SPL’S MONTHLY BOOK DISCUSSIONS: A YEAR IN REVIEW

As 2014 comes to a close, I thought I would reflect on the monthly book clubs I had the opportunity to moderate this year at Syosset Public Library. Each novel lead to discussions in an array of topics, from the art world to foster children to Typhoid Fever, the immigrant experience to labor laws to religious extremists, Coney Island to Calcutta, the early 1900’s New York to present day Boston. All evoking strong opinions, personal experiences and political views. Our discussions were thought provoking, lively and informative. I truly enjoy participating in SPL’s monthly book discussions. For one hour we are transported into different worlds, cultures and religions. We may have differences of opinion but one common denominator that we all share is our love of the written word.

This is a listing of titles of the book discussions I had the privilege of hosting this past year:

- The Art Forger by B.A. Shapiro
- Fever by Mary Beth Keane
- The Language of Flowers by Vanessa Diffenbaugh
- The Lowland by Jhumpa Lahiri
- The Museum of Extraordinary Things by Alice Hoffman

I would be hard pressed to pick a favorite from the above group as I enjoyed each novel for a variety of reasons. Do you have a memorable novel your book group discussed in 2014? We would love to hear from you. Please send us an email at Readersservices@syossetlibrary.org. Happy Holidays and a New Year filled with great books.

- Lisa Jones, Readers’ Services Librarian

Year-End Book Club Celebration with author Paullina Simons

Tuesday, December 16 at 2 PM in Meeting Room B/C

Join the Readers’ Services Staff for a fun Year-End Book Club Celebration featuring bestselling Historical Fiction author, Paullina Simons. Ms. Simons will discuss her novels and why they are perfect Book Club choices. Copies of Ms. Simons’ latest novel Bellagrand will be sold by the Friends of the Library at the event (cash only) and can be personalized by the author.

- Refreshments will be served.
- No registration required.
- Each attendee will receive a ticket to win one of two raffle prizes.

We have many of Paullina Simons’ novels currently available at the Library. Start reading one today!

- Jackie Ranaldo, Head of Readers’ Services
2014: A Reading Year in Review

2014 has been a rather interesting year, but unfortunately not my best Reading Year. Life gets in the way and my normal goal of 100 books per year has pentered out at a mere 60. This leaves me with many less “recommendable” titles coming out of 2014, but luckily I came upon some great ones. See my favorite titles read in 2014 below. All are available at the Library and would make excellent book discussion choices.

*The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd
*The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* by Gabrielle Zevin
*Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital* by Sheri Fink
*While Beauty Slept* by Elizabeth Blackwell
*Dream of Ding Village* by Yan Lianke
*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (my 2nd Reading – just as amazing the 2nd time around)
*Broken for You* by Stephanie Kallos
*The Lover’s Dictionary* by David Levithan
*Once We Were Brothers* by Ronald H. Balson
*All That is Solid Melts into Air* by Darragh McKeon

*Time to get my 2015 Reading List ready!*

- Jackie Ranaldo, Head of Readers’ Services

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Readers’ Services has added the following books to our Book Club in a Bag collection:

*The Paris Architect* by Charles Belfoure

In 1942 Paris, gifted architect Lucien Bernard accepts a commission that will bring him a great deal of money and maybe get him killed. But if he’s clever enough, he'll avoid any trouble. All he has to do is design a secret hiding place for a wealthy Jewish man, a space so invisible that even the most determined German officer won't find it. He sorely needs the money, and outwitting the Nazis who have occupied his beloved city is a challenge he can't resist. But when one of his hiding spaces fails horrifically, and the problem of where to hide a Jew becomes terribly personal, Lucien can no longer ignore what's at stake. *The Paris Architect* asks us to consider what we owe each other, and just how far we'll go to make things right. (From the Publisher)

*Tell the Wolves I’m Home* by Carol Rifka Brunt

In this striking literary debut, Carol Rifka Brunt unfolds a moving story of love, grief, and renewal as two lonely people become the unlikeliest of friends and find that sometimes you don’t know you’ve lost someone until you’ve found them.

1987. There’s only one person who has ever truly understood fourteen-year-old June Elbus, and that’s her uncle, the renowned painter Finn Weiss. Shy at school and distant from her older sister, June can only be herself in Finn’s company; he is her godfather, confidant, and best friend. So when he dies, far too young, of a mysterious illness her mother can barely speak about, June’s world is turned upside down. But Finn’s death brings a surprise acquaintance into June’s life—someone who will help her to heal, and to question what she thinks she knows about Finn, her family, and even her own heart. (From the Publisher)

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 to reserve a book for your Book Club.

- Evelyn Hershkowitz, Readers’ Services Librarian