

Fiction News



The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter

September 2010

RIDGEFIELD ADULT SUMMER READERS TOP TEN FICTION PICKS

Thanks to the 142 Ridgefielders who participated in our sixth annual Adult Summer Reading Program. Below are the “top ten” fiction picks from the over 490 titles they read. If you’d like to peruse all the reviews submitted, look for the binders of Adult Summer Reading entries next time you’re in the Library. They can be found both at the Fiction and Reference Desks.

Girl with a Dragon Tattoo by Stieg Larsson

Major Pettigrew’s Last Stand by Helen Simonson

The Help by Kathryn Stockett

Shanghai Girls by Lisa See

Dune Road by Jane Green

A Reliable Wife by Robert Goolrick

Sarah’s Key by Tatiana de Rosnay

Brava, Valentine by Adriana Trigiani

South of Broad by Pat Conroy

Little Bee by Chris Cleave



Adult Summer Reading is made possible thanks to the support of the Friends of the Ridgefield Library.

BANNED BOOKS WEEK AND JOHN STEINBECK

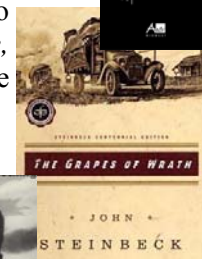
This year Banned Books Week will be celebrated from September 25th through October 2nd. Sponsored by organizations including the American Library Association and the American Booksellers Association, this yearly event highlights our freedom to access information and exchange ideas.

As Ridgefield embarks on The Big Read of *The Grapes of Wrath*, it is worth noting how often the works of John Steinbeck have been challenged or banned. In 2009, Steinbeck had the dubious distinction of being one of the top ten “challenged” authors in the country. *The Grapes of Wrath* has been burned in Illinois, barred in Buffalo, New York and challenged or banned in 10 states. Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men* is fifth on the list of the most frequently challenged

books of the last decade.

The reasons for challenging a work are varied. As part of its celebration of Banned Books Week, the Library will feature displays highlighting the long history of attempts to ban Steinbeck’s works. For more information, visit the Fiction Room to peruse the *Banned Books Resources Guide*, which gives details about the nature of the specific challenges to Steinbeck’s books.

By participating in The Big Read of *The Grapes of Wrath*, you’ll be celebrating the freedom to read that we are all so fortunate to share.

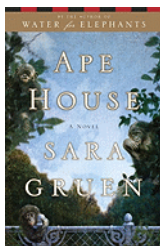


NEW FICTION

(Annotations from BookLetters)

Ape House by Sara Gruen.

Gruen's *Water for Elephants* has become one of the most beloved and bestselling novels of our time. Now the author has moved from a circus elephant to a family of bonobo apes kidnapped from a language laboratory and their mysterious appearance on a reality TV show.



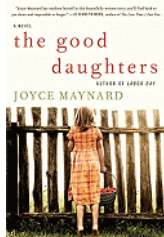
Freedom by Jonathan Franzen.

From the National Book Award-winning author of *The Corrections* comes a darkly comedic novel about family. Franzen's intensely realized characters struggle to learn how to live in an ever-confusing world--one with the temptations and burdens of liberty, the thrills of teenage lust, the shaken compromises of middle age, the wages of suburban sprawl, and the heavy weight of empire.



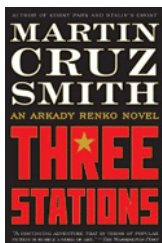
Good Daughters by Joyce Maynard.

From the bestselling author of *Labor Day* comes a spellbinding novel about friendship, family secrets, and the strange, unexpected twists of fate that shape our lives.



Three Stations by Martin Cruz Smith.

Arkady Renko returns in a new mystery about crime and corruption in the cold, dark, impenetrable landscape of modern-day Moscow.



Juliet by Anne Fortier.

When Julie Jacobs leaves for Italy per the instructions of her late aunt's will, she never imagines that she'll be thrust into a centuries-old feud, not to mention one of the most legendary romances of all time.... From Anne Fortier comes a sweeping, beautifully written novel of intrigue and identity, of love and legacy, as a young woman discovers that her own fate is irrevocably tied--for better or worse--to literature's greatest star-crossed lovers.



For a more extensive list of new fiction, mystery, and science fiction and fantasy titles, visit our website at www.ridgefieldlibrary.org

STAFF PICKS

Geri's Pick



Packing for Mars by Mary Roach.

Mary Roach tackles space travel; specifically, what accommodation the human body needs while in space. Humans are big messy problems to aerospace engineers. We come in random shapes and sizes, we need air to breathe, we need a certain amount of pressurization so our soft bodies don't collapse, we need to eat, and then we need to...um...get ride of what we ate. Compared to a gasket or a shuttle wing flap, we are nothing but trouble. Once again, Roach makes science accessible and fun.

Elise's Picks

Work Song by Ivan Doig.

In 1919, Butte, Montana, was the Copper Capital of the world and a tinderbox of labor unrest. Arriving at this "agitated time," Morrie Morgan is an unlikely hero, an inveterate charmer, a gifted one room schoolteacher and a walking encyclopedia. Hired by the imposing head of the town library as a jack of all trades, Morrie soon makes himself invaluable to his employer, to his fetching landlady, and to the impending union walkout. *Work Song* is a nostalgic yarn about the American West, written by one of its most popular chroniclers. It's an entertaining historical tale that's reminiscent of movies like *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.



City of Veils by Zoë Ferraris.



Set once again in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), Zoë Ferraris second topical thriller reunites desert guide Nayir Sharqi with Katya Hijazi, one of the few female forensic scientists in the city. When the mutilated body of a woman washes up on a local beach, the authorities despair of identifying her until Katya discovers a picture of the deceased in a Bluetooth device concealed in her burqa. It turns out that Leila Nawar was a provocative filmmaker with many potential enemies. Written by an American woman who was married to a Bedouin, *City of Veils* is a searing but respectful portrait of Saudi society. It is also an intriguing mystery filled with sympathetic characters and spectacular scenery, including a deadly sandstorm.

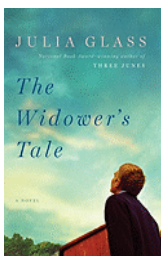
Dorothy's Picks

Girl in Translation by Jean Kwok.

Kimberly Chang's grandparents were intellectuals killed during the Cultural Revolution, and she and her mother have high hopes when Aunt Paula arranges for them to come to New York. The reality they confront is the heart of this story: sweat shops, life in an unheated Brooklyn apartment, and for Kimberly the challenges of letting her native intellect shine while dealing with language and cultural barriers. While Kimberly's story may ultimately be a Cinderella one, the author does not shy away from describing the inhumane treatment of this immigrant family as they try to establish a new life. This is a wonderful addition to the canon of coming-of-age and immigrant fiction.



The Widower's Tale by Julia Glass.



While her new novel may not be getting quite the same press coverage as that of her fellow writer Jonathan Franzen, Julia Glass is another accomplished chronicler of American life and culture. Percy Darling, the central character of her latest work, is a 70 year-old patriarch who has been a widower for 30 years. When his daughter convinces him to allow a preschool called Elves & Fairies to be housed in a barn on his property, a series of unforeseen consequences unfold. With wit and compassion, Glass captures the complexities of modern families and the havoc that can result from even well-intentioned actions.