



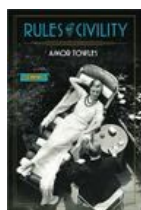
Sunriver Books & Music

June 2022 Newsletter

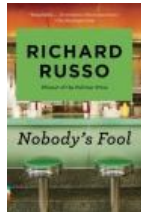
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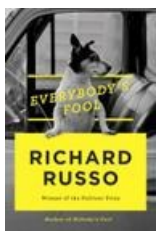
Every June we focus on a region, state, or city in the USA as a lead up to the 4th of July. This year for the month of June we are featuring New York. From the engineering marvel of the Brooklyn Bridge, to the dazzling lights of Manhattan, to the natural wonder of Letchworth State Park, New York has a lot to offer. A few years ago I visited New York for the first time, I loved the diversity and energy of the city. Central Park was a special treat. The USA has rich cultural and geographical diversity. Join us in reading books set in New York!



Rules of Civility by Amor Towles is beautifully written. Katey and Eve are young and full of themselves, ready to conquer New York! New Year's Eve 1937 they head out into a city rife with opportunity and adventure, with only \$3 between them. Tinker enters as 1938 dawns, elegant and handsome he sets the girls dreaming and shows them a good time. Tinker propels Katey into high society with the attendant parties and cliques, where she will have to navigate by sheer brash will and wit. Decades later Katey finds a picture of Tinker while perusing an art exhibit. The Jazz Age is front and center in this engrossing story, with such elegantly crafted sentences.



Nobody's Fool is my favorite of Richard Russo's books and I am fond of them all! His writing is so vivid, when he tells of ice cracking tree limbs I can hear the snap. Suffused with humor and compassion, the story is full of quirky, well drawn characters that take you into their village and remain as friends in your memory. Sully is an entertaining rascal, full of fun and short on responsibility. He cares about people and having a good time, not so great at steady employment, fiscal caution, or being a dependable father. At 60, the results of living life at full tilt are being felt; he is not as spry as he used to be. Sometimes the apple does fall far from the tree, Sully's son Peter is a college professor with a healthy respect for schedules and doing the right thing. Thus the relationship between the two is strained. Then again both of the Sullivans have trouble with the women in their lives. North Bath, New York is full of quirky characters making this story, with Russo's trademark humor, great fun to read. In 1994 Paul Newman starred in a film version of **Nobody's Fool**.



Everybody's Fool by Richard Russo continues the story of the small New York town of loveable misfits, heroes, and villains. Revisiting Sully and the gang is sheer pleasure. Sully is surprised to find himself in funds, having won a lottery and inherited a house he no longer has to hustle for a dollar. He has other worries, his body, so able to go forever in his younger days, is failing. The docs at the VA say his heart won't give him much more time without an operation, news Sully is keeping under wraps from his nearest and dearest. Rub is still Sully's sidekick, but worried that he is being replaced by all the other guys wanting Sully's time. Nor is he pleased that Sully chose to name his dog Rub, causing both man and canine to start when Sully calls. Carl Roebuck is still trying to lose his daddy's fortune, and appears to be making some serious inroads in that direction.

Doug Raymer is chief of police now, his mind occupied with trying to figure out who was his wife's paramour before her untimely demise, an activity Charice, the whip-smart cop he keeps deskbound, wishes he would abandon. It feels good to spend time with these characters. Russo makes you laugh out loud at their antics, worry about their problems, and wish them well.



Ask Again, Yes by Mary Beth Keane. This is a perfect novel for Book Clubs! In 1973 Francis Gleason and Brian Stanhope are fresh out of the Police Academy walking a beat together in the Bronx. Both are Irish American, both with young women they will soon marry. Ironically, they end up living next door to each other in Gillam. Francis wife, Lena, didn't really want to leave the city, but she understood Francis need for the calm and greenery of their new home after his shifts as a New York city cop. She is eager to make friends with Anne Stanhope when they move in next door, but it is not to be, Anne is not the friendly type. At the heart of the story is the friendship that develops between the children, Kate Gleason and Peter Stanhope. They ride the school bus together, play by the boulders in their back yards, and develop an intense bond. When Kate and Peter are teenagers, a shocking act of violence will leave devastation in its aftermath forcing the Stanhopes to leave. Despite their separation, Kate and Peter never stop thinking of each other, as college students they will find their way back together but the ghosts of the past cannot be ignored. The power of friendship, the need to confront the past in order to move to the future, the responsibility of family, the need for forgiveness, all of these and many other themes make this a rich book for discussion.

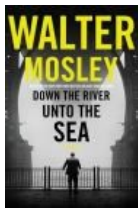


Ragtime by E.L. Doctorow is a blast from the past! Chock full of real figures from history; Henry Houdini, J.P. Morgan, Henry Ford, Booker T. Washington and a slew of others. Murder (real), conflagration, and intrigue, this book moves along at a breakneck pace. If you like history, music, and a good story, this is just the ticket. It was made into a successful movie too.

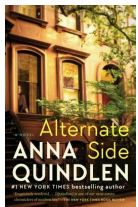


American by Day by Derek Miller. Sigrid, from Miller's brilliant **Norwegian by Night**, returns in this ambitious yet entertaining novel that tackles such weighty subjects as cop shootings, racism, the role of women in society, and the differences in America and Norway. Chief Inspector Sigrid Odegard receives word from Internal Affairs regarding the events that concluded **Norwegian by Night**. Those results did not allay her concerns; she wonders if she would have pulled the trigger had the assailant been Norwegian? Sigrid and her father, a farmer in the rural north, are very close. Feeling the need for time to reflect, she takes leave expecting to spend time with him enjoying the peace and quiet. It is not to be, on arrival her father informs her that she has a ticket to New York, the flight leaves tomorrow. Sigrid's mother died when she was 5 and her brother Marcus 11, he blames his father and himself, she doesn't understand why. Her father and brother have begun corresponding, taking tentative steps toward some form of contact. Marcus' last letter was disturbing, her father tried to reach Marcus right away but Marcus had already fled.

On arrival in northern New York, Sigrid discovers the family is not the only ones searching for Marcus; he is wanted by the local police in connection with the death of a woman. There are many differences between law enforcement in Norway and America, not least among them that Norwegian police are educated in criminology then rise through the ranks based on solving crimes, where in America the Sheriff is elected. Sigrid's American counterpart, Sheriff Irving Wylie, is a middle aged, Republican, graduate of Loyola divinity school with no background in law enforcement prior to his election. It would have been easy to make such a character appear as a bumpkin. Thankfully that is not the case. Irv is wicked smart, sly, and funny. While he may not have degrees in law enforcement, he is an excellent cop with a lot of empathy. I liked Irv and would be delighted to read more about him; complicated guy that Irv. Did I mention funny too? Irv is intent on finding Marcus, there is evidence indicating he is possibly guilty of murder, but Irv is willing to keep an open mind. His bosses not so much so, they are politicians and want an arrest, for them Marcus will do just fine. So Sigrid is dropped into America trying to find her missing brother, forced to collaborate with the local cops on a search that will take them into the Adirondack wilderness. An excellent story and a lot to ponder.



Down the River Unto the Sea by Walter Mosley introduces a new sleuth. Joe King Oliver was, mostly, a good cop and a talented investigator in the NYPD. A family man with a wife and daughter, he liked being a cop and was on the cusp of a major drug bust, could see himself advancing in the department. But Joe had a thing for the ladies. It made him easy to frame. Sent to investigate a car theft, he finds the woman much to his liking and instead spends a pleasurable amount of time with her. Arrested for sexual assault, he is jailed at Rikers Island where his treatment breaks something in him. A decade later Joe is a PI, his daughter works part time as his receptionist. His marriage didn't survive but his relationship with his daughter is strong and precious to him. As the story opens, two things happen to change Joe's circumstances. He receives a letter from the woman who helped frame him, confessing to her involvement, and a young lawyer wants to hire him to exonerate a man on death row, a convicted cop killer. Powerful people will not appreciate Joe's involvement in the case. Joe is finally ready to investigate who framed him and why. Mosley has a knack for creating quirky, dangerous, characters you can't help but like, in an odd sort of way. Melquarth Frost is deadly dangerous, most likely a sociopath, but he is also brilliant, loyal, and has a passion for life that belies his dark side. Hard not to like a guy who can see the beauty in this crazy world. Joe King Oliver will come to feel some comfort in the bad guys company, despite his tendency for violence, as he proves to be a very useful man indeed, unpredictable but resourceful.



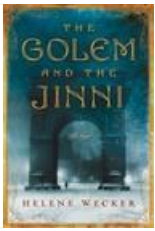
Alternate Side by Anna Quindlen is a perfect novel for our time. Nora Nolan always wanted to live in New York City, it fits her just right. She married Charlie and had twins. The family lives on a dead end street, in the kind of neighborhood that has a summer barbeques, holiday parties that no one wants to miss, and the neighbors amiably chat as they walk their various dogs. Charlie is a loving father, the children are achieving high marks academically, and Nora has risen to positions of importance in her field, not through an ambitious desire to get ahead but by caring about her work and doing her best. It is a good life, at least on the surface. However there are troubling undercurrents. Charlie started out as a bright young thing but has failed to achieve the stature in his firm he hoped to merit. While the neighborhood seems like a friendly nice place to live, the homeowners are all white, the people who take care of their homes, of a darker hue. When a shocking incident occurs, this idyllic street starts to change, people take sides, and the cohesive, friendly community starts to fray in major ways.



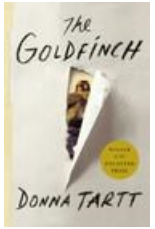
Lillian Boxfish Takes A Walk by Kathleen Rooney. Nothing will describe this story quite as well as the sheer joy of reading it! New Year's Eve 1984, Lillian takes a walk around Manhattan, stopping at places of significance to stroll down memory lane. Lillian at age 84 is still vital and great company. It is a pleasure to spend time with her remembering the past as she acknowledges the present. Lillian arrived in New York in 1926, finding employment as a copywriter for R.H. Macy's; by 1931 she was the highest paid woman in advertising and was beginning a successful career as a poet too. The highest paid woman, because in 1931 a woman, even a very talented woman, would not be paid the same salary as a man. As Lillian walks through the night, from 1984 to 1985, she revisits other years in her memory, times of joy and trial. There are so many things I enjoyed about Lillian; her belief in herself, audacity, interest in both the natural and cultural world of her neighborhood, and her joy in walking. Lillian relishes her independence, is actively involved in life, and resists her son's plea to move out of the city. Kathleen Rooney was inspired to write **Lillian Boxfish Takes A Walk** by the life of Margaret Fishback, who did achieve the status of highest paid woman in advertising and a popular author of poetry. This is a book that makes you want to fly to New York with a copy clutched in your hand to retrace Lillian's walk and think about this lovely, inspiring story!



Chelsea Girls by Fiona Davis. Hazel Riley and Maxine Mead meet in WWII Italy where they are with the USO entertaining the troops. Maxine, a fiery redhead, is destined for stardom; Hazel is generally the understudy. After a rough beginning the two women become fast friends, Maxine tells Hazel stories about her life in the Chelsea Hotel and encourages her writing. After the war, Maxine heads to LA and stardom while Hazel moves into the Chelsea Hotel where she finds a welcoming artistic community.. Hazel writes a play being produced on Broadway; Maxine returns from Hollywood to star. Just when things were coming together for the women, McCarthy's red scare put the brakes on. Want to keep working in theater, then give up names of your fellow thespians to McCarthy's hateful committee. Friends turn on friends and careers are ruined as people are afraid to confront the hatred of McCarthy's actions. The suspicion and futility of the era are portrayed in a plot that has twists that keep the reader guessing.



The Golem and the Jinni by Helene Wecker. Unlikely though they may be, ***The Golem and the Jinni*** breathe life into this enchanting story as they walk the nighttime streets of 1899 New York and develop a friendship that reaches across the chasm of very different natures. Both mythical creatures, the Golem is a creature made of clay, created to obey every command of her master and the Jinni is born of fire. This Golem's master barely lasted long enough to pay the purveyor of dark magic for his creation and get her loaded on board a ship headed for the New World. He dies before the ship docks, leaving a very new Golem to find her way in a world not comfortable with such creatures. The Jinni's trip to New York is no less astonishing, trapped for a thousand years in a jug by an evil wizard; he is released by a tinsmith in the Little Syria district of New York City. Imagine the Jinni's astonishment, when last he was free, he lived in a Middle Eastern desert where the population was scarce, tall buildings not even imagined. Both creatures must learn to live as humans in order to survive, it does not come easily. They are helped along by some good people. The Golem is taken under the wing of a kind Rabbi and the tinsmith does his best to help the Jinni navigate this magical city so different from his desert home. ***The Golem and the Jinni*** meet and begin walking the city at night, where they discover that because of their strange situation they can talk to each other in ways they could never disclose to others. You will root for them when inevitably they must face the evil that men do.



The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt, winner of the Pulitzer Prize. Luminous prose and a plot that keeps you guessing set this spellbinding novel apart. The story opens in Amsterdam with our narrator, Theo, remembering the past. Quickly the story moves to teenage Theo, experiencing a day that began as an ordinary but upsetting day then quickly turned tragic. His mother was called to a conference at his school, missing a day's work. Money is tight for the pair as Theo's father has absconded. The day quickly darkens; the taxi they climb into for their journey to the school is vile, when they decide to walk the heavens open with a punishing rainstorm, and then they take shelter in the Metropolitan Museum with spectacular bad timing. These minor ordinary choices soon have life altering consequences. From this explosive opening we follow Theo's life as his circumstances and locations change. His father comes back into the picture spiriting Theo away from New York, to a soulless suburb in Las Vegas.

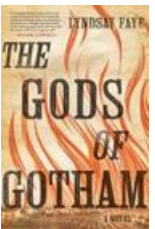
Throughout, at the heart of the story, is the painting, the ***Goldfinch***, a very real painting that hangs safely in The Hague, and has not experienced the adventures it faces in Tartt's work of fiction. A cast of characters that would do Dickens proud people the novel.



The Golden House by Salman Rushdie. On the day of Barak Obama's inauguration Rene Unterlinden wept for joy, he wept again when the next president took office but for the opposite reason. Rene was in his 20's; he lived with his parents, both professors, in the Gardens, a New York neighborhood surrounding a private park. A young filmmaker hoping to make his mark, Rene is instantly drawn to the Goldenes when they move into the biggest house in the neighborhood. And why wouldn't he be drawn to them? Nero Golden, and his three sons, with their huge fortune and secretive shady past? So he watched them, began to write his screenplay about them. The oldest son, Petya, is a genius but afraid to go out of doors. Apu, the middle son, is a brilliant artist. The youngest son, D, was handsome but confused. Rene is accepted into their circle, giving him a ringside seat at their escapades, crimes, and perhaps eventually their deepest secrets. Nero, with the name of a Roman emperor, is a powerful man, a widow, the fate of his wife never spoken. Such a man needs a consort, a queen. Vasilisa, a Russian emigre who has invented herself as surely as Nero has created his own persona, is just the woman to exploit this one vulnerability in Nero. As this turmoil stirs up the residents of the Gardens, New York City comes into disarray. It seems the country has gone bonkers, electing the least presidential of Presidents, a clown with no experience, a joker whose exploits would disqualify, possibly jail, any other candidate for the top job. Now crowned President, he freely vents his message of hate. Rushdie's sentences are so finely crafted they are sheer joy to read.



Tell The Wolves I'm Home by Carol Rifka Brunt. This lovely coming of age story is told through the perspective of 14 year old June. A shy girl with a rich imagination, she adores her Uncle Finn. On Sundays June travels with her mother and older sister Grace to Finn's apartment where their talented uncle works on painting his nieces as he waits for AIDS to claim his life. June's mother has never come to terms with her brother being gay or his illness. In her rigidity and disapproval, she has denied her daughters any contact with or knowledge of her brother's life partner, Toby. After the funeral, Toby contacts June, beginning a journey for the teen to greater understanding of her mother, herself, and her talented uncle. As this family comes to terms with the grief of losing a loved one, they also grow closer.



The Gods of Gotham by Lyndsay Faye. It is 1845, New York is just starting its first police department, the Irish potato famine is dumping thousands of poor, starving refugees on the overwhelmed city, and a blazing inferno is about to change Timothy Wilde's life for the second time. Orphaned in a fire as a child, history has repeated and again fire leaves him homeless, without funds, and scarred. With few options Timothy accepts the job his brother engineers for him in the police force. Returning to his new apartment one night a little girl wearing a night gown covered in blood runs smack into him. He takes the terrified child in to be comforted by his landlady. Making the frightened little girl talk quickly gains importance when a little boy is found dead. She tells of a brothel where child prostitutes go missing when a hooded man comes in the night. She tells of a grave that holds dozens of throw away children. Timothy is new at policing and not at all sure it is a good fit, but he knows these children deserve justice and he is willing to put everything on the line for them. If you like historical fiction, this one rocks.



The Guest Book by Sarah Blake. This elegant subtle novel takes the reader intimately into three generations of the Milton family, wealthy bankers living what seemed a charmed life. In the 1930's Kitty and Ogden are a golden couple, living within the rules of their social class. In the 1980's their grandchildren will face the harsh truth of those societal norms. Each chapter leads the reader eagerly to the next, wanting to find out what happens in this family drama that illustrates so perfectly the influence of society and the cruelty therein. Kitty seems lively and likeable; then she will utter a shocking bigoted sentiment that is perfectly acceptable to her social class. In her time, the upper class did not fraternize with Jewish or Black, no way. And yet, the characters are vibrant, often likeable, and engaging. Thereby making their actions all the more shocking. As the book progresses, each generation holds the reader's interest until the final pages when the cost of society's rot is disclosed in the damage to the human soul. This brave novel, populated with fascinating characters, is a true gift to the reader. I could not put it down!

June 2022 Book Clubs

Book Clubs this June celebrate our Month of New York by discussing books set in New York. Every June we concentrate on a state, city, or region in the USA to appreciate our country as we approach the 4th of July celebration. It is good to reflect on the diversity, rich cultural heritage and natural grandeur of the USA, realizing that diversity is at the heart of our country.

Book Clubs are currently via Zoom at 6 PM on Mondays. Hopefully in the not to distant future they will be via Zoom and in person.

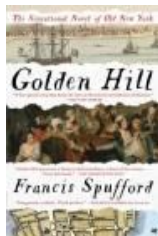


June 6 Mystery Book Club discusses ***The Last Days of Night*** by Graham Moore. This is not a traditional mystery, no stabbings or shootings. It is a legal thriller, although more slowly paced, and absolutely fascinating. In the late 1800's Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse were involved in a patent lawsuit of epic proportions (Edison had a fondness for lawsuits). Caught in their machinations was a brilliant inventor, Nikola Tesla. Paul Cravath was barely out of law school when he was picked by Westinghouse to represent him in a case that seemed doomed to fail. Nonetheless, it was a big case (huge!!!) and quite an undertaking for such a young lawyer. All of this is factual.

However, there were murky bits to the fight between Edison and Westinghouse. Edison was known to get up to dirty tricks to win his cases. Nikola Tesla's laboratory was destroyed by a fast-spreading intense fire. What caused the fire? Was someone trying to kill Tesla? Here we have the spark of an interesting take on historic events. What happened in this clash of giants? If you are interested in history and science, this book is a treat!

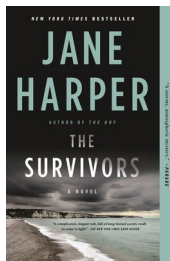
In addition to great historic detail, there is the courtship between Paul Cravath and Agnes Harrington. As information on Agnes Harrington is lacking in the historic record, Graham Moore took freedom in coloring in quite an intriguing background for the beautiful chanteuse.

While much is known about the court case and the lives of the main characters, the mystery lies in the cracks of history, the things never written down, the conclusions never reached, the blame never apportioned. So, what really happened? This is one possible explanation. There is also a creepy villain (in my opinion) a real and powerful man and one of the history's figures that I abhor. Read the book and I bet it will be easy to determine which character. When the evidence is in, you may even agree.



June 20 Fiction Book Club discusses ***The Golden Hill: A Novel of Old New York*** by Francis Spufford. Fresh off the boat, known to no one, a handsome stranger arrives with a draft for an impressive line of credit. The bankers, merchants, and society are nervous. Is it real? It is drawn on a reputable bank. Still, there is risk, do they trust the paper, if so they must embrace the stranger and stay in his good graces. But what if it is not real? In the 1700's communication with Europe meant a letter on a ship, not an email on the internet. It took time. What to do? And what are the stranger's plans for all that money? What are his intentions?

Staying mum seems to be the stranger's strategy. No hints about his plans or his background. He is amiable, courteous, and oh, so silent about all the things the locals are in such a lather to discover. Befriend him and be made a bankrupt fool if the funds are not truly real? Or refuse him credit while waiting for confirmation and risk making an enemy of a powerful man. Lovely Language, some wicked twists, and a great story.



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

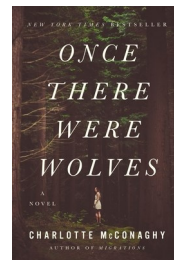
Everyone is welcome, Meetings are held via Zoom Mondays at 6 PM.

Times and dates are tentative due to current situation.

July

July 11 ***The Survivors*** by Jane Harper **Mystery Book Club.**

July 25 ***Once There Were Wolves*** by Charlotte McConaghy **Fiction Book Club.**



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Covid 19

Deschutes County has distinguished itself by having one of the highest counts of infection per 100,000 in Oregon. For the time being we are requiring masks. Hopefully this spike in cases will abate soon, perhaps even by mid-month. We will be delighted to drop the mask requirement once the level of risk is again low. People have been lovely about wearing masks, thank you for being so considerate. (Well, all but one woman) So a huge thank you to all who understand we are just trying to keep our families, staff, community, and customers safe.

Please Do Not Leave Pets In Parked Cars!!!

Temperatures can soar within minutes. If you see a parked car with a pet inside, please call Sunriver Police 541-593-1014 so they can rescue the animal. Even parked in the shade, the temperature inside the car can be deadly within minutes.