A Reader’s Radar

As a librarian I am constantly aware of what others are reading. So while on a recent family vacation, my reading radar kicked into high gear. I took pleasure in noticing the various books that were strewn upon vacant chaise lounges or propped open while a relaxed reader snoozed behind its pages and some peeking out of beach bags to be savored later in the day. I was delighted to see books of all genres represented. Most of my fellow vacationers preferred paperbacks to hardcover editions. Others sported various brands of e-readers (some of which were not compliant to the full onslaught of UV rays).

Some of the more popular titles that showed up on my radar were The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins, The Husband’s Secret by Liane Moriarty, Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking by Malcolm Gladwell, Unbroken: A World War II Airman’s Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption by Laura Hillenbrand, Best Kept Secrets by Sandra Brown and Go Set a Watchman by Harper Lee. Magazines and crossword puzzles made a small blip on the radar.

What book did I bring with me on my family vacation? To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. I re-read this American classic alongside my daughter who had to read it for her summer reading assignment. I enjoyed revisiting one of my all-time favorite novels.

Do you or your book club have a favorite summer or vacation read to recommend? We would love to hear from you. Send us an email at Readersservices@syossetlibrary.org.

–Lisa Jones, Readers’ Services Librarian

8 Questions to Help Generate Discussion:

Need some all-purpose questions to get your discussion going? Try these:

- How does the title reflect the book?
- Which character do you think is the voice of the author?
- Is the main character likeable? Why or why not?
- Did the author leave loose ends? What were they?
- What do you think the author wanted the reader to get out of the book?
- What makes a minor character memorable? Why is this character important to the story?
- What do you think happens to the characters next? (after the last page is turned)
- Would you recommend this book? Why or why not? If yes, what would you say about it?

–Sonia Grgas, Reference Librarian
Books to Fall Into

This was my first experience with the Adult Summer Reading Program, and I was impressed with the participation of so many of our Syosset patrons. The book review submissions kept pouring in all summer long. Now that the summer is ending, it may be difficult to continue on the same reading trajectory. But with so many avid readers, I am sure we are all looking ahead for new books, having exhausted the 2015 Summer Reading Lists. And with your book clubs resuming, here are some suggested titles you may be interested in exploring:

Harriet Wolf’s Seventh Book of Wonders by Julianna Baggott
Years after the death of the family matriarch, a reclusive famous author who may have written a final manuscript, her daughter and two grown granddaughters share the secrets that have shaped their lives and loves.

Among the Ten Thousand Things by Julia Pierpont
A former ballet dancer struggles to protect her children before receiving an anonymous package revealing her artist husband’s infidelities, a discovery that leads to a difficult breakup during a New York summer.

Purity by Jonathan Franzen
Struggling with identity issues and student loans as the daughter of a mother who hides a mysterious past, Pip takes an internship with an illicit activist group and falls for its charismatic fugitive leader.

Did You Ever Have a Family by Bill Clegg
Surviving a disaster that kills everyone else in her family, June relocates West and settles into a directionless existence while other people impacted by the tragedy struggle with new circumstances.

The Heart Goes Last by Margaret Atwood
Enrolling in a project that allows them to live in safe homes alternating service months spent in prison, a homeless couple is threatened by troubling events stemming from the wife’s involvement with another project member.

All summaries from the publishers.

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

Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng

Lydia is dead. But they don’t know this yet . . . So begins the story of this exquisite debut novel, about a Chinese American family living in 1970s small-town Ohio. Lydia is the favorite child of Marilyn and James Lee; their middle daughter, a girl who inherited her mother’s bright blue eyes and her father’s jet-black hair. Her parents are determined that Lydia will fulfill the dreams they were unable to pursue – in Marilyn’s case that her daughter become a doctor rather than a homemaker, in James’s case that Lydia be popular at school, a girl with a busy social life and the center of every party.
When Lydia’s body is found in the local lake, the delicate balancing act that has been keeping the Lee family together tumbles into chaos, forcing them to confront the long-kept secrets that have been slowly pulling them apart. James, consumed by guilt, sets out on a reckless path that may destroy his marriage. Marilyn, devastated and vengeful, is determined to find a responsible party, no matter what the cost. Lydia’s older brother, Nathan, is certain that the neighborhood bad boy Jack is somehow involved. But it’s the youngest of the family – Hannah – who observes far more than anyone realizes and who may be the only one who knows the truth about what happened.

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 239 or 241 to reserve a book for your Book Club.

Summary from the publisher.

- Evelyn Hershkowitz, Readers’ Services Librarian