



2023 Summer Reads

Book Recommendations

Katie Mulligan

American Ramble: A Walk of Memory and Renewal by Neil King Jr. - Nonfiction

While in remission or recovery from a near-fatal bout with cancer, King walked from Washington, D.C. to New York over several weeks. His aim was not to focus on what went wrong with the country or why Trump voters voted as they did, but to be open to what he experienced. The book contains experiences as different as a discussion with the mayor of a small town in Pennsylvania about Thomas Paine to a climb to the top of one of the largest landfills in the world. He celebrates aspects of American history, as well as the shameful episodes. I liked it for the joy he found in ordinary experiences and his discussions of what walking has meant to a variety of writers. He wrote, "Within days you understand why the holy books have whole sections built around the stories, the one-off encounters, of men and women out walking."

Kathie Gann

Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer - Nonfiction

She beautifully described aspects of the natural world from an indigenous person's perspective. I read at night and after reading each night fell asleep with a smile on my face.

Nancy Wunderlin

Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir - Fiction

2021 Science Fiction novel set in the near future. A junior high school teacher reluctantly becomes an astronaut and is asked to carry out a desperate, last-chance mission to save the planet. Thanks to an unexpected ally, he may just have a chance. Andy Weir also wrote *The Martian*, a huge bestseller and movie. Audio book recommended.

Robin Proud

Still True by Maggie Ginsberg - Fiction

Local author who spoke at the recent Book Cafe, book set in Wisconsin. A story of relationships and family secrets reminiscent of Nickolas Butler or Liane Moriarty. Interesting characters and moral dilemmas.



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Jason Deschard

Digital for Good: Raising Kids to Thrive in an Online World by Richard E. Culatta - Nonfiction. This book provides a balanced view of technology use in the home, which seems unusual when it comes to discussing kids and screen time. It also provides good examples of DOs for encouraging positive behavior online and talks about teaching kids about how apps use your data, etc.

Barbara Park

Girl in Ice by Erica Ferencik - Fiction

Val Chesterfield is a linguist specializing in obscure languages who is called to the ice fields of Greenland to try to understand a young girl who has been thawed alive from an ancient glacier.

Matthew Wise

The Coddling of the American Mind by Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff - Nonfiction
Exploring why political divides the US have gotten so strong including violent protests on college campuses and culture/value shifts.

Judy Wacker

A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley - Fiction

Mirrored and complexified retelling of King Lear in a Midwestern farm setting

Dirk Herr-Hoyman

Scythe by Neil Schusterman - Fiction

What happens if death is eliminated? Scythe will glean/kill to prevent overpopulation. Classic sci-fi like Asimov wrote. Audio book recommended.

Ron Frye

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver - Fiction

Ann Sawyer

All About Love by bell hooks



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Donald Bachman

The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S.Lewis - Fiction
God from beginning and world to end.

Mary Frantz

Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr - Fiction
Long involved "history", some science fiction, hard to describe

Mary Mullen

The Lincoln Highway by Armor Towles
Author of A Gentleman in Moscow. Follows a young man just out of prison, two of his prison friends and his younger brother who wants to find their mother in California.

Suzanne Gernand

The Candy House by Jennifer Eagan
Postcard by Anne Berest
My Antonia by Willa Cather

Aileen Nettleton

Settlin': Stories of Madison's Early African American Families by Muriel Simms

Al Nettleton

Horse by Geraldine Brooks
Slavery, Civil War, horse racing

Rick Ruecking

The Cathedral of the World by Forest Church
Universalist theology

Dean Schroeder

Chicago by Brian Doyle
Nostalgic novel

Orange Schroeder

Mad Honey by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan



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Cathy Peterson

Sisters of the Earth: Women's Prose and Poetry About Nature by Lorraine Anderson

The Swerve: How the World Became Modern by Stephen Greenblatt

The Art of Reading: An Illustrated History of Books in Paint by Jamie Camplin and Maria Ranauro

The Life and Times of The Last Kid Picked by David Benjamin Nonfiction

Funny and poignant tales about a "free-range" kid in 1950's Tomah, Wisconsin

Finding Me: a Memoir by Viola Davis - Nonfiction

This is an actress that I already greatly enjoyed and admired. It was fascinating and quite shocking to read about the circumstances she grew up in - so different than mine.

Jesse Garst

Bea Wolf by Zach Weinersmith - Fiction

A retelling of the first part of Beowulf in modern English for kids. All of the characters are modern kids. The book has beautiful illustrations, and uses similar rhythm and alliteration to the original making it very fun to read aloud.