



Season's Readings



*Post Learning Commons
and Drexel Library*

Recommended Reads

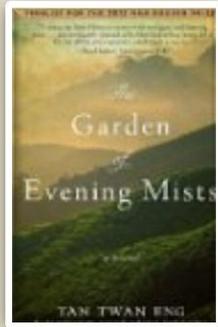
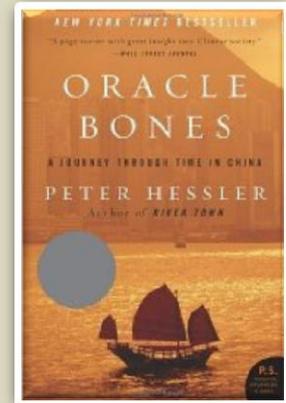


Evelyn Minick

Title: **Oracle Bones**

Author: Peter Hessler

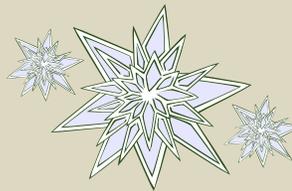
As a correspondent and journalist, Peter Hessler lived and taught in China for over a decade. Fluent in Mandarin, he recounts his broad knowledge, history and personal encounters in a way that entertains and mesmerizes. He frames his narrative with short chapters on Chinese artifacts, the oracle bones, considered the earliest known writing in East Asia. I found this book so fascinating, filled with stories about amazing people, and how culture informs language.



Title: **Garden of Evening Mists**

Author: Tan Twan Eng

This Booker Prize finalist still stays with me. It is set in the aftermath of World War II in Malaya, where a guerilla war still rages. Yun Ling Teoh, a judge and lone survivor of a brutal Japanese war camp, returns to the Cameron Highlands to build a garden to commemorate her sister, who died in the camp. There she is intimately drawn to Aritomo, the former gardener of the Emperor of Japan.



Marian Courtney

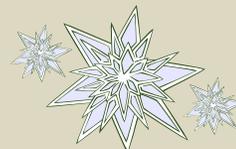
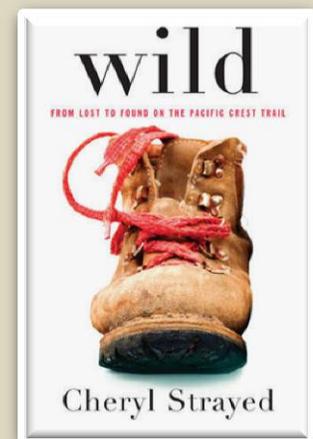
Title: **Wild**

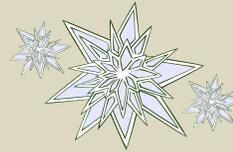
Author: Cheryl Strayed

I read a brief summary about this book under NPR's *A World on the Page: Five Best Travel Memoirs* (2012) and became intrigued.

<http://www.npr.org/2012/07/05/156314475/a-world-on-the-page-five-great-travel-memoirs>

Feeling confused and alone following the death of her mother, Strayed (a name she gave herself) decides to hike the Pacific Crest Trail as a way of gaining clarity and redemption in her life. She spares us nothing in recounting the journey: friends along the way, unbelievable self-denial, real dangers, harsh conditions, bodily damage and truly difficult decisions that must be made in order to complete the task she has set for herself. Critic Michael Schaub calls *Wild*, "one of the most original, heartbreaking and beautiful American memoirs in years."





Marjorie Rathbone

Title: **The Irresistible Henry House: A Novel**

Author: Lisa Grunwald

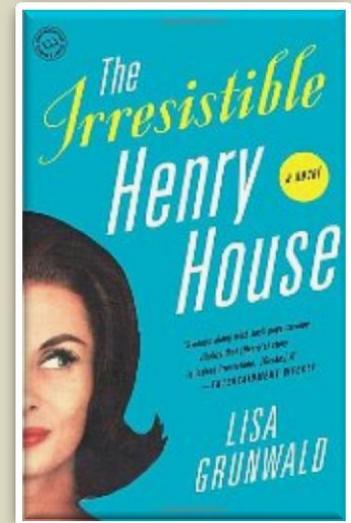
A novel inspired by actual programs carried out on college campuses for 50 years, *The Irresistible Henry House* is the story of a practice baby – an infant borrowed from an orphanage for a home economics program to help young college women learn modern mothering skills.

Mrs. Martha Gaines, an outwardly stern home economics professor at an all-female institution called Wilton College, teaches her young mothers to keep the baby fed, cleaned and on a schedule but not to cuddle or coddle the child. Hers is a philosophy much at odds with Dr. Benjamin Spock, the rising star in child care, who encourages permissiveness in Martha's view by advising mothers to trust their instincts, pick up their babies at will and give every child "a feeling that he belongs to you and that you belong to him".

As a rule, the practice babies are returned to the orphanage after a year and adopted out to families, but Mrs. Gaines falls in love with young Henry House and decides to keep him for herself. Having been mothered by a half-dozen adoring coeds who took care of him in shifts, Henry does not attach himself to Martha as she would like and, in fact, resists her attempts to be his sole, loving mother.

The book follows Henry's journey as he grows up and apart from Martha, searches for and learns the truth about his birth mother, acquires a serious girlfriend – herself a former practice baby - with whom he has a complicated love life, discovers a talent for art and becomes an animator for Walt Disney studios and, ultimately, reevaluates his relationship with Martha.

A story as much about the effects of these programs on the caregivers as on the practice babies, the book is an interesting look at a little known part of American life and the consequences of these behavioral experiments for all concerned.

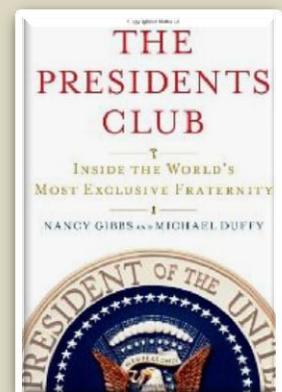


Susan Cheney

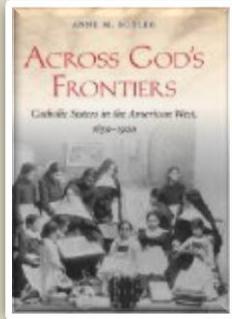
Title: **The President's Club: Inside the World's Most Exclusive Fraternity**

Author: Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy

Fascinating look at the presidents from Hoover through Obama and how they worked with and against each other, in and out of office. It explores how each of the sitting presidents used their predecessors as advisors, confidants, and emissaries not always with the desired results. Some of the friendships that arose between the members were quite unexpected. My entire book club really enjoyed this book.



Christopher Dixon



Title: **Across God's Frontiers: Catholic Sisters in the American West, 1850-1920**

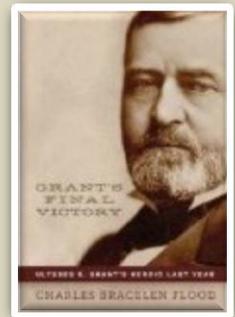
Author: Anne M. Butler

Roman Catholic sisters traveled the West providing social services, education and medical care to various populations. The missionary work of Saint Katharine Drexel, the daughter of Francis A. Drexel, and her Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament is one part of this history.

Title: **Grant's Final Victory: Ulysses S. Grant's Heroic Last Year**

Author: Charles Bracelen Flood

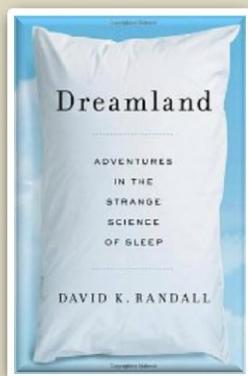
The financially ruined former president battles a terminal illness while working to complete his personal memoirs for publication by Mark Twain. Grant spent his last days in an upstate New York home owned by the youngest Drexel brother, Joseph.



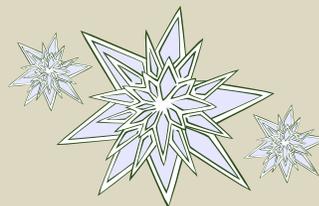
Naomi Cohen

Title: **Dreamland: Adventures in the Strange Science of Sleep**

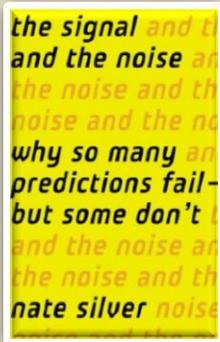
Author: David K. Randall



Concerned about his own sleepwalking, Randall started investigating just what is known about our nightly rest period and turned up some surprising answers along with many more questions. He looked into what helps and hinders a good night's sleep and argues convincingly that getting sufficient quality sleep makes a huge difference in our ability to function well at school, work, and sports. In fact, after reading this book, I decided to let my teenagers sleep later in the morning even if it means missing the school bus. Engagingly written; definitely not a "snooze".



Cynthia Slater



Title: **The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail-but Some Don't**

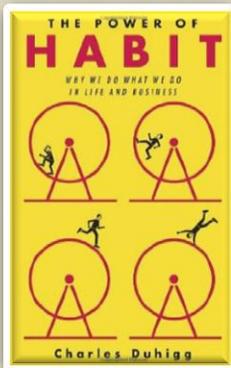
Author: Nate Silver

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/159420411X>

published September 2012

Nate Silver is the creator/author of the political blog FiveThirtyEight

<http://fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/>



Title: **The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business**

Author: Charles Duhigg

<http://www.amazon.com/Power-Habit-What-Life-Business/dp/1400069289/>

published February 2012

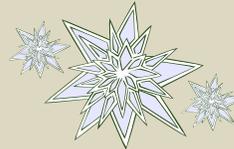
Charles Duhigg is a reporter for the *New York Times*. His article in the Sunday Magazine "How Companies Learn Your Secrets" prompted me to read his book.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/magazine/shopping-habits.html?smid=pl-share>

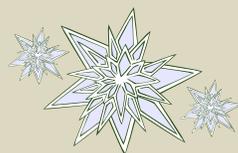
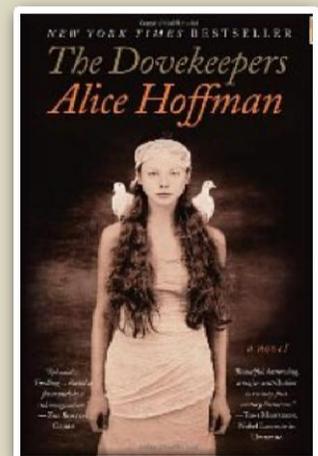
Margaret Guinan

Title: **The Dovekeepers**

Author: Alice Hoffman



An exceptional read. A wonderful mesmerizing novel about the lives of four strong Jewish women, each with different backgrounds, powerful personalities, and distinct stories of their own. Their histories collided with destiny/circumstances found them living at the Jewish stronghold, Masada, during the last and final siege by the Romans. All are dovekeepers, and all are also keeping secrets about who they are, where they come from, who fathered them, and whom they love. According to the historian Josephus, two of these women and five children survived the horrendous event.

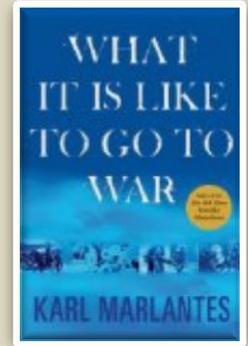


Michael Brooks

Title: **What it is Like to Go to War**

Author: Karl Marlantes

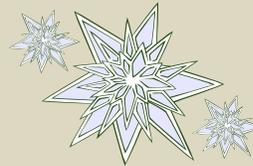
This is a study of the human psyche. What is it like? Most readers will never know, but Karl Marlantes shares his experiences and describes a world foreign to most, but shared by many. As a Vietnam-era veteran, Marlantes shows the reader what it was like before, during, and after coming home and discuss dealing with the demons that follow.



Linda Kubala

Title: **Every Thing On It**

Author: Shel Silverstein

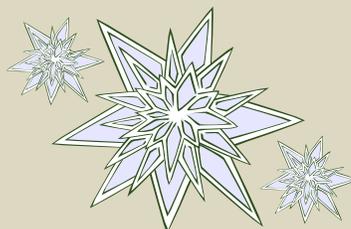
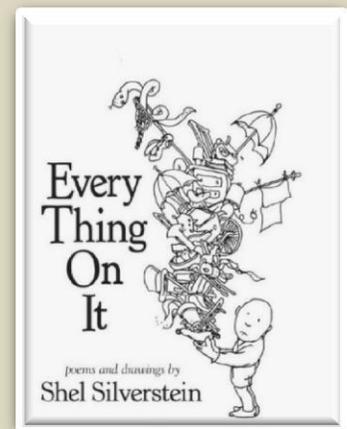


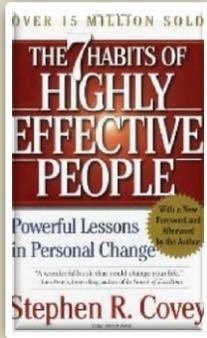
Be a child again...or remember the joy of reading to your children. Give yourself a gift and reacquaint yourself with Shel Silverstein. You remember *A Light in the Attic* and *Where the Sidewalk Ends!* Well, this newest addition to his writings has been published posthumously (he died in 1999) and presents never-before-published poems and drawings in his inimitable style. You remember his illustrations; they are simplistic black and white drawings. His poetry, however, seems to do the impossible, by making simple themes rich and complex, and then making complex themes or characters simple.

Here is an example from the book:

Frightened

“There are kids underneath my bed”,
Cried little baby monster Fred.
Momma monster smiled. “Oh, Fred,
There’s no such thing as kids”, she said.





Zhimin (Jimmy) Chen

Title: **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**

Author: Stephen R. Covey



The author tells us lots of principles about how individuals and enterprises adapt for the long term in a proper way.



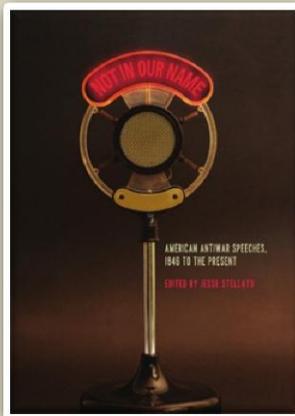
Catherine Collins

Title: **Shadows of Men**

Author: Kevin Grauke

Queen's Ferry Press, 2012

Who says the short story is dead? This debut short story collection by Kevin Grauke won't be released until December 11th, but *Shadows of Men* is already drawing comparisons to John Updike, William Trevor, and Richard Ford. These beautifully-crafted stories focus on the inner lives of men who are struggling to make sense of who they are and what it means to be a son, a father, a partner, a man in the world today. Smart, sad, funny, and unflinchingly honest, *Shadows of Men* will break your heart.



Title: **Not in Our Name: American Antiwar Speeches, 1846 to the Present**

Author: Jesse Stellato

Penn State Press, 2012

Not in Our Name is a collection of thirty of the most historically-significant speeches of dissent in American history, covering all of the major military campaigns from the Mexican-American War through the War on Terror. The speeches come from orators, politicians, and popular figures of their day. Some of the speakers—like Abraham Lincoln—are among the most familiar names in American history, while others—such as socialist Kate Richards O'Hare—may be unknown to most readers today. Each speech is preceded by some brief background information and insightful analysis.

