May 2013

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To register your book club and receive this newsletter straight into your inbox, contact any Readers’ Services Librarian

Upcoming Events

For Readers

Evening Book Club will discuss Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk by Ben Fountain on Tuesday, May 14, 2013 at 7:30 PM

Afternoon Book Club will discuss Beautiful Ruins by Jess Walter on Tuesday, May 28, 2013 at 1:30 PM

Toosyset Public Library
225 South Oyster Bay Road, Syosset NY 11791

The Book Club Insider

Monthly Newsletter

2013 Pulitzer Prize Winners

Just two weeks ago, on April 15, the 2013 Pulitzer Prize winners were announced by Columbia University. The Pulitzer Prize recognizes distinguished works in Journalism, Letters, Drama and Music. Each year a Board comprised of chosen professionals in the industry is charged with the overwhelming task of selecting a winner in various categories. Librarians, teachers, publishers, writers and readers eagerly anticipate the announcement each April. For 2013, the Board has selected the following winners; read the titles with your book club and see if you agree:

Fiction The Orphan Master’s Son by Adam Johnson “The son of an influential father who runs an orphan work camp, Pak Jun Do rises to prominence using instinctive talents and eventually becomes a professional kidnapper and romantic rival to Kim Jong Il.” (From the Publisher)

History Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America’s Vietnam by Fredrik Logevall “A history of the four decades leading up to the Vietnam War offers insights into how the U.S. became involved, identifying commonalities between the campaigns of French and American forces while discussing relevant political factors.” (From the Publisher)

Biography The Black Count: Glory, Revolution, Betrayal, and the Real Count of Monte Cristo by Tom Reiss “Traces the story of the mixed-race swordsman and father of novelist Alexandre Dumas, discussing his rise to the French aristocracy, his military triumphs, and the adventures that inspired such classics as The Three Musketeers and The Count of Monte Cristo.” (From the Publisher)

General Nonfiction Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America by Gilbert King “Chronicles a little-known court case in which Thurgood Marshall successfully saved a black citrus worker from the electric chair after the worker was accused of raping a white woman with three other black men.” (From the Publisher)

Poetry Stag’s Leap: Poems by Sharon Olds “In this wise and intimate new book, Sharon Olds tells the story of a divorce, embracing strands of love, sex, sorrow, memory, and new freedom.” (From the Publisher)

For a complete listing of current and past Pulitzer Prize winners and finalists, see the official website: http://www.pulitzer.org/

- Jackie Ranaldo, Head of Readers’ Services
INSPIRING MESSAGES FROM 2 EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN

I recently had the pleasure of listening to two memorable works, Maya Angelou’s newest autobiography *Mom & Me & Mom* and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor’s memoir *My Beloved World*.

Maya Angelou narrates the audio CD of *Mom & Me & Mom*. Her once booming voice is a little frail now but it nonetheless resonates with the listener. In *Mom & Me & Mom*, the 7th volume of her autobiographical series, Angelou describes her complex relationship with her mother, Vivian Baxter Johnson. When her parent’s marriage began to fall apart, Angelou along with her brother Bailey were sent to live with their paternal Grandmother in Stamps, Arkansas. Angelou lived with her Grandmother from the age of 3 to age 13. When she is finally reunited with her mother, Angelou refers to her “Mom” instead referring to her as “lady”. Angelou explores the path, often painful, that Mother and Daughter must take to reach forgiveness. Angelou and her Mother grew extremely close after their reconciliation and Angelou credits the love and support of her Mother as one of the factors in her achieving great success; “My Mother’s gifts of courage to me were both large and small. The latter are woven so subtly into the fabric of my psyche that I can hardly distinguish where she stops and I begin.”

The audio CD of Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor’s memoir *My Beloved World* is narrated by actress Rita Moreno. In *My Beloved World*, Sotomayor tells of her life growing up with an alcoholic Father and distant Mother in an impoverished Bronx neighborhood. Like Maya Angelou, Sotomayor spends time with her paternal Grandmother, as her parent’s marriage fails. Sotomayor’s determination and self reliance help her deal with the early death of her father and her diagnosis of diabetes. She excels in school and receives a full scholarship to Princeton University and graduates summa cum laude. She then goes on to graduate from Yale Law School. Throughout her memoir, Sotomayor celebrates her ethnicity and cultural heritage. She is not afraid to tackle tough intimate subjects and address her failings.

Maya Angelou and Justice Sotomayor show how hard work, faith and dedication can triumph over circumstance and greatness can be achieved. They cherish memories of their beloved Mothers and Grandmothers and credit these women (however unconventional they were) as key factors in their success. Both books would make excellent choices for book clubs.

*Happy Mother’s Day!*

-Lisa Jones, Readers’ Services Librarian

NEW TO BOOK CLUB IN A BAG

*The Art of Fielding* by Chad Harbach and *Next to Love* by Ellen Feldman have been added to our Book Club in a Bag collection. These books are now available for our Book Club Insiders:

**The Art of Fielding** by Chad Harbach  “A baseball star at a small college near Lake Michigan launches a routine throw that goes disastrously off course and inadvertently changes the lives of five people, including the college president, a gay teammate, and the president's daughter.” (From the publisher)

**Next To Love** by Ellen Feldman  “Follows the stories of three young couples whose lives are irrevocably changed in the years following World War II, a period during which they struggle with difficult losses and witness profound transformations in American culture.” (From the publisher)

-Evelyn Hershkowitz, Reader's Services Librarian

“Anyone who says they have only one life to live must not know how to read a book.”

-Author Unknown