



Sunriver Books & Music

October 2021

Newsletter

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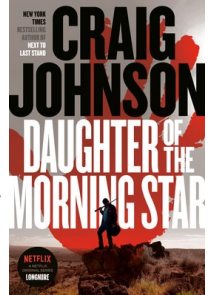


Thank you Craig Johnson!

Thank you Three Rivers School!

Thank you to our staff and Volunteers!

September 22 Craig Johnson gave an entertaining presentation on the latest in his Sheriff Walt Longmire series, *Daughter of the Morning Star* at Three Rivers School. It was such a pleasure to have Craig Johnson back with us in person! We are grateful for Craig and Judy Johnson's loyalty and generosity to Sunriver Books & Music. We are honored by their friendship.



Three Rivers School could not have been more welcoming. Principal Tim Broadbent and Office Manager Jill James took time in the summer, when the school is closed, to arrange our use of the Otter Room. Jeff Wingate worked out a seating arrangement to do our best to keep people social distanced and allow all audience members a view of the stage. Lori Gascon made sure everything was running smoothly at the event, helping wherever help was needed. Shane helped the night of the show. Everyone at Three Rivers School showed kindness and efficiency, we appreciated their help in putting on this event!

Thank you to our staff for doing their best to make this an enjoyable experience for everyone. Thank you Zach, Holly, Grant, Lori, and Sue. We couldn't make it work without our volunteers! Carolyn Barr, Janet Gordon, Kat McClusky, Laura Colburn, Jill Mann, and Shawn Mann.

We did our best trying to make this a safe event. Every attendee stated they were vaccinated, we spot checked vaccination cards, all audience members wore masks.

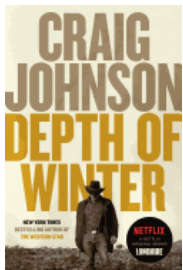
Daughter of the Morning Star is the 17th in the New York Times bestselling Longmire series that inspired the hit TV Drama. Sheriff Walt Longmire and Henry Standing Bear travel from Wyoming to Lame Deer Montana. Tribal Police Chief Lolo Long is a tough woman, a combat veteran of the Middle East, with a hair trigger temper. She is also the first woman to be immune to Henry Standing Bear's considerable charms (read *As The Crow Flies*). She is concerned for the safety of her niece, Jaya.

About a year ago, Jaya's older sister disappeared driving home from Billings Montana. Jaya is a star player on the Lame Deer High School Basketball team. Since her sister disappeared, she has been getting into trouble and receiving death threats. Lolo worries the death threats may be connected to her sister's disappearance. She asks Walt Longmire and Henry Standing Bear for help.

We have a limited number of signed books available. .

A Month of Mexico

Reading can expand your world; each year we focus on a different country or region. Step into the pages of a book and live for a while in another landscape, another culture. Reading about other places fosters empathy and brings understanding to other ways. It is fun to travel to different lands through the pages of a book and may inspire you to visit in person too. This October's selection is a Month of Mexico. The USA shares over 2000 miles of border with our southern neighbor. The borderlands have been in the news lately, Mexico is a good selection to read about this month. Our October newsletter and Book Clubs will feature books set in Mexico. In 2021, armchair traveling through the pages of books is a good plan.

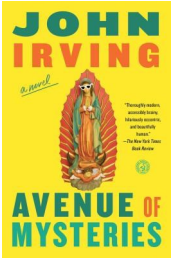


Depth of Winter by Craig Johnson opens with Sheriff Walt Longmire ignoring the orders of FBI Special Agent Mike McGroder and crossing into Mexico to face his greatest challenge; a desperate attempt to rescue his daughter Cady from a stone cold killer. Without jurisdiction or official sanction, to save his daughter, he will travel into the hot, remote, unforgiving desert country to face down an army of trigger happy drug runners in the employ of the man holding Cady captive.

Great characters and deadly action make this a page turner. Captain Guzman of the Border Patrol views the law's flexibility in much the same way as Vic, if not more so. A useful man. He knows people who might be of assistance to Longmire in this quest with long odds on survival. Such as Isidro, a sniper with deadly range and the Seer, a blind, wheelchair bound man with many resourceful connections. Dr. Martinez has his own reasons for taking on the drug cartels; he is willing to accompany Longmire into the remote mountains to battle the cartel's private army. His sister, Bianca, disapproves of the mission but she has a deep loyalty to her brother and is not a woman to cross.

Sheriff Walt Longmire has a history of defeating violent criminals, but this time it is different. He is in a foreign country and the killer has his daughter, intending to auction her off to the highest bidder. Walt cannot let that happen; if necessary he will die trying to save her.

A Month of Mexico!



Avenue of Mysteries by John Irving is perhaps one of his most inventive novels (and considering his body of work, that is saying something). Abandoning his usual New England setting, this story is set in Mexico and the Philippines.

It begins with Juan Diego, now in his fifties and a highly regarded author, traveling to the Philippines to keep a promise he made in his youth to visit the grave of an American soldier. Juan Diego's father was unknown, his mother worked as a prostitute and a cleaning woman at the Jesuit mission. Along with his sister, Lupe, Juan Diego was a dump kid, eking out an existence on the debris of others. Both Juan Diego and his sister were unusual in their little community. Juan Diego because he taught himself to read on scavenged books, mastering not only Spanish but English too. Lupe was truly unusual; no one could understand her speech except her beloved brother Juan Diego. She could read the minds of those around her (sometimes an uncomfortable experience for the men) and could tell not only the past, but the future, albeit she was not always accurate about the future. This ability to see what may occur was a burden for 13 year old Lupe, what she saw did not give her comfort.

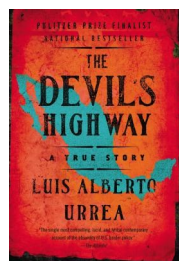
As Juan Diego hurtles on toward the Philippines, he sleeps and dreams during the flight. The dreams take him back to his youth, a time more real to him than the present. Juan Diego's trip has been aided in the planning by one of his writing students, Clark, now a successful author in his own right. Clark is a devout Catholic while Juan Diego has many grudges against the Catholic religion. Their debates often center on belief and the actions resultant from a feeling of divine entitlement. John Irving has points to make and what he would like for you to do is read the book, follow Juan Diego on his rather bizarre journey to judge for yourself.



The Lacuna by Barbara Kingsolver is generously filled with important historic moments. Harrison William Shepherd's life takes a drastic change when he is 12 and his gorgeous mother, Salome, moves them to her lover's Mexican hacienda on Isla Pixol where the air is rent by the shriek of Howler monkeys. A far cry from the Washington DC life the young lad had enjoyed with his American father. Other than the fright of the Howler monkeys, it is a beautiful place. Swimming in the sea, Harrison finds a lacuna, a secret underwater cave. He loves stories and words, keeps track of his days in a journal.

The next move will take the pair to Mexico City where Salome continues her quest for the right man, and Harrison finds employment with the artists Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. Thus he comes in contact with their house guest, the Russian Leon Trotsky. This is an association doomed to end in sadness. When Trotsky is assassinated, Harrison flees the howling mob of reporters and at 24 returns to the USA where he writes Mexican historic adventure novels. He is just in time to come under the scrutiny of McCarthyism. Again attracting the attention of a howling mob of press. The Harrison they create in their reporting is a far cry from his real man. He wants close friends, privacy, and quiet, not notoriety.

This is a lovely novel about a kind man that brings the events of history into intimate focus and tells a rousing story.

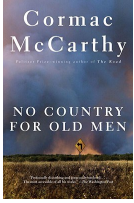


The Devil's Highway by Louis Alberto Urrea is a moving work of non-fiction about a group of men who tried to find new lives in the USA. Immigrating to the USA is not easy, can take decades, and coming illegally is fraught with danger. It isn't a journey anyone would want to take without desperate need. One way across is through an unforgiving desert corridor known as ***The Devil's Highway***.

In 2001 the Wellton 26 paid dearly to be guided across the border to safety and a chance to earn a living for their families back in Mexico. Economic need fueled their trek. The book details the way they were preyed upon by the gang they paid to provide safe passage. Instead, their guide panicked when lights were spotted, got lost, and abandoned the men to their fate.

The desert is not a gentle place to be lost. The sky is fierce with heat, lacking the comfort of shade or cooling water. Dehydration and heat stroke are strong possibilities once exposed too long to the high temperatures. Creatures living in the desert can be deadly. It took a while before one of the group stumbled upon a border control agent and summoned help. Fourteen of the men died, thereafter referred to as the Yuma 14. An illegal trek across the border is a risky option for people who see no good alternative.

A Month of Mexico



No Country For Old Men by Cormac McCarthy is a beautifully written story about the heartbreak of the innocent caught up in events beyond their control. Texas Sheriff Ed Tom Bell does his level best to stand between his people and the chaos of violence. He is getting on in years, a decorated veteran of WWII, and devoted to his wife; he believes in kindness and decency. Sheriff Bell is a good man and an able sheriff, but he is shocked by the violence of the drug trade fueled in the 1980s by customers north of the border and suppliers south. He is a brave man, unwilling to stand down when duty calls.

Llewelyn Moss is also a good man, a Vietnam veteran, and loving husband. He stumbles on the site of a massacre in a remote area. Several men are dead, one dying and begging for water. Moss, doesn't have any with him, but returns with water for the dying man. A cache of drugs and money is discovered. Lots of money. Who wouldn't be tempted? All that cash and nobody around to see who took it. Clearly it is from people who would not use the money for good purposes. So he grabs the cash and therein is his downfall.

It doesn't take long for the drug dealer's assassin, Chigurh, to figure out who took the money. Moss runs. The trail leads to Mexico. Sheriff Bell is after the bad guys. A classic tale of a good man trying to defeat the forces of evil, well worth reading.



House of the Rising Sun by James Lee Burke. In the battle of good versus evil, Hackberry Holland is racking up the body count. Formidable odds do not deter this Texas Ranger, as the book opens he takes on a house full of Mexican soldiers. The story spans a couple decades in the early 1890's from Revolutionary Mexico to Europe during WW1 concluding in the early days of Hollywood as Hackberry seeks to be reunited with his son Ishmael.

While Hack's father skills may have needed a bit of polish, his record with the ladies truly gets him in trouble. And what a grand group of feisty women Burke assembled for Hackberry! There is his wife Maggie, also a part time lover of the Sundance Kid, Ruby, the mother of his child, and Beatrice, a brothel madam who tries fruitlessly to keep Hack out of trouble. Along the way Hackberry gets on the wrong side of a sociopathic arms dealer with a taste for revenge. Hack has acquired a relic; the arms dealer wants both the relic and revenge. There is lots of action and a sprinkling of humor. I suspect Burke had fun writing this historical fiction, especially the trio of strong determined women.



Make Them Cry by Smith Henderson and Jon Marc Smith. Diane is on vacation, an idyllic interlude in cabin in Michigan's Upper Peninsula with Bronwyn, a handsome fellow who can list cooking among his many appealing characteristics. But Diane is DEA out of LA, she is not called Hardball for nothing, and her life is about to intrude on their sojourn drawing a sharp line under the differences between her sometimes deadly occupation and that of a sweet guy who just wants to relax and enjoy nature. Nope, the easy life is not Diane's default setting. She gets a tip that will take her across the border, outside the boundaries of officially sanctioned behavior, teamed up with a CIA guy who is not in the good graces of his superiors either. Together they go after tough and dangerous men involved in the cartels, not a safe undertaking. This is a hard as nails thriller with a strong female lead.



Cinnamon Skin by John D. MacDonald. Travis McGee enjoys a laid back life on his Florida houseboat, the Busted Flush. That said he is the kind of guy who would do anything for a friend, and his best friend is Meyer. McGee fixed the economist, Meyer, up with a speaking gig while Meyer's niece, Norma, borrowed his houseboat, the John Maynard Keynes, for her honeymoon. When the John Maynard Keynes exploded into a million little pieces, it destroyed everything Meyer owned along with his beloved niece. Was the groom a part of all that wreckage? Does he sleep with the fishes? Or was he even on board? A group of Columbian terrorists take credit for the bombing. The trail leads south of the border.

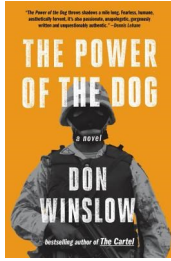


A Deadly Shade of Gold by John D. MacDonald. Sam Taggart wants to reunite with his girlfriend Nora. Breaking up was a mistake, he thinks he can set things right. He has a plan, not a good plan but a plan, for making some quick money so he and Nora can live happily ever after in Fort Lauderdale. Did I mention it was not a good plan? He pilfers an Aztec idol from some seriously bad dudes down in Mexico, they do not take this development well. Sam's end is predictable, but before his demise he calls his friend, Travis McGee, for help. McGee may be too late to save Sam, but he is spot on to for comforting the bereaved girlfriend and retribution for Sam. McGee is quick on his feet, a clever guy who can take care of himself and often his friends. But as he delves into this situation, things happen that make him question his goals and abilities.



Mexican Gothic by Silvia Moreno-Garcia. Noem Taboada is upper class and strong willed. Her cousin, recently married, lives in an isolated house with her English husband and his domineering father. She sends Noem a plea for help. It doesn't take long for Noem to start having strange dreams in this creepy house. There is a pervading sense of menace. Readers who enjoy an intricate story, strong female character, and a plot that builds suspense will find much to enjoy.

Book Clubs meet either in person or via Zoom on Mondays at 6 PM. Check with us on the in person dates, due to Covid-19 they may be postponed. At the moment, we plan to continue through October, but there is uncertainty.



Mystery Book Club discusses ***The Power of the Dog*** by Don Winslow in person October 4 and via Zoom October 11. This is the first of a trilogy Don Winslow wrote about the drug cartels and the border.

Art Keller was CIA. When President Nixon started his war on drugs, Art, who grew up in the barrio and witnessed ***The Power of the Dog*** first hand, was all in. Good notions don't always work the way you plan, switching to the newly created DEA he was thwarted by bosses who were rigidly entrenched in their own culture and coworkers who didn't trust the new guy from the CIA with a background in Southeast Asia. He was about to make one of the bigger mistakes of his life. Frustrated by bosses who wouldn't listen, and fluent in Spanish, he went to town where he met Adan Barrera. It was a meeting of future consequence. Adan and his brother would rise to be a power in the cartels. Father Parada knew both men, while the war they fought tore apart his country.

Callan was just a poor Irish kid from New York's Hells Kitchen. He palled around with, O-Bop, who got sideways of the local gang boss' enforcer. The standard result would have been a long dirt nap. Instead, Callan's talent for quickly dispatching his enemies makes him a formidable hit man.

Nora was the sort that inspire songs about California girls. Strictly into having a good time, sun streaked and pretty. Her parents were divorced, she stayed with her dad, an aging hippie more interested in his next tokes than his daughter. Her Mom lived on the other side of the country. A chance meeting with a more experienced woman showed Nora another way. Their stories come together in a cataclysmic tale of the first three decades of the war on drugs.



Fiction Book Club discusses ***American Dirt*** by Jeanine Cummins in person 10-18 and via Zoom 10-25. This story of a woman's desperate attempt to seek refuge with her child in the USA packs an emotional wallop. And this is only one story, each of the refugees seeking a better life is fleeing serious danger or deprivation to make them face the hardships of the long trek to freedom.

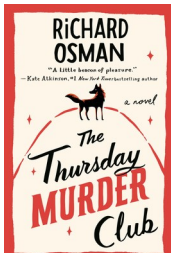
Lydia is a middle-class woman, happily married with a beloved son, Luca. She enjoys her work, a bookshop where she can share the pleasure in reading with others. Her husband, Sebastian, is a journalist. When they run afoul of a drug cartel, the violence is terrible. Sebastian and their extended family are slaughtered. Lydia and Luca flee. There is no time to prepare, they just 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. It brings home the humanity, need, and dignity of those seeking shelter. It is also an edge of your seat thriller told with heart.. 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. Oprah selected it for her Book Club. 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.

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***. To have been a refugee, to experience that danger and deprivation, must affect the rest of a person's life. They may not see their individual experience in ***American Dirt***. It is also true that authors who write using another gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, etc. should absolutely do so respectfully. Craig Johnson, author of the New York Times Bestselling Sheriff Walt Longmire series, Jane Kirkpatrick author of many historic fictions, and David Heska, Wanbli Weiden author of Winter Counts had a Zoom event with us; ***A Conversation on Writing Native*** discussing the use of Native American characters, history, and culture in writing. You can watch a video of the event at sunriverbooks.com.



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

Everyone is welcome, Meetings are held via Zoom and in person (vaccination required) Mondays at 6 PM.

Times and dates are tentative due to current situation.

November

In person 11-1 Zoom 11-8 ***Thursday Murder Club*** by Richard Osman **Mystery Book Club**

11-15 ***Nomadland*** by Jessica Bruder **Non-Fiction Book Club**

In person 11-22 Zoom 11-29 ***Fresh Water For Flowers*** by Valerie Perrin **Fiction Book Club**

Comment on book clubs, look up future book clubs, or find more information at Sunriverbooks.com



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