

2022 – 2023 Book Club Selections

- 10 August** ***Not Quite the Way You Heard it in School... or, Everything is Relative*** by Charles (Chick) Freund, III, Lt Col, USAFR (Ret) (Chick Freund)
- 14 September** “Suite of Three” by Julie Otsuka (These are three short novels. You are invited to read one or more of them and Jody Fidler will discuss all three together.)
When the Emperor Was Divine
The Buddha in the Attic
The Swimmers
- 12 October** ***The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek*** by Kim Michele Richardson (Theresa Sanford)
- 9 November** ***Anxious People*** by Fredrick Bachman (Nancy Jo Kirk)
- 14 December** ***The Mysterious Affair at Styles*** (first Hercule Poirot mystery) by Agatha Christie (Della Ridley) [Set of books at Cobb County library]
- 11 January** ***A History of Wild Places*** by Shea Ernshaw (Carolina (Cara) Druhot)
- 8 February** ***Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake-Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia*** by Dennis Covington (Beth Eckford)
- 8 March** ***The Sentence*** by Louise Erdrich (Elizabeth Walker)
- 12 April** ***The Unseen World*** by Liz Moore (Joanne MacDonald)
- 10 May** ***All Her Little Secrets*** by Wanda M. Morris (Jody Fidler) [Set of books at Cobb County library]

Not Quite the Way You Heard it in School... or, Everything is Relative by Charles (Chick) Freund, III, Lt Col, USAFR (Ret) (Chick Freund)

This memoir of Lt. Col. Charles Freund, III, USAFR (Ret) is an insightful, entertaining account of his early military life, focusing on the Vietnam conflict. Unlike most other stories readers have heard, his experience in Southeast Asia was mostly enjoyable. Written in a conversational style and filled with humor, readers will be entertained while reading a wartime memoir with stories ranging from his exploits flying gunships over Laos and South Vietnam to anecdotes of dust bunnies and tennis bugs. Freund's memorable memoir is sure to entertain readers as they discover a lighter side of a tumultuous time of US history.

"Suite of Three" by Julie Otsuka (These are three short novels. You are invited to read one or more of them and Jody Fidler will discuss all three together.)

When the Emperor Was Divine

In five chapters, each flawlessly executed from a different point of view "the mother receiving the order to evacuate; the daughter on the long train ride to the camp; the son in the desert encampment; the family's return to their home; and the bitter release of the father after more than four years in captivity" she has created a small tour de force, a novel of unrelenting economy and suppressed emotion.

The Buddha in the Attic

In eight incantatory sections, *The Buddha in the Attic* traces the picture brides' extraordinary lives, from their arduous journey by boat, where they exchange photographs of their husbands, imagining uncertain futures in an unknown land; to their arrival in San Francisco and their tremulous first nights as new wives; to their backbreaking work picking fruit in the fields and scrubbing the floors of white women; to their struggles to master a new language and a new culture; to their experiences in childbirth, and then as mothers, raising children who will ultimately reject their heritage and their history; to the deracinating arrival of war.

The Swimmers

The swimmers are unknown to each other except through their private routines (slow lane, fast lane), and the solace each takes in their morning or afternoon laps. But when a crack appears at the bottom of the pool, they are cast out into an unforgiving world without comfort or relief.

One of these swimmers is Alice, who is slowly losing her memory. For Alice, the pool was a final stand against the darkness of her encroaching dementia. Without the fellowship of other swimmers and the routine of her daily laps she is plunged into dislocation and chaos, swept into memories of her childhood and the Japanese internment camp in which she spent the war. Narrated by Alice's daughter, who witnesses her stark and devastating decline, *The Swimmers* is a searing, intimate story of mothers and daughters, and the sorrows of implacable loss, written in spellbinding, incantatory prose.

The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson (Theresa Sanford)

The lonely young Appalachian woman joins the historical Pack Horse Library Project of Kentucky and becomes a librarian, riding across slippery creek beds and up treacherous mountains on her faithful mule to deliver books and other reading material to the impoverished hill people of Eastern Kentucky. Along her dangerous route, Cussy, known to the mountain folk as Bluet, confronts those suspicious of her damselfly-blue skin and the government's new book program. She befriends hardscrabble and complex fellow Kentuckians, and is fiercely determined to bring comfort and joy, instill literacy, and give to those who have nothing, a bookly respite, a fleeting retreat to faraway lands.

A History of Wild Places by Shea Ernshaw (Carolina Druhot)

Travis Wren has an unusual talent for locating missing people. Hired by families as a last resort, he requires only a single object to find the person who has vanished. When he takes on the case of Maggie St. James—a well-known author of dark, macabre children's books—he's led to a place many believed to be only a legend. Called "Pastoral," this reclusive community was founded in the 1970s by like-minded people searching for a simpler way of life. By all accounts, the commune shouldn't exist anymore and soon after Travis stumbles upon it... he disappears. Just like Maggie St. James. Years later, Theo, a lifelong member of Pastoral, discovers Travis's abandoned truck beyond the border of the community. No one is allowed in or out, not when there's a risk of bringing a disease—rot—into Pastoral. Unraveling the mystery of what happened reveals secrets that Theo, his wife, Calla, and her sister, Bee, keep from one another. Secrets that prove their perfect, isolated world isn't as safe as they believed—and that darkness takes many forms.

The Mysterious Affair at Styles (first Hercule Poirot mystery) by Agatha Christie (Della Ridley)

A refugee of the Great War, Poirot has settled in England near Styles Court, the country estate of his wealthy benefactor, the elderly Emily Inglethorp. When Emily is poisoned and the authorities are baffled, Poirot puts his prodigious sleuthing skills to work. Suspects are plentiful, including the victim's much younger husband, her resentful stepsons, her longtime hired companion, a young family friend working as a nurse, and a London specialist on poisons who just happens to be visiting the nearby village.

The Unseen World by Liz Moore (Joanne MacDonald)

Ada Sibelius is raised by David, her brilliant, eccentric, socially inept single father, who directs a computer science lab in 1980s-era Boston. Home-schooled, Ada accompanies David to work every day; by twelve, she is a painfully shy prodigy. The lab begins to gain acclaim at the same time that David's mysterious history comes into question. When his mind begins to falter, leaving Ada virtually an orphan, she is taken in by one of David's colleagues. Soon she embarks on a mission to uncover her father's secrets: a process that carries her from childhood to adulthood. What Ada discovers on her journey into a virtual universe will keep the reader riveted until the heart-stopping, fascinating conclusion.

Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake-Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia by Dennis Covington (Beth Eckford)

It is Scottsboro, Alabama, in the fall of 1991. A snake-handling preacher by the name of Glendel Buford Summerford has just tried to murder his wife, Darlene, by snakebite. At gunpoint, he forces her to stick her arm in a box of rattlesnakes. She is bitten twice and nearly dies. The trial, which becomes a sensation throughout southern Appalachia, echoes familiar themes from a troubled secular world - marital infidelity, spouse abuse, and alcoholism - but it also raises questions about faith, forgiveness, redemption, and, of course, snakes. Glenn Summerford is convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to ninety-nine years in prison. When Dennis Covington covered the trial of Glenn Summerford for The New York Times, a world far beyond the trial opened up to him. *Salvation on Sand Mountain* begins with a crime and a trial and then becomes an extraordinary exploration of a place, a people, and an author's descent into himself.

The Sentence by Louise Erdrich (Elizabeth Walker)

Louise Erdrich's latest novel asks what we owe to the living, the dead, to the reader and to the book. A small independent bookstore in Minneapolis is haunted from November 2019 to November 2020 by the store's most annoying customer. Flora dies on All Souls' Day, but she simply won't leave the store. Tookie,

who has landed a job selling books after years of incarceration that she survived by reading with murderous attention, must solve the mystery of this haunting while at the same time trying to understand all that occurs in Minneapolis during a year of grief, astonishment, isolation, and furious reckoning.

Anxious People by Fredrick Bachman (Nancy Jo Kirk)

Viewing an apartment normally doesn't turn into a life-or-death situation, but this particular open house becomes just that when a failed bank robber bursts in and takes everyone in the apartment hostage. As the pressure mounts, the eight strangers begin slowly opening up to one another and reveal long-hidden truths. As police surround the premises and television channels broadcast the hostage situation live, the tension mounts and even deeper secrets are slowly revealed. Before long, the robber must decide which is the more terrifying prospect: going out to face the police, or staying in the apartment with this group of impossible people.

All Her Little Secrets by Wanda M. Morris (Jody Fidler)

Ellice Littlejohn seemingly has it all: an Ivy League law degree, a well-paying job as a corporate attorney in midtown Atlanta, great friends, and a "for fun" relationship with a rich, charming executive—her white boss, Michael. But everything changes one cold January morning when Ellice goes to meet Michael... and finds him dead with a gunshot to his head. Instead of grieving this tragedy, people are gossiping, the police are getting suspicious, and Ellice, the company's lone black attorney, is promoted to replace Michael. While the opportunity is a dream-come-true, Ellice just can't shake the feeling that something is off. When she uncovers shady dealings inside the company, Ellice is trapped in an impossible ethical and moral dilemma. Suddenly, Ellice's past and present lives collide as she launches into a pulse-pounding race to protect the brother she tried to save years ago and stop a conspiracy far more sinister than she could have ever imagined.