

After working with books all day, many of our librarians like nothing more than to relax with a good book of their own. Here are some recommendations from a list compiled annually by the University of Wisconsin—Madison Librarians' Assembly. Many of these books can be found in campus libraries or your local public library.

Boyle, T. Coraghessan. **Drop City**. New York: Viking, 2003.

A group from a failed commune in suburban California flees to Alaska, crossing the Canadian border by pretending to be the Grateful Dead during the 1970s.

Brown, Rita Mae. **Full Cry**. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003.

Why are the town drunks suddenly dying of hemlock poisoning? Is it suicide? The latest in this mystery series involves Jane Arnold and the members of her fox hunt in murder.

Bujold, Lois McMaster. **The Paladin of Souls**. New York: Eos, 2003.

A fantasy that follows the life of a recently widowed woman who begins her recovery on a religious pilgrimage and escapes the protective family that annoys her so much.

Camilleri, Andrea and Stephen Sartarelli. **The Snack Thief**. New York: Viking, 2003.

Passionate food lover, sarcastic boss, remote romantic — the inspector Montalbano unravels an extortion plot, smuggling ring, and the heinous school lunch thief mystery.

Coyote, Peter. **Sleeping Where I Fall: A Chronicle**. Washington D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998.

An autobiography involving too many hippie kids crammed into old farm houses without enough toilets and too many drugs, who find out that free love ends up causing feuds, jealousy, and no one with real life skills.

Dawson, Jan. **Teaching Safe Horsemanship: A Guide to English & Western Instruction**. Pownal, Vt.: Storey Books, 1997.

This book does not tell you how to teach riding, it tells you how to be safe and avoid being sued, and does so in a highly readable format.

Fried, Stephen. **The New Rabbi: A Congregation Searches for its Leader**. New York: Bantam, 2002.

"[Fried] closely chronicles the congregation's turmoil over the long process of selecting the new rabbi and finding a site for a new synagogue." — *Booklist Review*

Gibson, William. **Pattern Recognition**. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2003.

The latest novel by the initiator of cyber literature is a present-day cyber-who-done-it. The unwitting private investigator is Cayce Pollard, an intuitive "cool hunter" whose skills are in high demand by marketing firms.

Kaminsky, Stuart M. **A Cold Red Sunrise: An Inspector Porfiry Rostnikov Mystery**. New York: Scribner's, 1988.

Part of a series, this book begins in Siberia where a visiting commissar, investigating the death of a dissident's daughter, is murdered with a large icicle.

Keys, Marian. **Watermelon: A Novel**. New York: Avon Books, 1998.

—. **Rachel's holiday**. London: Penguin Books, 1997.

Each book details a different girl in the same wacky Dublin family and her struggle with either a failed marriage or rehab for an accidental drug overdose. Funny and poignant stories.

Kingsolver, Barbara. **Prodigal Summer: A Novel**. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.

Set in southern Appalachia, this is a wonderful novel that interweaves three human love stories and an appreciation of the natural environment.

Kotzwinkle, William, Glenn Murray, and Audrey Colman. **Walter, the Farting Dog**. Berkeley, Calif.: Frog, Ltd., 2001

Walter the dog creates problems with his farts but becomes a hero when burglars enter the house.

Long, John A. **The Dinosaur Dealers**. Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2002.

A slab containing two dinosaur footprints is stolen from a protected beach in Australia and begins a story detailing the problems of international fossil smuggling.

Mahler, Alma, Antony Beaumont, and Susanne Rode-Breymann. **Diaries, 1898–1902**. London: Faber & Faber, 1998.

An intimate account of Alma Mahler's life from adolescence into womanhood, beginning with her first affair and stopping shortly before her marriage to Gustav Mahler.

Mawer, Simon. **The Fall**. London: Little, Brown and Company, 2003.

A book about mountain climbers in Scotland, with love triangles, World War II, and the swinging sixties.

Mears, Raymond. **The Real Heroes of Telemark**. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2003.

During World War II, a group of men who've escaped occupied Norway return to their country secretly in the dead of winter on a British mission to blow up a factory.

Mills, Kyle. **Smoke Screen**. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2003.

Not the typical Mills novel, but a story of a tobacco industry heir who becomes the spokesperson to take cigarettes off the market and the ensuing political and economic consequences.

Minichino, Camille. **The Hydrogen Murder**. New York: Avalon Books, 1997.

"This first novel in a new series is a real find. Not only does Minichino, herself a physicist, clearly explain the scientific concepts relating to hydrogen and superconductivity, but she also offers a tightly constructed mystery with appealing, sympathetic characters." — *Booklist Review*

Mistry, Rohinton. **A Fine Balance: A Novel**. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.

— **Family matters**. London: Faber & Faber, 2002.

Both books touch on the balance of family dynamics. The first is set in post-independence India involving four people who make up a family of sorts. The second is set in present-day Bombay and touches on Parkinson's disease.

Ozeki, Ruth L. **All Over Creation**. New York: Viking, 2003

Radical environmentalists, potato farmers, Japanese immigrants, and the debate over genetically modified crops are all played out in Idaho in this very sophisticated novel where none of the political lines are what they seem, and no one is a stereotype.

Perry, Michael. **Population, 485: Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren at a Time**. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002.

Perry, a volunteer fireman, uses his accounts of emergency rescue runs in his Wisconsin home town as starting points for funny and moving riffs on topics from the meaning of life to the meaning of the bent-over granny lawn ornament.

Pritchard, Sara. **Crackpots**. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003.

Ruby Reese is a spunky kid. Her family is what her Pennsylvania townspeople would call "a bunch of crackpots." Despite her unorthodox upbringing and blundering through three failed marriages, this energetic girl matures into a creative, introspective woman.

Rosen, Jody. **White Christmas: The Story of an American Song**. New York: Scribner's, 2002.

A popular history of the well-known Christmas song that touches on the careers of Irving Berlin and Bing Crosby, the histories of Tin Pan Alley, and how Christmas became the United States' "national holiday" during World War II.

Satrapi, Marjane. **Persepolis**. New York: Pantheon Books, 2003.

In this engaging memoir, Satrapi uses the graphic novel form to tell the story of her childhood in Iran.

Spencer, Scott. **A Ship Made of Paper: A Novel**. New York: Ecco, 2003.

"This is an engaging novel of passion, romantic longing, race, class, family responsibilities, and the riveting anxieties of a couple embroiled in a relationship that cannot end well." — *Booklist Review*

Stock, Gregory. **Redesigning Humans: Our Inevitable Genetic Future**.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

A groundbreaking work, this book tackles the controversial subject of engineering the human germline — the process of permanently altering the genetic code of an individual so that the changes are passed on to the offspring.

Stone, Tom. **The Summer of My Greek Taverna: A Memoir**. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.

The memoir of an American expatriate running a beachside taverna on the Greek island of Patmos is filled with memorable characters.

Swofford, Anthony. **Jarhead: A Marine's Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles**. New York: Scribner's, 2003.

"In this memoir, Swofford's portrayal of the battlefield also contains flashbacks and flash-forwards of his personal life, which serve as platforms for his recurrent cynicism." — *Booklist Review*

West, Rebecca. **The Fountain of Overflows**. London: Virago Press, 1984.

This semi-autobiographical novel follows the lives of an eccentric, strong, and somewhat impoverished family in early 1900s London who encounter debt, poltergeists, music lessons, and murder.

Wilkes, Paul. **And They Shall be My People: An American Rabbi and His Congregation**. New York: Grove Press, 1994.

"The book explores the complex question, 'What is the place of the Jewish religion in today's lifestyle?' In seeking the answer, Wilkes has written an important book, focusing on a religion at a perilous juncture in time."

— *Booklist Review*