



# Sunriver Books & Music

## February 2020

### Newsletter

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541-593-2525



Due to a winter storm John Bruning was unable to be here in January and has rescheduled his appearance to **Saturday February 29 at 5:00 PM.**

John Bruning is a meticulous author of military history, he can turn his extensive research into an account that is both scholarly and reads like a thriller. He has done so with ***Race of Aces: WWII's Elite Airmen and the Epic Battle to Become Masters of the Sky.*** It is a compelling account that will keep the pages turning as you race to find out what happened.

Our WWII pilots faced incredible odds in the Pacific. They were outnumbered, fighting against an enemy with little mercy, unwilling to tolerate failure or weakness. Our pilots were young men, fighting in an unfamiliar and inhospitable jungle environment, and even the planes they flew killed them! What they had was ferocious bravery and the determination to fly into an uncertain future in battles where their survival was not a good bet.

Before our pilots engaged the enemy, they had to train on Lockheed's P-38 Lightning, a plane designed to fly higher and faster, to have a chance against the nimble Japanese zeroes. Safety was not the manufacturer's highest priority. The planes were so prone to self destructing, taking the pilot along to their doom, that in April 1942 there were 20 fatal crashes in Washington and Oregon. Pilots killed by their aircraft before even reaching a battle.

General MacArthur did not have a lot of confidence in the utility of airplanes in winning the war. By 1942 the battle in the Pacific was not going well. Then General George Kenney was given command of the pilots, he was battle hardened and a pilot himself. Captain Eddie Rickenbacker was famous for his exploits in WWI, he shot down 26 enemy planes and received the Medal of Honor; he was known as the ace of aces. He toured the Pacific talking to the flyboys, telling them stories of his experiences. Thus far in the Pacific the highest total for an ace was Buzz Wagner with 8. A challenge was issued, a case of scotch to the first pilot to beat Captain Rickenbacker's record. Our flyboys were in! No way were they going to walk away from a challenge. But this was war, not a game, the stakes were life and death.

John Bruning introduces us to Gerald Johnson, a hometown kid from Eugene Oregon, an outdoors enthusiast, bit of a dare devil, totally besotted with his sweetheart Barbara. Dick Bong, a quiet farm boy from Wisconsin with an affinity for machinery nurtured from his years of working on farm equipment. Tommy McGuire, a smart New Jersey transplant to Florida, a rich kid surrounded by poor boys who never quite fit in. Tom Lynch, movie star handsome, with a degree in chemical engineering and the makings of a career in command. And others who tried for the title of the ace of aces.

Bruning takes the story from the delivery of the P-38's to the young flyboys to the culmination of WWII in the Pacific. The battle scenes are detailed, well researched, and gripping. Pilots diving in against outrageous odds, crazy brave. And in the end, war exacts its price. The ***Race of Aces*** is thoroughly researched with the foot notes to prove it, but it reads like a thriller, the scenes brought to vivid life in remembrance of young men who gave their all for their country.

***Indestructible; One Man's Rescue That Changed The Course of WWII.*** Bruning's earlier book, is also an account of bravery and ingenuity in the Pacific theater of WWII. Retired after twenty years in the Navy, Pappy Gunn was living the good life in Manila with his family as Operations Manager for Philippine airlines. Then Pearl Harbor happened and he was called back to serve as a Captain in the Army Air Corps. Pappy was half a world away flying top brass out of harm's way when the Japanese, not known for their kindness to prisoners, took his wife Polly and four children to Santo Tomas Internment Camp. A chest full of medals attest to Pappy's bravery; a Silver Star, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, and nine Purple hearts. His family was never out of his thoughts, rescuing them his top priority. He also believed strongly in doing things his way, enraging highly ranked desk bound officers while winning the admiration of those fighting in the field. He "borrowed" (okay, steal might be the correct description) a squadron of B25 bombers from the Dutch Air Force in Australia, in order to fly them on a raid to the Philippines. Pappy was not always bound by rules if he knew a better way. Pappy Gunn lived, full speed ahead and the Devil take the hindmost.

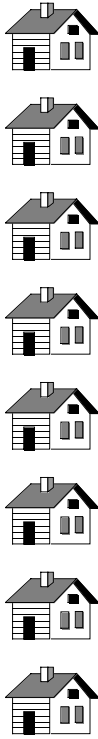
Photo credit to Renee Bruning.

#### Upcoming Author Appearances

- Saturday March 7, 2020 at 5:00 PM ***Elephant Speak*** by Melissa Crandall
- Saturday March 21, 2020 at 5:00 PM ***88 Names*** by Matt Ruff
- Saturday April 11, 2020 at 5:00 PM ***Catch and Release*** by Les AuCoin
- Saturday April 18, 2020 at 5:00 PM ***A Reasonable Doubt*** by Phil Margolin
- Saturday June 27, 2020 at 5:00 PM ***Deep Creek*** by Pam Houston

Join us to enjoy fabulous authors! Hearing an author speak clarifies and enriches the reading experience. Many Author readings are free with refreshments served and drawings for prizes. Sign up to attend events by calling 541-593-2525, e-mailing [sunriverbooks@sunriverbooks.com](mailto:sunriverbooks@sunriverbooks.com) or stopping by Sunriver Books & Music. Space may be limited for some events.

Check [Sunriverbooks.com](http://Sunriverbooks.com) for changes or additions to the schedule.



### Roxie and Emily Bates.



Among the many joys of bookselling is getting to know publishers. Our publisher's representatives are passionate about books, generally gifted with a sense of humor, and efficient. I enjoy working with them. Even better many of them share my love of dogs.



At the Pacific Northwest Bookseller's meeting in Portland, after talking about upcoming books, Emily Bates of Penguin Random House and I moved on to another favorite topic.

Dogs. Emily has a puppy, Roxie, a lovely Great Dane. Emily lives on a farm that has been in her family for generations. She gets up early to commute in to the city. The farm is both a cherished connection to her family history and a responsibility she feels keenly. It is also a wonderful place for a Great Dane puppy to grow, play, and live.

I wanted to share with you one of the aspects I love about bookselling and cute pictures of Roxie, a dog with the good fortune to be Emily's companion.



### Staff Recommendations.



**American Dirt** by Jeanine Cummins is the story of a woman's desperate attempt to seek refuge with her child in the USA, it packs an emotional wallop. And this is only one story, each of the refugees seeking a better life is fleeing serious enough danger or deprivation to make them face the hardships of the long trek to freedom. Lydia is a middle-class woman, happily married with a beloved son, Luca. She loves her work, a bookshop where she can share the joy in reading with others. Her husband, Sebastian, is a journalist. When they run afoul of a drug cartel, the violence is terrible. Sebastian and their extended family are slaughtered. Lydia and Luca flee. There is no time to prepare, they run. The reach of sadistic cartels is incredible, no place is safe. This is the story of their journey, of the people they meet along the way, and the desperation that propels them toward the USA border. I wish everyone would read this book! It brings home the humanity, need, and dignity of those seeking shelter. It is also a rousing good read! A thriller with heart, a young mother saving her child. And the characters

are stellar! Cummins has created a plethora of characters the reader will care about, complex, human, and worthy of note.

Publishers bid on the rights to this story. Amy Einhorn won, she is one of the best editors in publishing, if Amy finds merit in a book, that merit is real. Yet the Hispanic community has railed against the story. Some believe it should have been written by a Hispanic, that Cummins sensationalized the story, that it does not reflect their personal journey and that publishers should publish more authors who have experienced being a refugee. While I sympathize with the Hispanic community wanting to control their narrative, I continue to believe **American Dirt** is an excellent novel. Reading more by Hispanic authors would also be good.

If authors must write only about their ethnic group or gender, and only stories about events they personally experienced, the limits on creativity would be enormous. Women would not be able to write stories where the protagonist was a man. Authors of historical fiction would have to give up writing as they could not have personally experienced WWI or ancient Rome. And science fiction authors would have to give up as none of them are space aliens or have experienced travel in space (at least I think none of them are space aliens!).

**American Dirt** is fiction. That said, there are many articles on the violence of the drug cartels, the refugees fleeing them. Don Winslow wrote a trilogy about the cartels culminating in **The Border**. His books have even more violence. To have been a refugee, to experience that danger and deprivation, must certainly affect the rest of a person's life. They may not see their individual experience in **American Dirt**, but it does tell a story about a woman and child making the arduous trek in a work of fiction written to engage the reader.

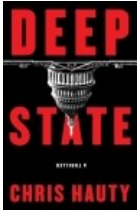
There are excellent books by Hispanic authors. Two that come instantly to mind are by Luis Alberto Urrea, **The Devil's Highway** and **Into the Beautiful North**. From what I have seen of publishers, they are more interested in the quality of the writing than the ethnicity or sexuality of the author. It is hard for an author to be published, so many books are written every year and few make it to publication.

Read Lauren Groff's January 19 New York Times review or Maureen Corrigan's January 14 NPR review. Better yet, read **American Dirt** and decide for yourself. Either way, the controversy over this novel is making people think about the migrant's experience, the feelings of the Hispanic community, and what they expect from works of fiction. Good conversations on important topics.



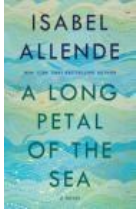
## New Releases, Staff Recommendations.

### Rich Stonehouse Recommends.



**Deep State** by Chris Hauty. With subtle nods to present day politics, **Deep State** is a novel that hints at a vast conspiracy involving the highest levels of government. Hayley Chill is tough, smart and dedicated to following her own rules. After a successful stint in the army as only one of a handful of females to achieve entry into infantry training, she is a formidable foe to those who wish harm to people in power of the government. Moving up through the ranks she finds herself steps away from the President of the United States. Little does she know of the powerful men who are plotting and scheming to take over the government. Some are far away, some are very close, but all of them are determined to enact this coup. Chill learns of the beginnings of this plot and goes into action to stop it at all costs. The ending of this novel is a real head snapper; you won't see it coming. One thing she learns along the way: trust no one.

### Deon Recommends.



**A Long Petal of the Sea** by Isabel Allende. The Spanish Civil War erupted in the 1930's with Franco's forces eventually succeeding, the country remained in his grip for decades thereafter. Victor and Guillem Dalmau, fought against Franco in the bloody conflict. Victor as a medic, on his way to becoming a physician, and Guillem as a fierce soldier. Their father, Professor Marcel Dalmau, took in his piano protégé, Roser, treating her like kin. It was a close, loving family, they were delighted when Guillem and Roser became a couple.

War is brutal, Guillem perishes in the fighting, Victor marries the woman bearing his brother's child to protect them in this chaotic time. Fleeing Spain to France after Franco's victory did not bring safety, war with Hitler was on the horizon. Through the efforts of poet Pablo Nerudo, Victor and Roser fled, along with a boatful of other refugees, to Chile. There they made a home, contributed to those less fortunate, raised Guillem's son, and embarked on new lives. Decades later, Pinochet takes over Chile and their troubles begin again. This is a beautifully written story about a couple who build meaningful lives from the ashes of defeat, believe in helping those less fortunate, and find joy in each other and their community. Themes of friendship and loyalty run deep.



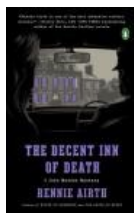
**Long Bright River** by Liz Moore is so much more than a police procedural about the deaths of four unfortunate women at the wrong end of society's ladder. It is the story of a community in Philadelphia ravaged by opioid addiction, the strength of a fierce bond between two sisters, the power men often wield against women, and the harm when police forget their mission to protect and defend all citizens.

Mickey and Kacey were raised by their stern grandmother, Gee, after the overdose death of their mother. As teenagers their paths diverged, Mickey, encouraged by a mentor, excelled at her studies and after graduation entered the police department. Kacey, always more popular and livelier, fell in with the wrong crowd becoming an addict who, like many women, would sell her body on street corners to potentially dangerous men.

Mickey is a good cop, respectful of people, and a loving single mother to her four-year-old son, Thomas. The sisters are estranged, but Mickey still watches out for her sibling, when Kacey disappears at about the same time the murders start, Mickey takes action that puts her at great risk in so many ways. This is a thoughtful story that moves through time, building connections and consequences that will keep you thinking long after the first page. Time spent with these characters will be relished. Book Clubs should love this book!



**The Wagers** by Sean Michaels Theo has spent his youth trying to make it as a comedian while working at the family grocery store. Once a week he places a bet, from the outcome he decides if it is a good night to try the comedy club. He has been doing this faithfully for years, riding his bike between his various destinations; racetrack, grocery store, comedy club. On her birthday he takes his niece to place a bet, it is tradition, she wins big. All these years of his betting and his niece hits it big on the first try! Theo gets involved in a group that steals from those who win more than their fair share. Things, of course, get out of control.



**The Decent Inn of Death** by Rennie Airth. Retired Chief Inspector Angus Sinclair was invited by Sir Wilfred to stay for a visit in Winchester. It seems Sir Wilfred has an acquaintance who is eager to quiz Sinclair about his police work for some research she is doing. As soon as he arrives, he learns of a death in the village. The church organist, Greta, fell into the stream, it has been deemed an accident. But Vera, her good friend, is not convinced. Greta walked the path across the stream often, knew of the danger spots, and was careful. Furthermore, that last day in church she seemed distracted, as if something was amiss. Like an old warhorse hearing the bugle call, Sinclair is drawn into solving the mystery!

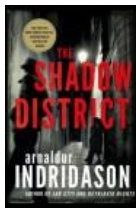


**Bear No Malice** by Clarissa Harwood. If George Elliot, author of **Middlemarch**, had wanted to pen an entertaining mystery, it might have read something like this intriguing novel.

Cannon Tom Cross is well liked by his parishioners, works tirelessly for the poor, is engaged in prison reform, counsels the troubled, and visits the sick. One night, in October 1907, after concluding his hospital visits he gets in a London cab for a ride to his lodgings, the next morning he is found in a remote wood, many miles from London, beaten to within an inch of his life,

Going for a ramble in the forest that morning Miranda Thorne discovers him and with her brother Simon takes him to their remote cottage in the woods where in the succeeding months they nurse him back to health.

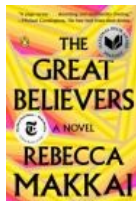
When asked his name, Tom makes up an alias. He doesn't know who is after him. For a clergyman he has managed to annoy quite a variety of people. There is the wealthy parishioner whose wife he seduced, the factory owner he challenged causing an uproar, or the other Canon rivaling him for the position of Dean soon to be open. And then there are the secrets of his past with other potential assailants. So, Tom keeps his identity secret. But the Thorne's have secrets of their own to protect. Miranda is a gifted artist and Simon, an outgoing sort, is not the type of man to seek such an isolated abode without reasons. The secrets of the past, the conflicts of the present, collide with consequence.



February 10 Mystery Book Club discusses **The Shadow District** by Arnaldur Indridason. Current day an elderly man dies in his bed, the police do not find it suspicious. His neighbor is shocked, he may have been in his 90's, but he was in great shape, this was an unexpected death. When the medical examiner takes a look, it is clear the man was murdered. But why kill a guy in his 90's? Time would take care of the problem before too long without the risk of a murder investigation.

In 1944 Iceland was coming to terms with housing American soldiers, gaining independence, and trying to keep those same soldiers from the local women. It was a losing proposition as young women would sneak out of the house to meet their soldier beaus. The dead man had old clippings from the 1944 murder of a young woman behind the National Theater.

Konrad has recently retired from the police, but the death of this man and the link to the past, of a murder committed the year of his birth in the neighborhood he grew up, catches his imagination and he is compelled to get involved. His former partner, admitting the police department is overworked, accepts his help and the game is afoot. Indridason presents a complex plot, with sympathetic characters, elegantly linking the time frames. This step outside his popular series is an excellent mystery.



February 17 Fiction Book Club discusses **The Great Believers** by Rebecca Makkai. There are moments in life where an innocent chance action leads to consequences.

The story opens in 1985 when a terrible plague decimated many in the gay community. At Nico's funeral a group of friends, mostly young men, gather to mourn his passing. Fiona refuses to side step the cause of her brother's demise, is open about the virus that felled him. His friend Yale, a great character, someone you would like as a friend, is just at the cusp of fresh opportunity in his career in the art world. The story follows the characters through a heartbreaking era.

In 2015 Fiona is in Paris searching for her estranged daughter, a young woman who disappeared into a cult and does not want to be found. In desperation, she hires a private detective. The time frames move seamlessly through this heartfelt story.

There is a lot going on in this novel; a fascinating focus on art, the role of friendship, the AIDS crisis, and a mother's search for her daughter in the City of Light. **The Great Believers** was named as one of the ten best books of 2018 by the New York Times.



February 24 the Non-Fiction Book Club discusses **Blowout: Corrupted Democracy, Rogue State Russia, and the Richest, Most Destructive Industry on Earth** by Rachel Maddow, a sobering view of the global consequences of chasing after gas and oil. It is also a hell of a good read! There are many *say what!* moments!

For instance, there is Project Rulison in Garfield County, Colorado. Our tax dollars at work. Austral Oil wanted to get at the gas in the Mesaverde formation but they were blocked by underground shale. So, our government let them use an atomic bomb, nuclear weapon three times more powerful than the bomb that took down Hiroshima. That's right, our government let an oil company use a nuclear weapon! People lived within 5 miles of the blast site, Highway 1-70 and railroad tracks were nearby. When the desired result was not achieved, they tried again in project Rio Blanco, this time with a much bigger bomb, 10 times more powerful. I am not giving much away, this happens in chapter 2, and the book is full of jaw dropping moments. It is also gifted with great writing, interesting characters, and side trips into such events as I.M. Pei's involvement in redesigning Oklahoma City, or attempting to do so.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's rise to power and involvement in the oil and gas industry brings a surreal story considering today's world events. Maddow does an excellent job of portraying Putin's ruthlessness in pursuit of his goals, his missteps, and the involvement of US companies in his rise. Interesting reading indeed.

**Upcoming Book Club Dates for Monday Evenings at 6:00 PM**

Everyone is welcome, light refreshments are served.

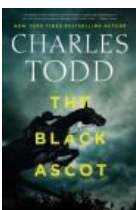
**March**

- March 9, 2020 **Black Ascot** by Charles Todd [Mystery Book Club](#)
- March 23, 2020 **This Side of Paradise** by F. Scott Fitzgerald [Classics Book Club](#)
- March 30, 2020 **Women in the Castle** by Jessica Shattuck [Fiction Book Club](#)

**April**

- April 13 **When Will There Be Good News** by Kate Atkinson [Mystery Book Club](#)
- April 20 Deschutes County Novel Idea selection, **When All I Said And Done** by Anne Griffen. [Fiction Book Club](#)
- April 27 **Tightrope** by Nicholas Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn [Non-Fiction Book Club](#)

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**Community Room.**

**If you are involved in a club or gathering that would enjoy using space in Sunriver Village, please remember the Village owners have kindly provided space in the loft area above Sunriver Books & Music. The space is available for uses compatible with the bookstore during Sunriver Books & Music's hours of operation. Using the space is free. To reserve the space for your group contact Deon at Sunriver Books & Music. Sunriver Village is an ideal place to meet. After concluding the day's agenda enjoy a meal at one of the Village restaurants and browse in the many shops.**