

UNT Women's Studies
The Bluestockings Reading Agenda: June 2009—May 2010

June 18, 2009

The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Pie Society, M. Shaffer & A. Barrows (fiction, 304 pgs)

“This epistolary novel pays homage to booklovers and a nostalgic portrayal of an era. However, it is the tragic stories of life under Nazi occupation that animate the novel and give it its urgency; furthermore, the novel explores the darker side of human nature without becoming maudlin. With its humor and optimism, *Guernsey* ‘affirms the power of books to nourish people through hard times.’” From *The Washington Post*, quoted in *Bookmarks Magazine*

July 16, 2009

Once Upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in the USA, Julia Alvarez (non-fiction, 288 pgs)

“The quinceañera party shines a happy light on the 15-year-old Latina as she moves from childhood to womanhood. The party immerses the Latina girl in the fantasy that she is a princess, if only for one day. But Alvarez asks, ‘What is going on? We are crowning them princesses and meanwhile the statistics are showing a large number of our young girls headed for poverty and failure!’” -- From *The Washington Post* Review by Luz Lazo.

August (No meeting)

September 17, 2009

The Reader, Bernard Schlink (fiction, 224 pgs)

“*The Reader* is a brief tale about sex, love, reading and shame in postwar Germany. Michael Berg is 15 when he begins an affair with Hanna, an enigmatic older woman. When she disappears one day, he expects never to see her again. But, to his horror, he does. Hanna is a defendant in a trial related to Germany’s Nazi past, and it soon becomes clear that she is guilty of an unspeakable crime. As Michael follows the trial, he struggles with an overwhelming question: what should his generation do with its knowledge of the Holocaust?” -- From *Amazon.com Review*

October 15, 2009

Drunk, Divorced, and Covered in Cat Hair, Laurie Perry (memoir, 284 pgs)

“[This book] is – surprise – not just for women. A heart-wrenching mix of sadness and humor, any man who has experienced a broken heart will relate to the story of Laurie’s divorce, the death of a marriage, and re-entry into single life. As men, we will not fully understand the humor of hair removal, perhaps, but her themes are resonant for all, men and women, who’ve had love and loss and laughed in between.” – From Drew Emborsky

November 19, 2009

Writing a Woman’s Life, Carolyn Heilbrun and Katha Pollitt (nonfiction, 160 pgs)

“A Must-Read for Women – Since I first read this book over 10 years ago, I think I must have purchased more than 15 copies – some for myself and others to give to other people, that’s how strongly I felt about it. It is important how we see the importance of writing our lives, how they have been mis-written, mis-understood, and mis-read for a very long time. For such a slender volume, it has an awful lot to say.” -- From *Customer Review*

December (No meeting)

January 21, 2010

Wife in the North, Judith O'Reilly (memoir, 352 pgs)

“When O'Reilly relocates to please her husband, she abandons London for a cottage in need of rebuilding in Northumberland, and her journalist's career for that of a stay-at-home mom. She records her thoughts first in a diary, then in a blog, describing her misgivings, anger, ambivalence, and joy. Entries run from near despair to compliance to resignation, and around that circle again. Pressures arise when neighbors read the blog and take issue with her opinions. Whether they stay or go after the two-year trial is unknown until the end.” -- From *Booklist*

February 17, 2010

The Middle Place, Kelly Corrigan (memoir, 288 pgs)

“Newspaper columnist Corrigan was a happily married mother of 2 young daughters when she discovered a cancerous lump in her breast. She was still undergoing treatment when she learned that her beloved father, who'd already survived prostate cancer, had bladder cancer. Corrigan's story could have been unbearably depressing had it not been for her family. All these stories lead up to where she is now, in that middle place, being someone's child, but also having children of her own. Those learning to accept their own adulthood might find strength in Corrigan's feisty memoir.” – From *Publisher's Weekly*

March (No meeting)

April 15, 2010

Prodigal Summer, Barbara Kingsolver (fiction, 464 pgs)

Wildlife biologist Deanna Wolfe studies coyotes in the Appalachian wilderness -- “isolated, that is, until the arrival of a young hunter who makes her even more aware of the truth that humans are only an infinitesimal portion in the ecological balance. This truth forms the axis around which the other two narratives evolve: the story of the city girl, entomologist, and new widow and her efforts to find a place for herself; and the story of Garnett Walker and Nannie Rawley, who seem bent on thrashing out the countless intimate lessons of biology as only an irascible traditional farmer and a devotee of organic agriculture can.” – From *Amazon.com*

May 20, 2010

A Country Year: Living the Questions, Sue Hubbell (essays, 240 pgs)

“An invasion of spring peepers, a young indigo bunting at song practice, a parade of caterpillars: these are integral parts of Hubbell's environment. She lives alone on a 100-acre farm in the Ozarks, where she tends 200 beehives and produces honey on a commercial scale. In a series of exquisite vignettes, she takes us into her world, and a life attuned to nature. Some of these delightful pieces have appeared in the “Hers” column of the *New York Times*.” -- From *Publisher's Weekly*

“This is on my top-ten list of books to be re-read and enjoyed over and over” – *Sandi Spencer*