With thousands of books from which to choose, this might seem like an easy question to answer. But quite a few books clubs would say that it’s not. Methods used to find the next book to discuss are many. Some groups have one person who always decides on which books will be read and some have all of their members decide together. Other groups choose their books month by month while some set an agenda of books for a few months or a year ahead. Still others just trust that one of their members will come with a ready suggestion for the next month that will be acceptable to all. If the method that your book club is using has become monotonous or is not working well, your group might try one of the following ideas for use in scheduling the books to discuss in the months ahead:

Read a New Genre Each Month
Your club might be concentrating (some might call it stuck) on just a few genres that members feel comfortable with. Why not step outside of your group comfort zone and deliberately schedule titles that are outside of those genres? If your group is mostly reading “Historical fiction”, try a Mystery, a Classic, a Science Fiction or a Thriller. There are discussable books in every genre and enough genres in existence to not repeat one for months.

Tour the World
Your book club can choose books set in different countries or cities. Or you can pick books by authors from other countries. Perhaps you can stay in the United States and pick books set in different states.

Holiday or Seasonal
Choose books by a holiday occurring during the month or by season - a mystery with a Halloween theme for October or a historical set in a cold climate for Winter (or to cool down in Summer), a poetry book in April for National Poetry Month or a book set in a school or college for September.

Award Winners
Pick titles that have been nominated for a major book award such as the National Book Award or Pulitzer Prize. You might concentrate on one year and read books that won different awards for that year.

More
- Pick titles just because they contain a certain word(s).
- Use the alphabet: start with a book whose title or authors name begins with an A, then one beginning with a B and so on (or reverse it and start with Z).
- Revisit authors whose books have led to the most interesting discussions and read another book by them.
- Pick a profession and find a book whose main character is a member.

If your group is intrigued by any of the above ideas, the librarians at the Readers’ Services desk would be happy to help you explore the many resources available at the library to help you and your group choose titles that will satisfy any situation. Let us help you to find books that are just right for the discussions of your group.

- Sonia Grgas, Readers’ Services Librarian
The literary world recently lost two notable writers within a day of each other. Maeve Binchy passed away on July 30th at the age of 72. Born in County Dublin, Ireland, Binchy’s books detailed the lives of Irish women and Irish village life. Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny stated “Across Ireland and the world people are mourning and celebrating Maeve Binchy; she is a huge loss wherever stories of love, hope, generosity and possibility are read and cherished”. Binchy wrote 16 novels which sold over 40 million copies worldwide. Her best known books are “Light a Penny Candle”, a story of friendship between two girls as they grow into adulthood, “Circle of Friends”, a tale of college students set in 1950’s Ireland and “Tara Road” where two women, one from Ireland and one from Connecticut exchange houses for one summer with extraordinary consequences. Binchy’s last novel “A Week in Winter” is scheduled to be published later this year. Binchy’s novels would make a great book discussion choice for themed book discussions. Book groups could select one of her books for an Irish themed discussion especially for the month of March.

Gore Vidal died on July 31st at the age of 86. His literary career spanned more than 60 years. He published 25 novels, 2 memoirs and several volumes of essays. He also wrote plays, TV dramas and screenplays. His most notable novels are “Julian”, a fictional account of the life of Julian the Apostate, “Myra Breckinridge”, a satirical comedy about a transsexual film enthusiast, “Burr” the imaginary memoir of Aaron Burr the 3rd U.S. Vice President and “Lincoln” a novel set during the Civil War which describes Abraham Lincoln through several historical figures emphasizing Lincoln’s political and personal struggles. Vidal also co-wrote the screenplay for the 1959 film “Ben Hur”. Among critics, his volumes of essays seem to garner the most praise. Any of Vidal’s above mentioned books would make for a great book discussion. Book groups could discuss and compare Vidal to such notable contemporaries as Normal Mailer and Truman Capote. Vidal’s storied personal life and political views would add to the discussion. So here’s to Maeve Binchy and Gore Vidal. While they were two very different writers, with a different fan base, they each achieved great literary success.

- Lisa Jones, Readers’ Services Librarian

The Syosset Public Library recently held a Staff Title Swap on August 3, 2012. The list of titles discussed is now available. Please come to the Readers’ Services desk for your copy.

- Ralph Guiteau, Readers’ Services Librarian