

49-99 Book Club in a Box

TITLES AVAILABLE – October 2012

(Please destroy all previous lists)

FICTION, CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL

The Art of Racing in the Rain – by Garth Stein (321 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

A heart-wrenching but deeply funny and ultimately uplifting story of family, love, loyalty and hope, *The Art of Racing in the Rain* is a beautifully crafted and captivating look at the wonders and absurdities of human life... as only a dog could tell it. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

Articles of War – by Nick Arvin (178 p.) - 15 copies + audio (CD)

This gripping World War II novel follows a stunningly average young soldier from Iowa to Europe – and forces us to rethink the glory of the Greatest Generation. (Salon.com)

Atonement – by Ian McEwan (368 p.) - 22 copies + audio (CD)

In a crumbling English mansion in 1935, young Briony tells a lie that sends a man to jail. Five years later, a soldier retreats during World War II. These story threads come together in the book's surprising conclusion. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress - by Dai Sijie (184 p.) - 25 copies + audio (CD)

Two boys are sent to the countryside to be re-educated in this fable set during China's Cultural Revolution. They discover hope through forbidden western literature, but find hope can be cruel and corrupting. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Bel Canto - by Ann Patchett (318 p.) - 19 copies + audio (cassettes)

In the Vice President's house in an unnamed South American country, an elegant dinner party turns into a kidnapping that goes awry - the President the terrorists are intent on capturing misses the dinner. When the government refuses to give in to their demands, the hostage situation continues for a number of weeks during which a pleasant domesticity, enlivened by opera singing, begins to blur the lines between captive and captor. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Blue Heaven - by C.J. Box (384 p.) – 15 copies

A twelve-year-old girl and her younger brother go on the run in the woods of northern Idaho, pursued by four men they have just watched commit murder—four men who know exactly who the children are, and where their desperate mother is waiting patiently by the phone for news of her children's fate. In a ranching community increasingly populated by L.A. transplants living in gaudy McMansions, the kids soon find they don't know whom they can trust among the hundreds of retired Southern California cops who've given the area its nickname: "Blue Heaven." (*From the publisher.*)

California Uncovered: Stories for the 21st Century - by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni & others (379 p.) –13 copies

Hear and feel dynamic California in the words of established writers like John Steinbeck, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Joan Didion, as well as compelling new voices that reveal California in all its complexity. *California Uncovered* is a central component of a statewide program sponsored by the California Council for the Humanities designed to inspire people to tell and listen to stories that get at the reality beneath the headlines, statistics, and stereotypes about the state and its people. (*Compliments of Amazon.com*)

Close Range: Wyoming Stories – by Annie Proulx (288 p.) - 15 copies + audio (CD)

Proulx explores the underside of America's beloved Wild West in a collection of stories about hardship in Wyoming territory. Understanding that the West's infinite spaces tended to inspire neither introspection nor contemplation, but a violent and insatiable restlessness, Proulx's eight stories are dark reflections of a handful of characters striving to define themselves against the unforgiving landscapes. Includes "Brokeback Mountain." (Amazon.com)

The Coffee Trader - by David Liss (402 p.) - 16 copies

Price-fixing and stock market manipulation may sound like the makings of a modern Wall Street thriller, but the setting is the Amsterdam stock exchange in 1659, where a Jew recently resettled from Portugal struggles to save his name and fortune in the face of unscrupulous commodity traders, family rivalries, tension between Jews and Christians, and infighting within the community of Portuguese Jews escaping the Inquisition.

Consider This, Senora – by Harriet Doerr (241 p.) – 15 copies

In this novel the characters find themselves waiting, hoping and living in rural Mexico – a land with the power to enchant, repel, and change all who pass through. Each of the North Americans who settles in Amapolas interacts with the landscape and the Mexican residents in a different way, but it is Ursula Bowles – born in Mexico and now returning near the end of her life - who comes to the truest understanding of the nature of the place. (Jacket notes)

Crown of Dust - by Mary Volmer (274 p.) – 15 copies

In the small settlement of Motherlode, a group of disparate characters have set up a community, held together by the formidable Emaline, hostess of the Wayside Inn. It is there that Alex, on the run from something and disguised as a teenage boy, finds refuge. But once she strikes gold, buried secrets are revealed and danger surrounds her. (www.amazon.com)

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time - by Mark Haddon (226 p.) - 20 copies + audio (CD)

An autistic teen narrates this story of his adventure trying to solve a mystery surrounding the discovery of the murdered corpse of his neighbor's pet poodle. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Cutting for Stone – by Abraham Verghese (688 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD)

An epic novel that spans continents and generations, *Cutting for Stone* is an unforgettable story of love and betrayal, compassion and redemption, exile and home that unfolds across five decades in India, Ethiopia, and America. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

Daughter of Fortune - by Isabel Allende (416 p.) - 16 copies

An orphan raised in Valparaiso, Chile, by a Victorian spinster and her rigid brother, Eliza Sommers follows her lover to California during the Gold Rush of 1849 and meets a Chinese herbalist, who becomes her soul mate, on the journey. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Devil in a Blue Dress – by Walter Mosley (263 p.) - 17 copies

Los Angeles, 1948: Easy Rawlins is a black war veteran just fired from his job at a defense plant. Easy is drinking in a friend's bar, wondering how he'll meet his mortgage, when a white man in a linen suit walks in, offering good money if Easy will simply locate Miss Daphne Money, a blond beauty known to frequent black jazz clubs... (Jacket notes)

Dogs of Babel - by Carolyn Parkhurst (288 p.) – 15 copies + audio

In Paul's fantastic and even perilous search for the truth about his wife's death, he abandons his everyday life to embark on a series of experiments designed to teach his dog Lorelei to communicate. Could she really give him the answers he is looking for? (www.amazon.com)

Dreaming in Cuban – by Cristina Garcia (245 p.) - 21 copies

Poignant and perceptive...it tells of a family divided politically and geographically by the Cuban revolution...and of the generational fissures that open on each side. In Cuba, between a grandmother who is a fervent Castro supporter and a daughter who retreats into an Afro-Cuban Santeria cult; in American, between another daughter, militantly anti-Castro, and her own rebellious punk-artist daughter, who mocks her obsession. (Richard Eder – *Los Angeles Times*)

English Creek - by Ivan Doig (352 p.) - 14 copies

The summer of his 14th year brings challenges and changes to Jick McCaskill and his family. Jick's older brother decides not to attend college, becoming a cowboy instead; a fire in Two Medicine National Forest threatens to destroy the community; and, "by summer's end, Jick has learned the secret his father and an old campjack have kept from the rest of the community," (*Compliments of Amazon.com*)

A Fabricated Mexican – by Rick Rivera (168 p.) - 17 copies

Charts the hilarious and bittersweet saga of growing up in two cultures with the American Dream as the guiding light. The reader follows Ricky Coronado's search for identity, made more difficult by the specter of his father's suicide and the pressures placed upon him by his strong-willed mother. Rivera teaches at Columbia College in Tuolumne County.

Ghost of Hannah Mendes - by Naomi Ragen (384 p.) - 20 copies

Ragen's engrossing novel depicts one family's search for its Sephardic Jewish roots. While contemplating how to divide her numerous assets, Catherine de Costa is visited by the ghost of ancestor Hannah Mendes (an actual historical figure), who tells her to send her granddaughters to search for Hannah's missing medieval manuscript. (*Patty Engelmann – Booklist*)

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo – by Stieg Larsson (465 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

Mikael Blomkvist, crusading journalist and publisher of the magazine Millennium, has decided to run a story that will expose an extensive sex trafficking operation between Eastern Europe and Sweden, implicating well-known and highly placed members of Swedish society, business, and government. But he has no idea just how explosive the story will be until, on the eve of publication, the two investigating reporters are murdered. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

**Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society – by Mary Ann Shaffer (304 p.)
-15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print**

This epistolary novel, based on Shaffer's painstaking, lifelong research, is an homage to booklovers and a nostalgic portrayal of an era. However, it is the tragic stories of life under Nazi occupation that animate the novel and give it its urgency. With its humor and optimism, *Guernsey* "affirms the power of books to nourish people during hard times" (*Washington Post*). Copyright 2008 Bookmarks Publishing LLC

The Handmaid's Tale – by Margaret Atwood (320 p.) - 15 copies + audio (cassettes)

Canadian poet and novelist Atwood presents a fable of the near future. In the Republic of Gilead, formerly the United States, far-right ideals have been carried to extremes in the monotheocratic government. The resulting society is a feminist's nightmare: women are strictly controlled, unable to have jobs or money, and assigned to various classes. The tale is told by a Handmaid who recalls the past and tells how the chilling society came to be. (*Library Journal*)

The Help – by Kathryn Stockett (544 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

In pitch-perfect voices, Kathryn Stockett creates three extraordinary women whose determination to start a movement of their own forever changes a town, and the way women-mothers, daughters, caregivers, friends-view one another. A deeply moving novel filled with poignancy, humor, and hope, *The Help* is a timeless and universal story about the lines we abide by, and the ones we don't. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

History of Love – by Nicole Kraus (272 p.) - 15 copies

A long-lost book reappears, mysteriously connecting an old man searching for his son and a girl seeking a cure for her widowed mother's loneliness. (from the publisher's website)

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet – by Jamie Ford (290 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

Henry Lee comes upon a crowd gathered outside the Panama Hotel, once the gateway to Seattle's Japantown. It has been boarded up for decades, but now the new owner has made an incredible discovery: the belongings of Japanese families, left when they were rounded up and sent to internment camps during World War II. As Henry looks on, the owner opens a Japanese parasol. This simple act takes old Henry Lee back to the 1940s, at the height of the war, when young Henry's world is a jumble of confusion and excitement, and to his father, who is obsessed with the war in China and having Henry grow up American. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

If He Hollers Let Him Go – by Chester Himes (203 p.) - 14 copies

This classic story of a man living in fear every day of his life for simply being black is as powerful today as when it was first published in 1947. Set in Southern California in the early forties, the novel spans four days in the life of Bob Jones, a black man relentlessly plagued by the effects of World War II racism. His is a society drenched in insidious race consciousness, and these surroundings take their toll on his behavior, thoughts and emotions – even before he is accused of a brutal crime he did not commit. (Jacket notes)

In the Lake of the Woods – by Tim O'Brien (320 p.) - 14 copies

A failed political campaign leads Vietnam veteran John Wade and his wife Kathy to retreat to their cabin in the woods to re-group. When Kathy disappears, John's past collides with his present. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

In the Time of the Butterflies – by Julia Alvarez (321 p.) - 23 copies

Four martyred sisters, symbols of defiant hope in a country shadowed by dictatorship and despair, speak across the decades to tell their stories of everyday horrors under the Dominican dictator Trujillo. The sisters come to vibrant, dramatic life in a warm, brilliant, and heartbreaking story that makes a haunting statement about the human cost of political oppression. (Jacket notes)

The Jane Austen Book Club – by Karen Joy Fowler (288 p.) - 18 copies + audio (CD)

"Real people are really complicated," says Jocelyn, the founder of the "Central Valley/River City all-Jane-Austen-all-the-time Book Club." And the members of her newly founded book club certainly prove this to be true. Each has a story to tell, and much like an Austen novel, the intricate plots that are their own lives are slowly revealed. This simple act takes old Henry Lee back to the 1940s, at the height of the war, when young Henry's world is a jumble of confusion and excitement, and to his father, who is obsessed with the war in China and having Henry grow up American.

Kite Runner – Khaled Hosseini (371 p.) - 19 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

A boy named Amir, born in pre-Soviet Afghanistan, befriends a servant's son. Long after emigrating to California, Amir returns to Afghanistan to reconnect with his past. This is an epic tale of fathers and sons, of friendship and betrayal, that takes us from Afghanistan in the final days of the monarchy to the atrocities of the present. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

Life of Pi - by Yann Martel (326 p.) - 25 copies + audio (CD)

An Indian boy, Piscine Patel (aka 'Pi') and his zookeeping family are emigrating to Canada. While on a container ship enroute to their new life, an accident at sea leaves Pi and a tiger in a lifeboat floating on the Pacific Ocean. The hilarious and soulful 2002 winner of the Booker Prize. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Lydia Cassatt Reading the Morning Paper - by Harriett Scott Chessman (164 p.) - 17 copies + audio (CD)

Readers will be transported to the vibrant art scene of late nineteenth-century Paris in this richly textured portrait of the relationship between Mary Cassatt and her sister Lydia. It is a moving and revealing portrait of the free-spirited artist and the sister and model who lived—and died—with such courage, dignity, and grace. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

Major Pettigrew's Last Stand – by Helen Simonson (384 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

The Major leads a quiet life valuing the proper things that Englishmen have lived by for generations: honor, duty, decorum, and a properly brewed cup of tea. But then his brother's death sparks an unexpected friendship with Mrs. Jasmina Ali, the Pakistani shopkeeper from the village. Drawn together by their shared love of literature and the loss of their respective spouses, the Major and Mrs. Ali soon find their friendship blossoming into something more. But village society insists on embracing him as the quintessential local and her as the permanent foreigner. Can their relationship survive the risks one takes when pursuing happiness in the face of culture and tradition? (www.bookbrowse.com)

March – by Geraldine Brooks (304 p.) - 15 copies + audio (CD)

This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel imagines the Civil War experiences of Mr. March, the absent father in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*.

Middlesex – by Jeffrey Eugenides (529 p.) – 17 copies + audio (CD)

This is the astonishing tale of a gene that passes down through three generations of Greek-American family and flowers in the body of Calliope Stephanides. *Middlesex* is a story about what it means to occupy the complex and unnamed middle ground between male and female, Greek and American, past and present. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

The Milagro Beanfield War – John Nichols (456 p.) - 16 copies

After Joe Mondragon, a feisty hustler with a talent for trouble, marches into an arid patch of ground and (illegally) taps into the main irrigation channel, small farmers and sheepmen begin to rally to Joe's beanfield as the symbol of their lost rights and their lost lands. And downstate in the capital, the Anglo water barons and power brokers huddle, intent on destroying that symbol before it destroys their multimillion-dollar land-development schemes. (www.henryholt.com/readingguides/milagro)

Moviegoer - by Walker Percy (242 p.) - 16 copies + audio (CD)

This elegantly written account of a young man's search for signs of purpose in the universe is one of the great existential texts of the postwar era and is really funny besides. Binx Bolling, inveterate cinemaphile, contemplative rake and man of the periphery, tries hedonism and tries doing the right thing, but ultimately finds redemption (or at least the prospect of it) by taking a leap of faith and quite literally embracing what only seems irrational.

Mystic River – by Dennis Lehane (472 p.) - 18 copies + audio (CD)

Mystic River is a story about three friends who confront their past and their choices. When Dave, Sean, and Jimmy were eleven, two men posing as policemen lured Dave into a car. Although he escaped, the terrifying incident causes the three friends to grow apart. Their paths cross 25 years later when Sean, a homicide detective, is assigned to investigate the death of Jimmy's daughter. Dave is a suspect. (Courtesy Massachusetts Center for the Book)

The Namesake - by Jhumpa Lahiri (291 p.) - 16 copies + Large Print

Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli are recent immigrants to Boston from India in 1968 when they give birth to their first child, a son. Their son ends up with the pet name of Gogol, when his "good name" never arrives from India. Gogol despises his name and grows up as American as he can while his parents cling to their Bengali past while living what appears to be a typical American suburban lifestyle.

Olive Kitteridge – by Elizabeth Strout (270 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

At times stern, at other times patient, at times perceptive, at other times in sad denial, Olive Kitteridge, a retired schoolteacher, deplores the changes in her little town of Crosby, Maine, and in the world at large, but she doesn't always recognize the changes in those around her. As the townspeople grapple with their problems, mild and dire, Olive is brought to a deeper understanding of herself and her life --- sometimes painfully, but always with ruthless honesty. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

Our Lady of the Forest – by David Guterson (336 p.) - 19 copies + audio (Tape)

An emotionally charged, provocative novel about a teenage girl who claims to see the Virgin Mary. *Our Lady of the Forest* tells a suspenseful, often wryly humorous and deeply involving story of faith at a contemporary crossroads. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

Out Stealing Horses – by Per Petterson (256 p.) - 15 copies + Large Print

Trond Sander, a 67-old man, has moved to a remote, riverside cabin, only to have all the turbulence, grief, and overwhelming beauty of his youth come back to haunt him. The reader is immersed in a decades-deep story of searching and loss told in precise, irresistible prose. (Reading Group Choices)

Passion of Artemisia – by Susan Vreeland (352 p.) – 12 copies

Narrated in the wise, candid first-person voice of Italian painter Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1653), the novel tells the story of Gentileschi's life and career in Renaissance Italy. (Publishers Weekly)

Picture Bride - by Yoshiko Uchida (216 p.) - 30 copies

Young Hana Omiya arrives in San Francisco in 1917, one of several hundred Japanese "picture brides" whose arranged marriages brought them to America in the early 1900s. Her story is intertwined with others: her husband, an Oakland shopkeeper; Kiku and her husband Henry, who reject demeaning city work to become farmers; and Dr. Kaneda, a respected community leader who is destroyed by the adopted land he loves. All are caught up in the cruel turmoil of World War II, when West Coast Japanese Americans are uprooted from their homes. (*Amazon.com*)

The Postmistress – by Sarah Blake (384 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

The Postmistress is a tale of three unforgettable women, of lost innocence, of what happens to love when those we cherish leave us. It examines how we tell each other stories --- how we bear the fact that that war is going on at the same time as ordinary lives continue. Filled with stunning parallels to our lives today, it is a remarkable novel. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

Praisesong for the Widow – by Paule Marshall (256 p.) - 21 copies

A black, middle-aged, middle-class widow given to hats, gloves, and pearls has put behind her the Harlem of her childhood. Then, on a cruise to the Caribbean, she senses her life beginning to unravel – and in a panic packs her bags in the middle of the night and abandons the ship at the next port of call. The unexpected and beautiful adventure that follows provides links to the culture and history she has so long disavowed. (Jacket notes)

Pride and Prejudice – by Jane Austen (384 p.) - 17 copies + audio (CD)

Elizabeth Bennett is young, clever, and attractive, but she and her sisters are in dire need of financial security in the shape of husbands. The arrival of the pleasant, nice Mr. Bingley and the obscenely arrogant Mr. Darcy turns all of their lives upside down in the witty drama of friendship, rivalry, enmity, and love. (Amazon.com)

Sarah's Key – by Tatiana de Rosnay (294 p.) -15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year-old girl, is brutally arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup, but not before she locks her younger brother in a cupboard in the family's apartment, thinking that she will be back within a few hours. Paris, May 2002: On Vel' d'Hiv's 60th anniversary, journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article about this black day in France's past. Through her contemporary investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connect her to Sarah. Julia finds herself compelled to retrace the girl's ordeal, from that terrible term in the Vel d'Hiv', to the camps, and beyond. As she probes into Sarah's past, she begins to question her own place in France, and to reevaluate her marriage and her life. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Shanghai Girls – by Lisa See (309 p.) – 15 copies

In 1937 Shanghai, sisters Pearl and May, are beautiful, modern, and carefree --- until the day their father tells them that he has gambled away their wealth and is selling the girls as wives to men from the United States. Along their journey, they make terrible sacrifices, face impossible choices, and confront a devastating, life-changing secret, but through it all the two heroines of this astounding new novel hold fast to who they are --- Shanghai girls. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan - by Lisa See (288 p.) – 17 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

The story of Lily Yi and Snow Flower, intimate friends who used a secret written language to correspond, and how they were brought together and torn apart by their letters in 19th century rural China. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Specimen Days – by Michael Cunningham (336 p.) - 15 copies + audio (CD)

Walt Whitman haunts this triptych novel from the author of *The Hours*, which raises historical fiction, the detective story, and science fiction to the status of literature. (Salon.com) *Specimen Days* is a genre-bending, haunting, and transformative ode to life in our greatest city (New York) and a meditation on the direction and meaning of America's destiny. (Amazon.com)

Still Alice – by Lisa Genova (293 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

Alice Howland, happily married with three grown children and a house on the Cape, is a celebrated Harvard professor at the height of her career when she notices a forgetfulness creeping into her life. As confusion starts to cloud her thinking and her memory begins to fail her, she receives a devastating diagnosis: early onset Alzheimer's disease. (www.readinggroupguides.com)

Sweet Hereafter - by Russell Banks (272 p.) – 14 copies

With the cool logic of accreting snowflakes, Banks builds a world--a small U.S. town near Canada—peopled with four vivid, sensitive souls linked by a school-bus tragedy: the bus driver; the Vietnam vet who was driving behind the bus when it went off the road; the negligence lawyer who tries to shape the victims' heartaches into a winning case; and the beauty-queen cheerleader crippled by the crash, whose testimony will determine everyone's fate. (Amazon.com)

The Sweetest Dream – by Doris Lessing (496 p.) - 13 copies

From swinging-'60s London to liberated sub-Saharan Africa, the author depicts the human faces of a broad canvas of issues in this polemical piece. The novel ranges from anorexia to AIDS to casting a questioning eye at the morality of the travelers on the World Bank gravy train. Lessing documents the social movement and lost dreams of a post-war generation. (Amazon.co.uk)

The Talented Mr. Ripley by Patricia Highsmith (288 p.) – 15 copies

One of the great crime novels of the 20th century, Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* works on two levels. First, it is the story of a young man, Tom Ripley, whose nihilistic tendencies lead him on a deadly passage across Europe. On another level, the novel is a commentary on fiction making and techniques of narrative persuasion. Ripley seduces readers into empathizing with him even as his actions defy all moral standards. (Amazon.com)

Those Who Save Us – by Jenna Blum (496 p.) - 15 copies

Mother-daughter story related to mother's activities in WWII in Germany and what she did to survive and protect her daughter while suspected of helping Jewish prisoners.

Tortilla Curtain – by T. C. Boyle (355 p.) - 10 copies

In Southern California's Topanga Canyon, nature writer Delaney Mossbacher and his real estate agent wife reside in an exclusive housing development. Camped out at the bottom of the canyon are Cándido and América Rincón, a Mexican couple who have crossed the border illegally. A chance, violent encounter brings together Delaney and Cándido, instigating a chain of events that culminates in a harrowing confrontation. This tale raises the curtain on the dark side of the American dream. (Courtesy Penguin Group)

Turn of Mind – by Alice LaPlante – (307 p.) 15 copies

Dr. Jennifer White wants to come clean about her neighbor's murder, but she is not sure that she can. Slipping gradually into the tangle of Alzheimer's, this once brilliant hand surgeon can only piece together scattershot memories of the woman whose killing has made her a suspect. Alice LaPlante's first novel is more suspenseful than most novels and more subtle than most whodunits. A labyrinth well worth entering. (www.barnesandnoble.com)

The Uncommon Reader: A Novella – by Alan Bennett (128 p.) - 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

Briskly original and subversively funny, this novella from popular British writer Bennett sends Queen Elizabeth II into a mobile library van in pursuit of her runaway Corgis and into the reflective, observant life of an avid reader. The queen gradually loses interest in her endless succession of official duties and learns the pleasure of such a common activity, with some astonishing results. (Reading Group Choices, Amazon.com)

Water for Elephants – by Sara Gruen (350 p.) - 30 copies + audio (CD, Playaway)

Ninety-year-old Jacob Jankowski reminisces in a nursing home about his days caring for animals in a travelling circus during the Great Depression. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

What We Keep – by Elizabeth Berg (272 p.) - 15 copies

As the book opens, Ginny is flying to California to join her sister in a meeting with their mother, whom neither daughter has seen for 35 years. She uses her travel time to reflect upon memories of the summer when her mother withdrew from the family and became an outsider in her daughters' lives. Berg cleverly examines the roles and relationships of mothers and daughters and reveals how truth, forgiveness, and understanding are possible. (*Library Journal*)

When the Emperor Was Divine - by Julie Otsuka (144 p.) - 16 copies + audio (CD)

This heartbreaking, bracingly unsentimental debut describes in poetic detail the travails of a Japanese family living in an internment camp during World War II. Otsuka describes the family's everyday life in Berkeley and the pitiful objects that define their world in the camp with admirable restraint and modesty. The novel's honesty and matter-of-fact tone in the face of inconceivable injustice are the source of its power.

Wicked: Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West – by Gregory Maguire (448 p.) -16 copies + audio(CD)

When Dorothy triumphed over the Wicked Witch of the West in L. Frank Baum's classic tale, we heard only her side of the story. But what about her arch-nemesis, the mysterious witch? Where did she come from? How did she become so wicked? And what is the true nature of evil? This 1995 novel is currently enjoying a second life as a big-budget Broadway musical. (www.gregorymaguire.com/books/wicked.html)

NONFICTION, MEMOIRS, ETC.

Barrio Boy – by Ernesto Galarza (275 p.) - 17 copies

Barrio Boy is the remarkable story of one boy's journey from a Mexican village so small its main street didn't have a name, to Sacramento, California, bustling and thriving in the early decades of the twentieth century. With vivid imagery and a rare gift for recreating a child's sense of time and place, Galarza gives an account of the early experience of extraordinary life.

The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession - by Mark Obmascik - (272 p.) - 16 copies

During the well-known competition called the Big Year, birders abandon regular life in order to see more species of birds in a geographic area than their competitors. Environmental journalist Obmascik follows the 1998 Big Year's three main competitors as they crisscross the country in search of birds. These obsessed birders not only faced seasickness, insects, altitude sickness, and going into debt, they also faced each other. *Nancy Bent* (Booklist - © American Library Association. All rights reserved)

Blue as the Lake – by Robert B. Stepto (204 p.) - 14 copies

Blue as the Lake maps out an African-American landscape unique in our literature. From Idlewild, the black resort near Lake Michigan where the young Robert Stepto vacationed with his grandparents, to Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard, the author traces a history of generations finding and making a home. (Jacket notes)

Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight – by Alexandra Fuller (315 p.) - 16 copies

Alexandra Fuller remembers her African childhood with candor and sensitivity. This diary of an unruly life in an often inhospitable place is suffused with Fuller's endearing ability to find laughter, even when there is little to celebrate. In wry and sometimes hilarious prose, she stares down disaster and looks back with rage and love at the life of an extraordinary family in an extraordinary time. (www.randomhouse.com)

Down These Mean Streets – by Piri Thomas (340 p.) - 16 copies

Thirty years ago Piri Thomas made literary history with this lacerating, lyrical memoir of his coming of age on the streets of Spanish Harlem. As he recounts the journey that took him from adolescence in El Barrio to a lock-up in Sing Sing to the freedom that comes of self-acceptance, faith, and inner confidence, Thomas gives us a book as exultant as it is harrowing and whose every page bears the irrepressible rhythm of its author's voice. (Jacket notes)

Dreams from My Father – by Barack Obama (480 p.) – 15 copies + audio (abridged CD) + Large Print

The 44th U.S. President's memoir of his search for racial identity, community, and authenticity.

Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything across Italy, India and Indonesia – by Elizabeth Gilbert (352 p.) - 24 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

A memoir of a year-long journey of soul searching and self discovery through sensual delight in Italy; meditation in India; and love in Indonesia. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Epitaph for a Peach - by David Mas Masumoto (233 p.) - 20 copies

Tells the passionate story of one farmer's attempt to rescue one of the last truly sweet and juicy fruits from becoming obsolete in a world that increasingly values commerciality over quality. At once a deeply personal story, a sharp commentary about the state of American agriculture, a lighthearted rhapsody of nature, and an intimate glimpse into the Asian American experience.

French Lessons: Adventures with Knife, Fork, and Corkscrew – by Peter Mayle (240 p.) - 10 copies

In this book, part travelogue, part guide to cuisine, Mayle leaves his beloved Provence behind and sets out to experience gastronomic pleasures available at food festivals and celebrations throughout France. His wry, colorful, and playful prose effectively conveys just how seriously the French take their food. (Publishers Weekly)

Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love –by Dana Sobel (432 p.) -16 copies + audio (cassettes)

Sobel tells the story of the famous scientist and his illegitimate daughter, Sister Maria Celeste, accompanied by 124 surviving letters written from daughter to father. The loving correspondence, translated into English for the first time by Sobel, revealed much about their world and provided emotional support during Galileo's trial before the Inquisition.

Good Good Pig – by Sy Montgomery (245 p.) - 15 copies + Large Print

A naturalist by trade, Sy Montgomery had always felt more comfortable with animals than with people. Yet when she gladly opened her heart and home to a sickly piglet, Sy had no inkling that this piglet, later named Christopher Hogwood, would not only survive, but flourish – and through Christopher, she could find herself united with the people in her small-town community in ways she had never dreamed possible. (www.goodgoodpig.com/book)

Hemingway Book Club of Kosovo - by Paula Huntley (255 p.) - 17 copies

In August 2002 Huntley made a decision to accompany her husband on an assignment to help build a legal system in war-ravaged Kosovo. In a move that would forever alter the core of her existence, Paula kept a journal of her experiences to memorialize and come to terms with the pain inspired by the tragic human stories she came across every day. Although she never intended for her journal to be published, its beautiful, soul-searching passages deserve to be embraced by the world.

Last Child in the Woods – by Richard Louv (334 p.) - 15 copies

Child advocacy expert Louv directly links the lack of nature in the lives of today's wired generation – he calls it nature deficit – to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as rises in obesity, attention deficit disorder (ADD), and depression. He maintains that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development – physical, emotional, and spiritual. Parents have the power to ensure that their daughter or son will not be the “last child in the woods” - this book is the first step toward nature-child reunion. (Jacket notes)

Omnivore's Dilemma – by Michael Pollan (464 p.) - 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

The moral and ecological issues of the food system are traced through four meals, one from McDonald's, one prepared from Whole Foods products, one prepared from products from a small, utopian Virginia farm, and the last from foraged and hunted food. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Persepolis – by Marjane Satrapi (160 p.) - 13 copies

Satrapi tells of her life in Iran from age 10, when the Islamic revolution of 1979 reintroduced a religious state, through age 14, when the Iran-Iraq war forced her parents to send her to Europe for safety. This story, told in graphic format with simple, but expressive, black-and-white illustrations, combines the normal rebelliousness of an intelligent adolescent with the horrors of war and totalitarianism. An important work for Westerners of all ages. (*School Library Journal*)

The Pianist – by Wladyslaw Szpilman (224 p.) - 14 copies

Originally published in Poland in 1945 but suppressed by Communist authorities, this memoir of survival in the Warsaw ghetto joins the ranks of Holocaust memoirs notable as much for the literary value as their historical significance. Szpilman, a Jewish classical pianist, played the last live broadcast from Warsaw before Polish Radio went off the air in September 1939. Szpilman is a lucid observer and chronicler of how he survived thanks to a combination of resourcefulness and chance. (*Publishers Weekly*)

Reading Lolita in Tehran - by Azar Nafisi (347 p.) – 17 copies

Iranian author Nafisi recounts her time leading a secret reading group of women in the mid 1990s. Classics of western literature take on new meaning and insights in the hands of these Muslim women. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey – by Candice Millard (432 p.) - 13 copies + audio (CD)

Millard focuses on an episode in Teddy Roosevelt's search for adventure that nearly came to a disastrous end - a South American trip down an unexplored tributary of the Amazon known as the River of Doubt in 1912. Millard, a former staff writer for *National Geographic*, nails the suspense element of this story perfectly, but equally important to her success is the marvelous amount of detail she provides on the wildlife that Roosevelt and his fellow explorers encountered on their journey. (*Publishers Weekly*)

Same Kind of Different as Me – by Ron Hall and Denver Moore (256 p.) – 15 copies + Large Print

The true account of unlikely friendship and love between two men and the woman that brought them together. It is a touching story of faith and the kind of compassion that transcends race and cultural boundaries. (www.squidoo.com)

Serendib – by Jim Toner (215 p.) - 25 copies

When John Toner, a retired Cleveland judge, decided on a whim in April 1990 to spend a month with his son in war-torn Sri Lanka, he was as much a stranger to his seventh and last child as he was to the hardships of life in a Third World country. *Serendib* chronicles the journey that follows as a father and son who had never been alone together live in close quarters, in the poorest of conditions - and replace awkwardness and distance with understanding and love. (Jacket notes) Toner teaches at Columbia College in Tuolumne County.

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down - by Ann Fadiman (341 p.) - 16 copies

In chapters that alternate between the history of the Hmong and a highly personal story of a young Hmong girl who is severely ill with seizures, we learn about Hmong culture and the dramatic clash between it and American medicine in the early 1990s. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Strength in What Remains – by Tracy Kidder (304 p.) – 15 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

Strength in What Remains is the story of Deogratias, a young man from the central African nation of Burundi. In 1993, through no fault of his own, he was forced onto a terrifying journey, a journey that split his life in two. First he made a six-months-long escape, on foot, from ethnic violence in Burundi and from genocide in Rwanda. Then, in a strange twist of fate, he was, as it were, transported to New York City, where it sometimes seemed that his travails had only just begun. (www.amazon.com)

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln – by Doris Kearns Goodwin (916 p.) – 7 copies

Acclaimed historian Doris Kearns Goodwin illuminates Lincoln's political genius in this highly original work, as the one-term congressman and prairie lawyer rises from obscurity to prevail over three gifted rivals of national reputation to become president. (From the author's website)

Tender at the Bone - by Ruth Reichl (282 p.) - 16 copies

This memoir of family, friends and food by the former restaurant critic for The New York Times and current editor of Gourmet Magazine focuses on the early childhood and adulthood of the author, and shows what led to her love of food. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Three Cups of Tea – by Mortenson, Greg (368 p.) - 25 copies + audio (CD) + Large Print

During a 1993 mountain-climbing venture, author Greg Mortenson is aided by rural Pakistani villagers, then promises to help build a school there. Over the next decade, this initial promise results in his building fifty-five schools in the region. (www.madisonpubliclibrary.org)

Until Tuesday – by Montalvan, Luis Carlos (252 p.) – 15 copies + Large Print

A heartwarming true dog story like no other: Tuesday, a lovable golden retriever, transforms a former soldier's life forever. (www.amazon.com)

NOT JUST FOR KIDS

Bridge to Terabithia– by Katherine Paterson (208 p.) - 20 copies

Jesse's colorless rural world expands when he becomes fast friends with Leslie, the new girl in school. But when Leslie drowns trying to reach their special hideaway, Terabithia, Jesse struggles to accept the loss of his friend. A Newbery Medal winner. Age 9+ (*School Library Journal* © 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.)

Charlotte's Web - by E. B. White (192 p.) - 20 copies

An affectionate, sometimes bashful pig named Wilbur befriends a spider named Charlotte, who lives in the rafters above his pen. In this story of friendship, hardship, and the passing on into time, E.B. White reminds us to open our eyes to the wonder and miracle often found in the simplest of things. Age 9-12. (Amazon.com)

Classic Fairy Tales – by Iona Opie and Peter Opie (344 p.) - 19 copies

This volume contains twenty-four of the best known fairy tales in the English language, presented here in the exact words of their first English publication or of the earliest surviving text. Including "Sleeping Beauty," "Bluebeard," "Cinderella," "Thumbelina," and "Hansel and Gretel," as well as many others, this collection provides a historical introduction for each tale and a general Introduction which traces the history of fairy tales collected in Asia and Europe long before they appeared in English. Age 9-12. (Amazon.com)

Daniel Half Human and the Good Nazi- by David Chotjewitz (304 p.) – 14 copies

In June 1945, a U.S. soldier working as an interpreter for the Royal British Army visits the ruins of his childhood neighborhood in Hamburg and reflects on the events that changed his life forever. Grade 7+ (*Ginny Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Santa Rosa, CA - School Library Journal* © Reed Business Information)

Dragonwings– by Laurence Yep (336 p.) - 16 copies

The story begins as eight-year-old Moon Shadow Lee journeys across the Pacific to join his proud and clever father at the family-owned laundry in San Francisco. Eventually, they turn their attention to making a flying machine. Though it's a modern invention, part of their motivation is the elder's belief in his own previous dragon existence. Yep draws heavily on his own heritage, but also includes figures such as Teddy Roosevelt and the Wright Brothers, and historic events such as the San Francisco Earthquake. Grade 4-7. (*School Library Journal* © 2002 Cahners)

Elsewhere – by Gabrielle Zevin (304 p.) – 20 copies

This coming-of-age novel has a unique twist. Although Liz is maturing, coping with disappointments, and controlling her anger, she is getting younger. Having been killed by a hit and run driver, she now lives in Elsewhere with the grandmother who died before she was born. After death, the residents get younger until they become babies and are reborn onto Earth again. Grade 7-10. (*Claudia Moore, W.T. Woodson High School, Fairfax, VA from School Library Journal* © Reed Business Information)

Giver, The– by Lois Lowry (192 p.) - 12 copies

In a world with no poverty, no crime, no sickness and no unemployment, and where every family is happy, 12-year-old Jonas is chosen to be the community's Receiver of Memories. Under the tutelage of the Elders and an old man known as the Giver, he discovers the disturbing truth about his utopian world and struggles against the weight of its hypocrisy. In this 1994 Newbery Medal winner, Lowry examines the idea that people might freely choose to give up their humanity in order to create a more stable society. Age 12-14. (Amazon.com)

The Golden Compass – by Phillip Pullman (399 p.) - 17 copies + audio (CD)

The protagonist of this complex fantasy is young Lyra Belacqua, a precocious orphan growing up within the precincts of Oxford University. It quickly becomes clear that Lyra's Oxford is not precisely like our own--nor is her world. For one thing, people there each have a personal *daemon*, the manifestation of their souls in animal form. It is a children's book that will appeal to adults, a fantasy novel that will charm even the most hardened realist. Age 12+ *Alix Wilber* (Amazon.com)

Life As We Knew It – by Susan Pfeffer (360 p.) – 17 copies

It's almost the end of Miranda's sophomore year in high school, and her journal reflects the busy life of a typical teenager: conversations with friends, fights with mom, and fervent hopes for a driver's license. When she first begins hearing the reports of a meteor on a collision course with the moon, it hardly seems worth a mention. But after the meteor hits, pushing the moon off its axis and causing worldwide earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanoes, all the things Miranda used to take for granted begin to disappear. Grade 6+ (Amazon.com)

Little Women – by Louisa May Alcott (464 p.) – 12 copies

In picturesque nineteenth-century New England, tomboyish Jo, beautiful Meg, fragile Beth, and romantic Amy come of age while their father is off to war. This timeless classic will appeal to the young and the young-at-heart. Age 9-12. (Amazon.com)

Private Peaceful – by Michael Morpurgo (224 p.) – 20 copies

At 15, Thomas Peaceful, like many other English soldiers in World War I, is too young to fight, but he lies about his age. Now at the front in France with his older brother Charlie he stands a lonely nighttime vigil for reasons that are not explained until the book's end. This thoughtful novel touches on themes of humanity and duty. Grade 7+ (*Delia Fritz, Mercersburg Academy, PA - School Library Journal*) California Young Reader Medal Winner - 2008

Secret Garden – by Frances Hodgson Burnett (288 p.) – 18 copies

Frances Hodgson Burnett creates characters so strong and distinct, young readers continue to identify with them even 85 years after they were conceived. Mistress Mary is quite contrary until she helps her garden grow. Along the way, she manages to cure her sickly cousin Colin, who is every bit as imperious as she. These two are sullen little peas in a pod, closed up in a gloomy old manor on the Yorkshire moors of England, until a locked-up garden captures their imaginations and puts the blush of a wild rose in their cheeks. Age 9-12. (*Amazon.com*)

Sold – by Patricia McCormick (272 p.) – 17 copies

Lakshmi, 13, knows nothing about the world beyond her village shack in the Himalayas of Nepal, and when her family loses the little it has in a monsoon, she grabs a chance to work as a maid in the city so she can send money back home. What she doesn't know is that her stepfather has sold her into prostitution. Grade 9+ (*Hazel Rochman – Booklist © American Library Association*) California Young Reader Medal Winner - 2009

Vampire High – by Douglas Rees (240 p.) – 20 copies

This rollicking tale of horror, humor, and light romance will appeal to both girls and boys. Transplanted from California to an archetypal New England town, ninth-grader Cody Elliot is accepted at Vlad Dracul Magnet School, where most of the students are tall, pale, and prone to Edwardian mannerisms. Grade 6-9. (*School Library Journal - Francisca Goldsmith © American Library Association*)

BOOK CLUB RESOURCES

The Book Club Cookbook – by Judy Gelman and Vicki Levy Krupp (510 p.) - 2 copies

Featuring recipes and discussion ideas for 100 popular book club selections, *The Book Club Cookbook* will guide you in selecting and preparing culinary masterpieces that blend perfectly with the literary masterpieces your club is reading, with contributions from many of the authors themselves. Includes such scrumptious pairings as Tandoori Shrimp with *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel and Spicy Pork with Orange Hoisin Sauce in Wonton Cups with *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie. (*Amazon.com*)

Book Lust – by Nancy Pearl (288 p.) - 10 copies

Pearl, a longtime reader, book reviewer, and public librarian, presents a hundred or so of her favorites in this novel guide to finding the right book for the right mood. Presented in eclectic categories of people, places and themes (e.g. "Prose by Poets," "Dinosaur Hunting," "In Big Sky Country" and "Academia: The Joke"), each of her suggestions is accompanied by a few of her thoughts on it, a succinct plot summary and often information about the volume's prizes and print status. (*Publishers Weekly, 2003*)

More Book Lust – by Nancy Pearl (288 p.) - 10 copies

In this sequel, Pearl dips further into her repertoire of have-read books (both fiction and nonfiction), this time presenting a whole new set of categories. From "Adapting to Adoption" to "Your Tax Dollars at Work: Good Reading from the Government (Really!)," and including "Nagging Mothers, Crying Children," "Science 101," and "Gender-Bending," Pearl suggests titles relevant to each category and gives a brief annotation for each. (*Booklist, © American Library Association*)