



# Sunriver Books & Music January 2010 Newsletter

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## Happy New Year!

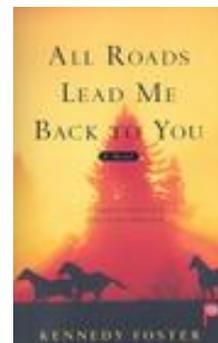


Rarely does a novel combine so many interesting, important topics so successfully while telling a story that leaves you feeling good. **All Roads Lead Me Back To You** by Kennedy Foster is a real find, a northwestern story with heart and substance. Kennedy Foster will be at Sunriver Books & Music January 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM, I believe you will enjoy her presentation immensely. **All Roads Lead Me Back To You** is set in the foothills of the Blue Mountains in Eastern Washington.

Wild, open country with miles between neighbors, it possesses a lonely, quiet beauty. Alice Anderson lives alone with her dogs and critters on the ranch she grew up on, her roots in that hard, lonely soil are deep. During a snow storm, the ranch is cut off from everyone, town miles away over snowed in roads. Her dogs alert Alice to an intruder, a rider-less horse. In that brutal weather Alice doesn't think the chances are good that she will find the rider, even lower that the rider is still alive. Still she feels bound to go out into the teeth of the storm and search, just in case someone is injured and alone.

Domingo Rogue is fortunate Alice had such a strong feeling for what is right, or surely he would have frozen to death. He is in rough condition. Alice brings the injured man back to her ranch and helps

him thaw out. He starts to do chores around the place, repaying her kindness. There is a cultural chasm between the two characters roughly the size of the Grand Canyon. It is here the book picks up some real weight, in the interplay between two cultures with different belief systems and different chances in life. Domingo is at first suspicious of Alice, while he is grateful to her for saving his life, he has learned not to trust. He fears the immigration officers and a quick trip back across the border stripped of his beloved horse. Alice has stayed within the law; she has avoided employing illegal aliens and is not all that familiar with the tensions their lives hold. Running a ranch is brutal hard-work. Alice has been doing it on her own too long and it is taking a toll. She is saddled with a shiftless partner, Jerry Graeme, who provides the story with an evil villain. No help is forthcoming from him. Domingo's help lifts a large burden from Alice's shoulders; he is capable, kind to the stock, and hardworking. Hiring him as a ranch hand would make her life so much easier. Alice's sister Janet teaches in the nearby town, she knows some of the pitfalls that could ensnare the employer of a Hispanic man lacking a legitimate green card. The interplay between the two characters as they form a friendship and begin to understand the challenges each faces, is priceless. The story lives here, in these two very different lives that are drawn together by chance, develop a friendship and cross that deep canyon to reach an understanding of what is important. Of course there is also the back story they bring. Alice's nemesis is her evil partner; Domingo has some secrets of his own. Here are characters that feel real, they make the reader care what happens to them. The book is a pleasure to read, the northwestern setting familiar, and it got me to thinking about current issues in a new way simply by reading their enjoyable story. Spend an interesting evening hearing Kennedy Foster speak about **All Roads Lead Me Back To You**.



Stop by, call or e-mail to sign up to attend the free events and be entered in the drawings for prizes. Refreshments will be served.

### Upcoming Author Appearances

Saturday March 6th at 5:00 PM **When She Flew** by Jennie Shortridge and **The School of Essential Ingredients** by Erica Bauermeister

Saturday April 3rd at 5:00 PM **Seeing Stars** by Diane Hammond

Saturday April 17th at 5:00 PM **An Absence So Great** by Jane Kirkpatrick

Saturday May 8th at 5:00 PM **100 Hikes in Southern Oregon** by William Sullivan

Saturday May 15th at 5:00 PM **A Night of Mystery** with Lisa Jackson and Nancy Bush, authors of **Wicked Games**

Saturday May 22nd at 5:00 PM **The Girl Who Fell From The Sky** Heidi Durrow

Saturday June 5th at 5:00 PM **Massacred for Gold** by Greg Nokes

Saturday June 19th at 5:00 PM **The Spellmans Strike Again** by Lisa Lutz

Saturday July 12th at 5:00 PM **Bend Overall** by Scott Cook

We hope you join us to enjoy these fabulous authors! Hearing an author speak often clarifies and enriches the reading experience. Author readings are free with refreshments served and drawings for prizes. Call or e-mail Sunriver Books & Music to attend and be entered in the prize drawings. Space may be limited for some events. Check our newsletter or web site, [Sunriverbooks.com](http://Sunriverbooks.com), for changes and additions.

## Winners of the Voting for the favorite Book Club selections of 2009

### Non Fiction

**First Place:** *The Eaves of Heaven* by Andrew X. Pham. Pham's family lived for generations on their lush estate in a North Vietnamese village. WWII brought the country to its knees as hungry Japanese troops invaded taking all the food for their army leaving the people to starve. Vietnam rejoiced when the Japanese were beaten, believing they would be free. A deal was cut with the French and an unwilling nation returned to the yoke of French colonial rule. Resistance was inevitable. During the day the French used brutal mercenaries to torture and kill villagers thought to cooperate with the rebels. At night the resistance fighters demanded food and money. Pham's family fled south from the brutality of the communist fighters as the French left Vietnam. America tried to the rescue the ARVN forces trying to rout the Viet Cong.

**Second Place:** *Stubborn Twig* by Lauren Kessler tells the story of one family's struggles to overcome internment during WWII and regain a piece of the American Dream. WWII included a shameful chapter in our nation's history. People were rounded up and sent to camps. Allowed one suitcase, they were herded onto buses away from their homes. Imagine being allowed one suitcase and being forced to leave behind the family pet.

**Third Place:** *Dreams From My Father* by President Barack Obama. 200 years ago, when President Lincoln was born, people of color could be owned as property, used as sexual toys, beaten, and sold away from their families. Now a black man leads the country. President Obama is the first president born in Hawaii, he has lived in Indonesia, his father's family still resides in Kenya. He worked as an organizer to help the poor and downtrodden, and traveled to Africa to meet the paternal side of his family.

**Fourth Place:** *A Voyage Long & Strange* by Tony Horwitz. Tony explores the settlement of North America, setting the record straight. Leif Ericson may be familiar to you, but how about his murderous sister Freydis? Tony pokes into the various nooks and crannies of history, he gives us a look at what the land is like today.

### Travel Essay

**First Place:** *The Impenetrable Forest* by Thor Hanson. Thor joined the Peace Corp and landed the stellar assignment of teaching Mountain Gorillas that it was okay to have their relatives, Homo Sapiens, nearby snapping pictures. Uganda faces many challenges; the needs of the population must be balanced with salvation of the wildlife before it is too late. Tourists could bring money to the community, showing people that saving animals was in their best interest. Teaching Mountain Gorillas is not an easy task. They are not aware they have signed up for class. Thor knew the Mountain Gorilla bearing down on him with eyes flashing, teeth bared, and fists thumping was not truly intent on hurting him, or at least maybe not. But in the moment could you remember to sit still and not run away in terror? Because running away would peeve the Mountain Gorilla and he might change his mind on the not hurting part of the program. This had to be a difficult & exhilarating task!

**Second Place:** *Iron & Silk* by Mark Salzman. Salzman spent time in China teaching English at Hunan Medical College. Salzman studied Chinese language and literature at Yale, graduating Phi Beta Kappa, Summa Cum Laude in 1982. He had a few more language skills than most American visitors in China. He was also deeply interested in martial arts, having studied since he was a child. The writing is beautiful, the story interesting, and the country worthy of interest.

**Third Place:** *Lasso the Wind* by Timothy Egan. Egan goes all over the west. Sometimes reveling in its beauty, sometimes stepping into its past, sometimes growing furious at its devastation. The west is a vast area full of light, canyon, tall mountains, and irascible people who love the land.

**Fourth Place:** *A Year In Provence* by Peter Mayle. Peter packs up his wife and two dogs heading for a small village in Provence and a 200 year old farmhouse needing work. He settles nicely into his new community, meeting his neighbors, making friends, and spending a lot of time eating delicious meals. Thankfully he also spends a lot of time walking his dogs through the picturesque fields of France. It is advantageous to both his waistline and the amusement of his dogs.

### Classics

**First Place:** *Palace Walk* by Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz. This is the first book in the Cairo Trilogy. *Palace Walk* is set around WWI, when the Egypt was eager to be rid of the British. Nationalistic fever was high and trigger fingers were itchy. Al-Sayyid Ahmad Abd al-Jawad rules his home with an iron hand, demanding respect from his wife Amina, and his children. At night he leads a different life, going off with his friends to drink and have a grand time. His friends view him as charming and witty. His family sees him as austere, respectable, and fierce. Amina is a wonderful character. She stands by her screened balcony and looks out as the world passes by on the street below. As the children grow, Al-Sayyid finds them more difficult to manage.

**Second Place:** *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck. Deceptively simple, this powerful story follows the life of a poor rural farmer. He suffers famine, poverty and eventual wealth, but always it is the land that brings him back to his roots. Poignant and filled with rich human drama, the story paints a vivid picture of life in a small rural Chinese Village and the suffering possible when fate is uncontrolled. Pearl Buck was the first American woman to win the Nobel Prize for literature.

**Third Place:** *Gone With The Wind* by Margaret Mitchell, winner of the Pulitzer Prize. *Gone with the Wind* positively seethes with passion, it is full of high drama. Atlanta burns, the Civil War rages, Rhett and Scarlet smolder. They never quite get it right, still as Scarlet says, "tomorrow is another day".

**Fourth Place:** *The Painted Veil* by Somerset Maugham. Kitty's Mom had high hopes for her pretty daughter. Doris expects Kitty to marry well. Years pass, Doris figures Kitty's best chances are behind her, she better stop being picky. In an attempt to leave her mother's home and avoid failure, Kitty marries Walter Fane and travels with him to China. It is a mistake. Kitty is a bright pretty thing, used to parties and admiration. She was not raised to be the wife of a sober, quiet man researching bacteria in 1920's China. Kitty is prime for misadventure, when Charles crosses her path she is easy to seduce. The consequences change her life. Maugham's writing is beautiful.



## Fiction

**First Place:** *The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. Every once in a while a special book comes along that you just do not want to end. Julia spent the war years watching for fires from the rooftops of London apartments. Now it is time to get her life back on track. A letter reaches her while she is on a book tour for her latest book. Dawsey found her address on the bookplate of a book he purchased at a jumble sale. He does not wish to inconvenience her, but no bookstores have survived Nazi occupation near his home on Guernsey. Does Julia know the address of any London bookstores who might be willing to sell him more of the author's work? Letters zip back and forth. All sorts of quirky characters enter the story. Pretty soon they all feel like old friends and you do not want to bid goodbye.

**Second Place:** *Sirine*, a 39 year old Iraqi-American, is happy with her life as chef cooking in a Lebanese restaurant. She lives with her uncle, a professor, and her adoring dog. I liked having a main character who was a 39 year old, confident, content woman. Her uncle introduces her to a gorgeous fellow professor, an Iraqi refugee who turns her life upside down. The book is set in California and Iraq, and it uses its setting well. Diana has a beautiful writing style, lively and engaging. She is also very inventive. At the beginning of each chapter is a continuing fable. Eventually the fable includes Omar Sharif, speaking of gorgeous, Omar is serious eye candy.

**Third Place:** *Hannah's Dream* by Diane Hammond. Sam has cared for Hannah ever since he got out of the Korean War, more than forty years ago. Hannah was part of Max Biedelman's private collection, housed on her luscious, gorgeously landscaped estate. Max willed her estate to the city as a zoo. Now it has fallen on hard times, all that gorgeous landscaping degenerated into concrete and vendor stalls. Standing on concrete isn't good for elephants. Nor is living alone, Elephants need company. At night Sam goes home and he dreams of lush pastures, deep ponds, and the trumpet of elephants. Can a dream become reality?

**Fourth Place:** *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café* by Fannie Flagg. Evelyn Couch is a beleaguered, woefully overwhelmed, powerless woman. Visiting her mother in law at a nursing home out of a sense of duty, the woman hates her, she meets Ninny Threadgoode. Ninny tells her stories from the 1930's and listens to her woes. Evelyn begins to feel more empowered more in charge of her life. Ninny's stories center on Ruth and Igdie. Ruth marries Frank, a handsome man who gives her a son, then beats her. Igdie rescues Ruth and her son from her abusive husband. There are dark secrets, lifelong friendship, and strange justice in the story. The characters are beyond lively; they are drawn with humor, a zesty spirit, and compassion.

## Mystery

**First Place:** *Uncivil Seasons* by Michael Malone. If you enjoy beautiful writing, fully realized characters, and intricate plotting you will be most pleased. Michael Malone is an Emmy Award winning screenwriter, New York Times Best Selling author, Edgar Award winner, a professor at Duke University and a very talented man. Most of Michael Malone's body of work is literary fiction, he has written only three mysteries set in North Carolina. This is the first of the trilogy. Justin Savile's family ruled as far back as memory served, his granddaddy was the governor, his uncle a senator, his cousin the attorney general. Justin was meant to finish law school then join his family in the halls of power. He graduated law school but instead of joining his powerful clan he developed a taste for alcohol and became a cop. Crime in his social class, at least the sort that resulted in prison time, was uncommon. It is a shock when the wife of Justin's uncle, is found beaten to death. She was a cheerful woman, beloved by many. Assumptions are made about the sort of people who would be involved in her brutal murder and the reasons they employed. It does not take long to find a low-life who fits the profile. Cuddy Mangum is a brilliant detective from the wrong side of the tracks and a Viet Nam veteran to boot. He is determined that justice not supposition rule.

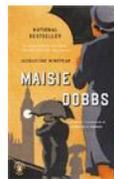
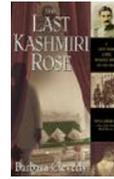
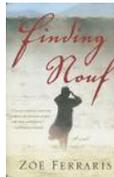
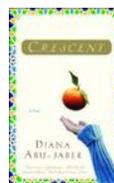
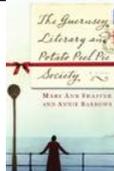
**Second Place:** *Finding Nouf* by Zoe Ferraris. It will take you behind the chador, but will not make fun of or ridicule the culture. Zoe Ferraris married a Saudi Arabian man and lived for a while in Jeddah the setting for the mystery. She uses her intimate knowledge of the setting and the culture to give us a compelling mystery. Nouf goes missing; her prominent family hires Nayir, an experienced desert tracker, to help in the search. When her body is found, the facts do not sit comfortably with Nayir. Katya in the medical examiner's office also has concerns about what really happened to Nouf. The tension between Nayir and Katya as they try to discover the truth is part of the story. Nayir is uncomfortable interacting with Katya, there are taboos on what is permissible between a single woman and a man.

**Tied for Third Place:** *Past Caring* by Robert Goddard. A rising young star in British Parliament falls for a feisty suffragette. He can keep his career or his love, he cannot have both. On the day he turns in his resignation she spurns him. Why? In 1977 a discredited history teacher is hired by a mysterious man on the isle of Madeira to find the answer to the mystery. Goddard writes with elegant prose and intricate plots.

**Tied for Third Place:** *The Last Kashmiri Rose* by Barbara Cleverly. Brigadier Harold Sandilands, the great uncle of Cleverly's husband, was the inspiration for Commander Joe Sandilands. This is the first book in a series, it opens with Joe eagerly anticipating his return to London and Scotland Yard. He is packed and ready to leave India, when he receives a summons from the Governor. Pretty soon he is headed not to London but out into the hinterlands where the Governor's niece fears someone is getting away with murder. The mortality rate in wives of the Bengal Greys is unusually high, the deaths ascribed to suicide or accident.

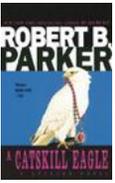
**Tied for Fourth Place:** *Maisie Dobbs* by Jacqueline Winspear. Lady Rowan discovers her 14 year old maid hidden in the library voraciously reading books in the middle of the night. Fortunately Lady Rowan is impressed by Maisie's intelligence and eagerness to learn. She decides to educate the girl. WWI swallows Europe, filling the land with horror. Maisie serves as a nurse, helping suffering men as a generation is destroyed. After the war Maisie becomes a detective. Her first case is a husband fearful his wife may be cheating. She follows her to a cemetery, not the usual spot for a tryst.

**Tied for Fourth Place:** *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* by Laurie King. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created a memorable character in Sherlock Holmes. Laurie King has given Holmes formidable intellect to a young woman, Mary Russell, and made them compatriots. Russell stumbles across Holmes when she is a lass of 15 and Holmes is 54. Russell is out wandering the Sussex meadows, avoiding her shrewish aunt. Holmes is occupying himself scrutinizing the behavior bees in the meadow. The two recognize in each other a keen intellect. Holmes takes Russell under his wing, training the young girl. She will grow to be his friend and associate, together they will solve puzzles baffling the authorities. Holmes has enemies; by caring for Mary Russell he puts her at risk.



## January 2010 Book Clubs

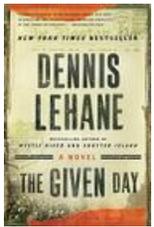
January 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 the Mystery Book Club kicks off 2010 with **A Catskill Eagle** by Robert Parker. Reading one of Robert Parker's Spencer series is like visiting an old friend, comfortable and a pleasure. **A Catskill Eagle** is one of his earlier books in the series; it has all the main characters right in the thick of the plot. Susan, the love of Spencer's life, has left him for a bad guy. Hawk, Spencer's tough as nails side kick, is framed for murder. Spencer will have to save them both.



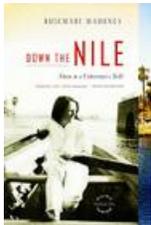
Our pick for Best Non Fiction Book of 2009 is the selection for the Non Fiction Book Club Monday January 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30. **The Most They Ever Had** by Pulitzer Prize winner Rick Bragg is a powerful book by a stunningly gifted author. He bears witness to the lives of good, hard working people employed in the cotton mill in Jacksonville Alabama. His words show he honors telling their stories, giving them the respect and dignity their hard working lives deserve. He conveys their essence with power; "You need not use foul language to damn a man here. Just say a day's work would kill him, and you tore him down to the bald nothing." We used to value hard work in this country. The people in this book are proud people who take pride in working hard to provide for their families. They don't expect much, just a roof over their heads, a newer car every once in a while, and maybe a night at the movies. They are not anticipating easy lives or great wealth. Is it too much to expect a safe working environment and a living wage? Apparently it is. Rick Bragg has written a eulogy to the time in America where we built things rather than chased ever faster after the next deal and the easy dollar. Now a company's parts are worth more than its whole, the jobs can be done cheaper overseas, and the bad boys of Wall Street need to be kept happy. We have become a nation of financiers. A nation obsessed with flashy ball players paid mega dollars to play a boy's game, CEO's bringing home checks with so many zeroes it will make your head hurt, and TV reality shows illustrating the decline of our culture. In this era of bigger is better, Rick Bragg has written a book about the lives of hard working, everyday people who hold their dignity close. Rick reminds us of a set of values and a way of life that defined our country far better than the lust for the deal, and fast money culture of late. This book is a powerhouse!



January 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 the Fiction Book Club discusses **The Given Day** by Dennis Lehane. Open the book and it feels like you have stepped through a portal into Boston at the end of WWI, Lehane's writing makes the story come alive! Babe Ruth passes time during a train stop playing a pickup game of baseball with some black men in a nearby field. Luther has fast in his blood; he gives Babe a game to remember. But the main story is the police strike that felled Boston in 1919. It is a cop's story about a time they were paid less than trolley car drivers. Danny's Dad is a respected police captain, putting his son on a fast track to a gold shield. His future is pretty well assured if he will just stay on the path his father paved. Instead Danny finds himself embroiled in the union's fight, not a good career move. Luther shows up in Boston, running from a bad night down in Tulsa. He goes to work for Danny's dad as a houseman, his troubles are not over, they are just getting a good start. **The Given Day** is brimming with tension, violence, humor and history, from anarchist's bombs, to a cavalry charge down the main streets of Boston during a riot. It is packed with vibrant characters and plenty of action.



January 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 the Travel Essay Book Club discusses **Down the Nile** by Rosemary Mahoney. One of the enjoyable aspects of travel essay is reading about very different sorts of travel, like rowing a boat down the Nile. Mahoney is an avid rower and had long been fascinated by Egypt. Rowing down the Nile would allow her to experience Egypt as it might have been ages ago. There are a few challenges to be faced by a single, American woman in rowing a boat alone down the Nile. Not the least of which is getting a boat!



### Non Fiction Book Club

Monday 6:30 March 29th 2010 **The Limits of Power** by Andrew Bacevich

Monday 6:30 April 26th 2010 **Nine Lives** by Dan Baum

Monday 6:30 May 24th 2010 **Mornings on Horseback** by David McCullough

### Fiction Book Club

Monday 6:30 PM February 22nd 2010 **The Piano Teacher** by Janice Y.K. Lee

Monday 6:30 March 22nd 2010 **Mudbound** by Hilary Jordan

Monday 6:30 April 12th 2010 **Tree of Smoke** by Denis Johnson

### Classics

Monday 6:30 PM March 1st 2010 **The Monkey Wrench Gang** by Edward Abbey

Monday 6:30 PM April 19th 2010 **Song of Solomon** by Toni Morrison

Monday 6:30 PM June 28th 2010 **To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee

### Mystery Book Club

Monday 6:30 February 15th 2010 **A Beautiful Blue Death** by Charles Finch

Monday 6:30 March 18th 2010 **Half of Paradise** by James Lee Burke

Monday 6:30 April 5th 2010 **Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie** by Alan Bradley

Monday 6:30 May 3rd 2010 **Still Life** by Louise Penney

### Travel Essay Book Club

Monday 6:30 PM March 15th 2010 **Catfish & Mandela** by Andrew X. Pham

Monday 6:30 PM May 10th 2010 **Following the Equator** by Mark Twain

