Our Favorite Book Discussions

Recently, while thinking of which book I should choose to schedule for my next book discussion at the Syosset Public Library, I began to reminisce about the books that I have done in the past. While I would say that I have enjoyed most of those discussions, there have been some that stand out for me. Here are some of the books that inspired some great discussion experiences for myself and some of my fellow librarians. You might consider trying one for a meeting of your own.

-Sonia Grgas, Readers' Services Librarian

My favorite book discussion was for The Lost Legends of New Jersey by Frederick Reiken. The reason was because of the extremes of the reaction to it. One patron walked in and immediately said in an angry tone - “who picked this book and why would you pick it” – she just didn’t relate to it at all. On the other hand, during the discussion someone was reduced to tears because she said the book was “such a gift to her”. I will never forget that discussion.

-Lisa Caputo, Assistant Library Director

My two favorite book discussions over the years (because I cannot choose just one) have been To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee and Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck. I was so impressed with the insight and enthusiasm demonstrated by the attendees. I was grateful to see that our members felt as passionately about these two novels as I do. Whether they enjoyed the novels or not, our most vocal members all agreed on the importance of these novels in American Literature.

-Jackie Ranaldo, Head of Readers’ Services

I would have to say that my most memorable book discussion was Room by Emma Donoghue. The compelling subject matter really struck patrons emotionally. When I outlined the dimensions of the fictional 11 x 11 ft. "room" in masking tape in the center of our book discussion circle, the entire room went silent. We continued to stare at this small space as we tried to imagine a young woman and her son spending 7 years of their life confined to this "room" with no outside contact.

-Lisa Jones, Readers’ Services Librarian

I think my favorite discussion that I’ve led so far would be The Parable of the Sower by Octavia Butler. I enjoyed leading the discussion with Jackie because it was a discussable book, it made you wonder if this could happen in the future and the research that I found for the book was quite interesting. There are actually some real life spiritual/religious groups based on the religion Octavia Butler created in the book.

-Stacey Levine, Readers’ Services Librarian

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte was the book that generated my favorite and best discussion. The fact that I had never read it before was in large part responsible for this. I was expecting something worthwhile but dull. To my amazement, I found it to be thoroughly compelling and was eager to talk about it. We had a big turnout for the meeting as well as an interesting and lively discussion. I do not remember anyone having anything but good things to say.

Do you recall a favorite meeting? Please let us know by email, readersservices@syossetlibrary.org or just tell us next time you are at the library. We would love to hear from you!
Swing Into Spring

To celebrate the start of Major League Baseball season, here are a few novels that have a baseball theme. You may wish to choose one of these titles as a spring book club selection:

**Calico Joe by John Grisham** Follows the divergent paths of a rookie hitter for the Chicago Cubs and a hard-hitting Mets pitcher.

**The Art of Fielding by Chad Harbach** At Westish College, a small school on the shore of Lake Michigan, baseball star Henry Skrimshander seems destined for big-league stardom. But when a routine throw goes disastrously off course, the fates of five people are upended.

**A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving** In the summer of 1953, two 11-year-old boys—best friends—are playing in a Little League baseball game in New Hampshire. One of the boys hits a foul ball that kills his best friend's mother. Owen Meany believes he didn't hit the ball by accident. What happens to Owen after 1953 is extraordinary and terrifying.

**The Natural by Bernard Malamud** This sports novel follows the career of baseball player Roy Hobbs, a natural with a bat whose dreams of playing in the big leagues are deferred by a youthful indiscretion, but who finally becomes a hero.

**The Chosen by Chaim Potok** A baseball injury precipitates a friendship between two boys from Hasidic and Zionist families.

**The Great American Novel by Philip Roth** A third major baseball league tries to survive, but World War II decimates it by 1943.

**The Might Have Been by Joseph M. Schuster** Hoping to achieve a lifelong goal when he is called up to the major leagues after ten years in the minors, Edward Everett Yates makes a risky play that results in a devastating injury and is unable to pursue a life without baseball as the years progress.

For those of you who are baseball fans, opening day for the NY Yankees is Monday, April 7th. Monday, March 31st was opening day for the NY Mets. Happy Spring!

-Lisa Jones, Readers’ Services Librarian

*Available as a Book Club in a Bag

Spring is nature’s way of saying, "Let’s party!"

—Robin Williams

New to Book Club in a Bag

Syosset Public Library’s Book Club in a Bag is part of a consortium of 13 libraries. This allows us to provide our patrons with more available titles. The following books have been recently added to the consortium and are available for your Book Club to borrow:

**Orphan Train by Christina Baker Kline** - Close to aging out of the foster care system, Molly Ayer takes a position helping an elderly woman and discovers that they are more alike than different as she helps Vivian solve a mystery from her past.

**The Dinner by Herman Koch** - Meeting at an Amsterdam restaurant for dinner, two couples move from small talk to the wrenching shared challenge of their teenage sons’ act of violence that has triggered a police investigation and revealed the extent to which each family will go to protect those they love.

**The Husband’s Secret by Liane Moriarty** - Discovering a tattered letter that says she is to open it only in the event of her husband’s death, Cecelia is unable to resist reading the letter and discovers a secret that shatters her life and the lives of two other women.

**The Art Forger by B.A. Shapiro** - An artist whose reputation has been tarnished stumbles on a piece of art that disappeared twenty-five years ago and agrees to forge it for a gallery owner, until she realizes that the art she is forging may itself be a forgery.

Let us provide everything you need for a successful book discussion. We can supply you with 10 copies of the book and a discussion binder. The binder contains discussion questions, biographical information and critical material. Please contact Readers’ Services, 921-7161, ext 241 or 239 to reserve a book for your Book Club.

All summaries on this page from the publishers.

-Evelyn Hershkowitz, Readers’ Services Librarian