A DECADE OF BOOK DISCUSSIONS

Over the last ten years I have had the privilege of moderating over 30 book discussions here at Syosset Public Library. Each novel lead to discussions on an array of topics and locales. From the Holocaust, to the immigrant experience, to women’s rights. From scientific discoveries, to racism, to teen suicide. From Coney Island to Calcutta. From Sweden to Tehran. All evoking strong opinions, personal experiences and political viewpoints. Our discussions were thought provoking, lively and informative.

For one hour our group was transported into different worlds, cultures and religions. I have gained so much insight and knowledge not only from the books we have discussed but from the participants themselves. For this I am eternally grateful. We may have difference of opinion but one common denominator that we share is our love for the written word.

I would be hard pressed to pick a favorite book as I enjoyed each for a variety of reasons. Here are my top ten most memorable book discussions:

- *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng
- *Fever* by Mary Beth Keane
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd
- *The Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh
- *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman
- *The Museum of Extraordinary Things* by Alice Hoffman
- *Room* by Emma Donoghue
- *The Samurai’s Garden* by Gail Tsukiyama

*available as Book Club in a Bag

In the case of good books, the point is not to see how many of them you can get through - but rather how many can get through to you.

-Mortimer J. Adler
The Andrew Carnegie Medals for excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction for 2018 were announced on Sunday, February 11th at the Reference and User Services Association’s Book and Media Awards Event. These awards are made possible by a grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York in recognition of Carnegie’s belief in the power of books and learning to change the world. Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan won for excellence in fiction and You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me: A Memoir by Sherman Alexie won for excellence in nonfiction.

Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan, takes the reader on a journey from New York mobsters to the first woman diver at the Brooklyn Naval Station during WWII to the archetypally motley crew of a merchant-marine ship in U-boat-infested waters. Egan’s insightful and propulsive saga portrays complex and intriguing individuals navigating the rising tides of war.

You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me: A Memoir by Sherman Alexie, presents a courageous, enlightening, anguished, and funny memoir told in prose and poetry that pays tribute to the author’s Spokane Indian mother and reveals many complex traumas and tragedies of reservation life, as well as Alexie’s struggles.

I would like to congratulate the winners, listed above, and the nominees as well. Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders and Sing, Unburied Sing by Jesmyn Ward, were shortlisted for the fiction award and were definitely on my list of favorite reads. The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner by Daniel Ellsberg and Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI by David Grann, were shortlisted in the nonfiction category. Any of these titles would be great choices for book groups as they offer diverse, relevant topics.

All summaries from the publishers -Jean Simpson, Readers’ Services Librarian

The nominees for the 23rd Annual Audie Awards have been announced. The Audio Publishers Association will be giving out awards in 27 categories including the Audiobook of the Year. The nominations for that category will be announced at a later date. The awards will be presented on Thursday May 31st at The New York Historical Society in New York City.

The staff of the Syosset Public Library recommends the following nominated audiobooks:

Fiction Finalist - Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman, narrated by Cathleen McCarron.

Best Female Narrator and Young Adult - The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas, narrated by Bahni Turpin (my favorite narrator).

Best Female Narrator - The Alice Network by Kate Quinn, narrated by Saskia Maarleveld.

Autobiography/Memoir, Narration by the Author or Authors and Best Male Narrator – Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood written and narrated by Trevor Noah.

The full listing of nominees can be found at: https://www.audiopub.org/winners/2017-audies-1

If you would like to borrow any of the audiobooks that are nominated for an Audie please ask a Readers’ Services librarian on the second floor for assistance or call 921-7161 ext 239.

-Evelyn Hershkowitz, Readers’ Services Librarian