out what really did happen to Angelique during the Mardi Gras ball.” ~ Cheryl Vogel

Kerry Walters, Philosophy

Title: *Seeds of Non-Violence* by John Dear

“An inspiring and challenging collection of reflections on peace and peacemaking, written by the leading Catholic peace activist today--the successor to the Berrigan brothers and Dorothy Day.” ~ Kerry Walters

