

April 2017 Wayne Readers' Recommendations



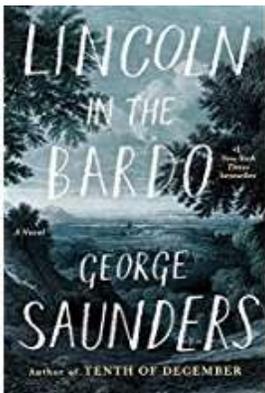
We want to hear from you. Please send a blurb about something you've read and want to share with CML. Postings will be published monthly except over the summer. Next posting will be in April 2017. Send your recommendations to

jadelbergCML@gmail.com

*This month's blog has **13** entries from enthusiastic readers. Try some of these selections while you look forward to more sunshine.*

Fiction

Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders (Fiction)

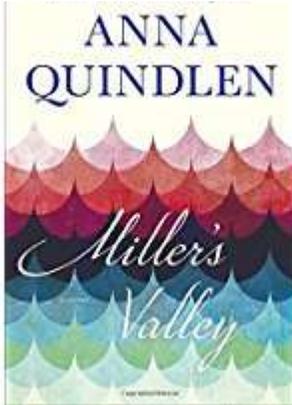


Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders is a peculiar look at the grief, lamentation and melancholy of Abraham Lincoln after the death of his dear child, Willie. This child died at age 11, despite all efforts to save him. Lincoln was devastated by the loss, and in fact went several times to the crypt where Willie was interred, to grieve and hold the body of his son. Saunders envisions a group of ghosts in the near vicinity. Though they have not even accepted that they themselves are dead, some are trying to help Willie pass on himself to the realm of the dead. A fascinating take on this tragic happening. And by the way, it's not all maudlin. The former lives of the ghosts supply a lot of entertainment!

Reviewed by Pam Chenea

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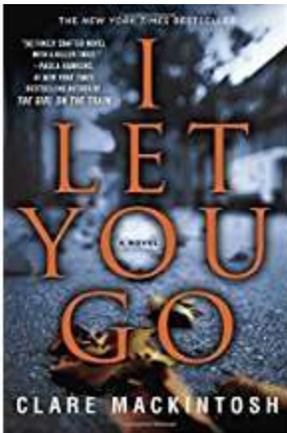
Miller's Valley by Anna Quindlen (Contemporary Fiction)



A character driven story covering several decades in one family and the choices and dilemmas they face. The story is reflective of the cultural era, and the challenges of that period and is very easy to relate to. It is an American story, and the characters are symbolic of many individuals I have known over the years. Ms. Quindlen is very adept at portraying multi-dimensional people who struggle and aspire the same way most of us do.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson

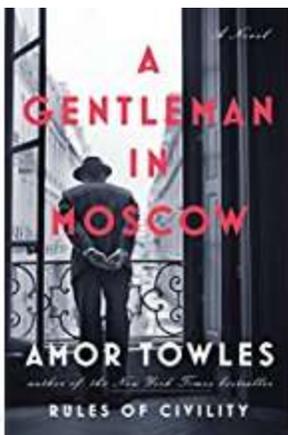
I Let You Go by Clare MacKintosh (Mystery Fiction)



A great murder mystery with more twists than a double helix. A great read!

Reviewed by Steve Dodge

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles (Historical Fiction)

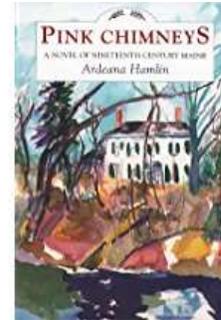
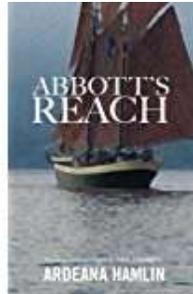
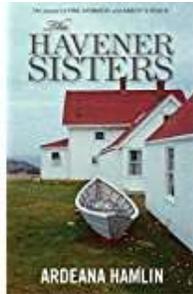


A wonderful book which takes place in Moscow starting in 1922 and going for several decades. It covers a tumultuous time in history, and there are many historical references, but it is the small incidents of human frailty and motivation, beautifully written, which capture your interest. Mr. Towles manages to bring us along on an ironic, humorous, philosophical journey, which is not bound by nationality or culture. Even though it is a dark time in history, one is uplifted and inspired by his prose, and his analysis of the human condition.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson

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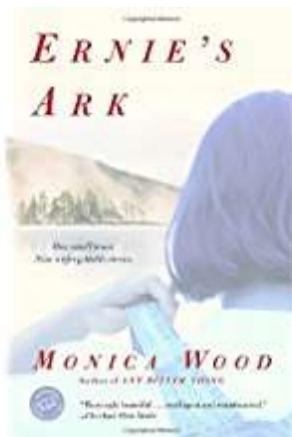
The Novels of Ardeana Hamlin (Historical Fiction)



Ardeana Hamlin's novels are enjoyable reads. I wasn't sure I'd like these novels, given that they are set in 19th century Bangor and focused on lots of family problems and challenges, but from the very first page of *Pink Chimneys*, I was hooked. And after finishing that book, I moved quickly to Hamlin's follow-up novel, *Abbott's Reach*. Ardeana grew up in Bingham in the 1950s and 1960s, when logs were still driven down our rivers. And river drivers are included in her first novel, set in Bangor, where the main character, Fanny, has a baby out of wedlock after being abandoned by the guy she expected to marry, and begins working in a brothel, the infamous house with the pink chimneys. There's a lot more to that story but I don't want to spoil it for you. My thanks to Islandport Press in Yarmouth for republishing these novels in paperback, making them easily accessible for all of us.

Reviewed by George Smith (Mt. Vernon)

Ernie's Ark by Monica Wood (Contemporary Fiction)



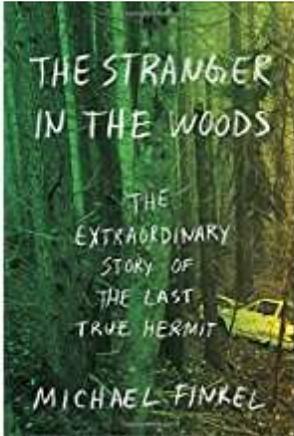
Monica Wood is a Maine author and this novel is set in Abbott Falls, Maine which is a fictitious mill town where a paper mill is on strike. Ernie Whitten is a striking pipe fitter who is only a few weeks away from retirement and the subsequent retirement package that will provide when we find him on strike. His wife of many years is dying when inspiration strikes Ernie and he decides to build an ark in his back yard. The book is set up in a series of short stories starting and ending with Ernie. Each short story/chapter tells of an individual and his relationship to Ernie and his current situation. The characters are interesting, the book is captivating and for those who see the words "short story" and decide it is not for them, you will find that they really all tie together cohesively. Thoroughly enjoyed this book.

Reviewed by Connie Locashio (Winthrop)

Non-Fiction

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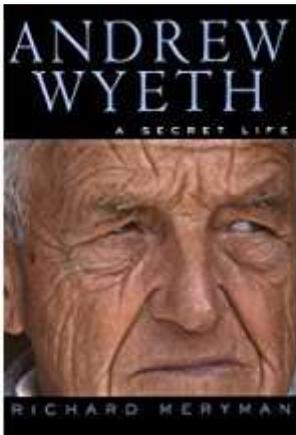
The Stranger in the Woods by Michael Finkel (Non-Fiction)



After listening to NPR's "Maine Calling" interview with Michael Finkel, I wanted to read his book about the North Pond hermit, Christopher Knight. Fascinated by the story of this man who chose to live alone in the woods for 27 years, the book covers it all...BUT...nagging questions remain in my mind. It's hard to believe that Knight lived through harsh Maine winters in a tent, without heat, never starting a fire, and never leaving the site. Think of the 1998 ice storm. Hard to imagine, but you decide. The book is an amazing, puzzling, fascinating read and I highly recommend it. I read it in a day. It's new to our library and I'm sure many will check it out. Thanks, Janet!

Reviewed by Dave Petell

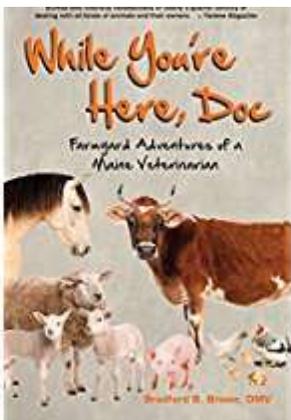
Andrew Wyeth: A Secret Life by Richard Meryman (Biography)



Biographer Meryman spent a lifetime following the larger-than-life characters and subplots of this American painter icon and his family and models. Follow the stories of death and madness in their intertwined lives. I especially enjoyed the clear reproductions of many of his famous works with the insightful stories highlighting the motivations behind the paintings.

Reviewed by Mary Jean Cowing

While You're Here, Doc by Bradford Brown, DVM (Animals/Humor/Maine Maine)

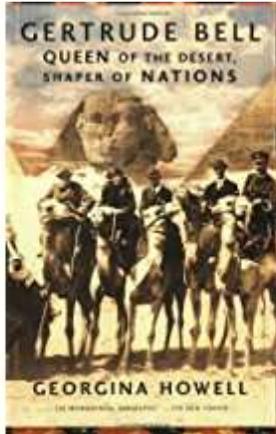


You won't believe the farmyard adventures of this Maine veterinarian. He was trampled, dragged, mauled, and more by farm animals, especially horses. Brad was also run down and nearly crushed by a 75-foot tractor-trailer stacked with crates of live chickens, hit in the rib cage by a horse, suffering a smashed left quadriceps and torn muscles, and hauled on his belly through a quagmire of mud, decaying table scraps, and feces by a huge pig. Often, Brad worked all night – consistently being asked, after he'd taken care of the problem for which he'd been called to a farm, to check out other animals and problems – hence the title, *While You're Here, Doc*.

Reviewed by George Smith (Mt. Vernon)

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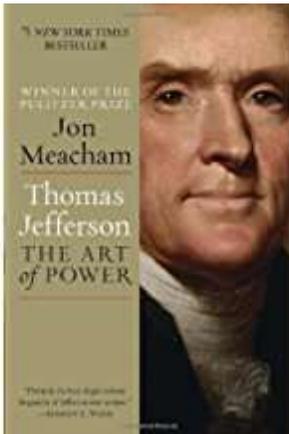
Gertrude Bell - Queen of the Desert - Shaper of Nations by Georgina Howell (biography)



This is a fabulously interesting book about a woman most of us have never heard of. This book describes her many exploits and relationships that are historically relevant even today. Even though many men resented her female presence, they were dependent on her language skills, cultural understanding, and interpersonal skills to shape policy and make a thousand other decisions a hundred years ago.

Reviewed by Judy Danielson

Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power by Jon Meacham (Biography)



Any biography of Thomas Jefferson must include his extensive interests in all things academic and philosophical. Meacham, however presents Jefferson as a politician and through the political lens of the day. Jefferson is strongly positioned in the tenets of the Republican Party, small government. His disdain for Hamilton's National bank is one obvious example of this position.

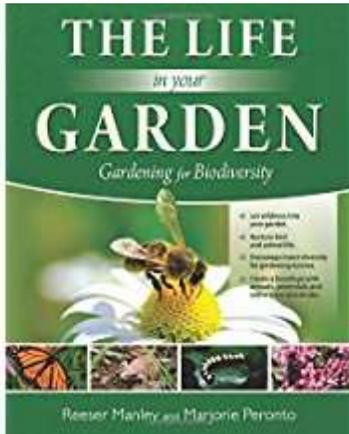
President Jefferson was dogmatic in most affairs but when necessary he was pragmatic enough to leave himself room for maneuvering. He felt that the Louisiana Purchase was best accomplished by a constitutional amendment because he believed that the power to acquire territory was beyond his executive powers, but when Napoleon agreed to the treaty, Jefferson moved quickly to make the purchase. In doing so he expanded the powers of the executive branch. Jefferson, Meacham writes believed in

a limited government except when he thought the nation was best served by a more expansive one. The Louisiana Purchase is one such case. Jefferson's biography presents many similarities to today's political climate. There was evidence of partisanship and antipathy in Jefferson's time. Meacham's writing is clear and concise. He makes extensive use of letters and other communications of the day and he presents extensive documentation for his research.

Reviewed by Jim Direnzo

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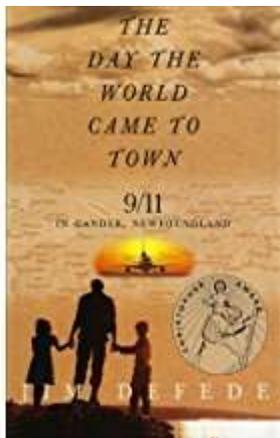
The Life in your Garden by Reeser Manley and Marjorie Peronto (Gardening/Biodiversity)



This is an important and interesting book for all who garden and all who value our environment and the critters that share it with us. I originally got the book for my wife Linda, a gardening fanatic who gardens all winter in her 14 foot by 28 foot hoop house, heated by the sun. The book is billed as “a must-read call to action for gardeners concerned about Earth’s biodiversity crisis,” and it is all of that. Best of all, it tells us how we can help improve things for all of us, especially the critters who live in our yards, gardens, and forests.

Reviewed by George Smith (Mt. Vernon)

The Day the World Came to Town: 9/11 in Gander, Newfoundland by Jim Defede (Non-Fiction)



Reading this book will make you want to travel to Gander NF and go have a beer at the local pub to hear more stories. Many of us have always admired Canada and this will only reinforce that feeling. The tiny town of Gander (which happened to have a huge airport due to a former life as a military installation) welcomed passengers from 47 jumbo jets for almost a week, opening their homes, schools, and churches to weary and stressed strangers from around the world. Local vets were heroic managing logistics to care for pets in the baggage compartments. A new Broadway musical called *Come From Away* is based on this book. Not lofty literature--but a really good read.

Reviewed by Janet Adelberg