

OPLA

**Reader's Advisory Committee
members'**

5 favourite books!

Lynn McLeod – Mississauga Public Library

The Master by Colm Toibin

Nineteenth-century writer Henry James is heartbroken when his first play performs poorly in contrast to Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" and struggles with subsequent doubts about his sexual identity.

Lost Painting by Jonathan Harr

In 1992 a young art student uncovers a clue in an obscure Italian archive that leads to the discovery of Caravaggio's original *The Taking of the Christ*, a painting that had been presumed lost for over 200 years.

The Mermaids Chair by Sue Monk Kidd

When restless wife and mother, Jessie Sullivan gets a disturbing phone call, she returns to her childhood home to deal with the shocking behavior of her mentally unstable mother. During this visit, she finds herself undeniably attracted to a Benedictine monk.

State of Fear--Michael Crichton

An eco-thriller takes readers to such far-flung locales as Paris, Iceland, Antarctica, and the Solomon Islands.

East of the Mountains--David Gutterson

When retired heart surgeon Ben Givens learns he has terminal cancer and just a few months to live, he sets out across the Cascades for a hunting trip, planning to take his own life once he reaches the high desert.

Sharron Smith – Kitchener Public Library

The Madonnas of Leningrad by Debra Dean

Her granddaughter's wedding should be a time of happiness for Marina Buriakov, but the Russian emigre's descent into Alzheimer's has her and her family experiencing more anxiety than joy.

The Attack by Yasmina Khadra

Dr. Amin Jaafari, an Israeli Arab, seems fully assimilated into Tel Aviv society, with a loving wife, a successful career as a surgeon, and numerous Jewish friends. But after a restaurant bombing kills nineteen people, and it becomes apparent that his wife was the bomber, he plunges into the world of Islamic extremism, trying to understand how he missed signs of her intentions.

Other Side of the Bridge by Mary Lawson

Mary Lawson's 2nd book after *Crow Lake* has Arthur Dunn, a stolid, salt-of-the-earth farmer, and his brother, Jake, a handsome, smooth-talking snake in the grass, battling over the beautiful Laura, with Arthur, it seems, the unlikely winner.

Still Life by Louise Penny

When the body of middle-aged artist Jane Neal is found near a woodland trail used by deer hunters outside the village of Three Pines, it appears she's the victim of a hunting accident. Summoned to the scene, Armand Gamache, an appealingly competent senior homicide investigator, soon determines that the woman was most likely murdered.

The Masque of the Black Tulip by Lauren Willig

After discovering the identity of the Pink Carnation, one of England's most successful spies during the Napoleonic wars, modern-day graduate student Eloise Kelly is hot on the trail of the Black Tulip, the Pink Carnation's French counterpart.

Virginia Van Vliet – Toronto Public Library

Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

In her memoirs, Walls chronicles her upbringing at the hands of eccentric, nomadic parents--Rose Mary, her frustrated-artist mother, and Rex, her brilliant, alcoholic father.

Night Child by Maureen Jennings

After thirteen-year-old Agnes Fisher faints at school, her teacher, the young and still idealistic Amy Slade, is shocked to discover in the girl's desk two stereoscopic photographs. One is of a dead baby in its cradle, and on the back Agnes has scrawled a terrible message.

No Great Mischief by Alistair MacLeod

No Great Mischief is far more than the straightforward saga of one family over the generations. Instead the author has created a painfully beautiful myth in which the long-ago is in many ways more present than modern existence.

Without reservations: travels of an independent woman by Alice Steinbach

In a travel-book-cum-memoir set against a glamorous background of European cities, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Steinbach describes the months she spent traveling after she took a sabbatical from her job as columnist for the Baltimore Sun.

Devil in the White City by Erik Larsen

Not long after Jack the Ripper haunted the ill-lit streets of 1888 London, H.H. Holmes (born Herman Webster Mudgett) killed somewhere between 27 and 200 people, mostly single young women, in the churning new metropolis of Chicago; many of the murders occurred during (and exploited) the city's finest moment, the World's Fair of 1893.

Tammy Robinson – Oshawa Public Library

The Ice Queen by Alice Hoffman

After a New Jersey Librarian is struck by lightning, she joins a lightning survivor support group in Florida. There she meets Lazarus, who was dead for 40 minutes after he was struck.

True Believer by Nicholas Sparks

Jeremy Marsh, a scientist who loves to debunk supernatural events, meets Lexie, the librarian in Boone Creek, North Carolina, when he goes to investigate ghosts that haunt the local cemetery.

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

A young Afghani man, who immigrated to the U.S., returns to his homeland to rescue his childhood friend from the Taliban regime.

Can You Keep A Secret? by Sophie Kinsella

Emma Corrigan confesses her deepest darkest secrets to a stranger on a plane, only to discover that he is the CEO of the company she is interviewing for!

Angels & Demons by Dan Brown

It takes guts to write a novel that combines an ancient secret brotherhood, a papal conclave, mysterious ambigrams, a plot against the Vatican, a mad scientist in a wheelchair, particles of antimatter, crafty assassins, a beautiful Italian physicist, and a Harvard professor of religious iconology. It takes talent to make that novel anything but ridiculous.

Shonna Froebel – Barrie Public Library

Bleak House by Charles Dickens

In one of Dickens' longest and most complicated novels, the beautiful Lady Dedlock nurses a dark secret... and the merciless lawyer Tulkinghorn seeks to uncover it.

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

When the Joads lose their tenant farm in Oklahoma, they join thousands of others, traveling the narrow concrete highways toward California, dreaming of a piece of land to call their own.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon

Mark Haddon's bitterly funny debut novel is a murder mystery of sorts--one told by an autistic version of Adrian Mole.

A Natural History of the Senses by Diane Ackerman

Physiology and philosophy mesh in this poetic investigation of the five senses; essays explore synesthesia, food taboos, kissing and the power and diversity of music.

Barometer Rising by Hugh MacLennan

Hugh MacLennan's first novel is a compelling romance set against the horrors of wartime and the catastrophic Halifax Explosion of December 6, 1917.

Wendy Hicks – Stratford Public Library

Fugitive Pieces by Anne Michaels

Fugitive Pieces is a book about memory and forgetting. How is it possible to love the living when our hearts are still with the dead? What is the difference between what historical fact tells us and what we remember?

Enemy Women by Paulette Jiles

For 18 year old Adair Randolph Colley, the eldest daughter of a widowed Missouri Ozarks schoolmaster and justice of the peace, the Civil War becomes personal when her father, who has remained neutral in the conflict, is arrested by the Union militia, their home is nearly burned and their possessions stolen.

Cold Mountain by Charles Frazier

Inman, a disillusioned Confederate soldier, deserts and embarks on a dangerous and lonely odyssey through the devastated South, heading home to North Carolina, and seeking only to be reunited with his beloved, Ada, who has herself been struggling to maintain the family farm she inherited.

A Scientific Romance by Ronald Wright

English archeologist David Lambert stumbles upon a Victorian time machine. When Lambert discovers that he may have the same disease that killed his lover, he lights out for the future: A.D. 2500, to be exact. There Wright creates for him a vivid, compelling world, a depopulated, tropical dream of what had once been England.

A Widow for One Year, John Irving

John Irving's *A Widow For One Year* is the epic story of a family, dysfunctional at best, unable to cope with tragedy--or with each other.

Chris Sheehy – Markham Public Library

The Big Over Easy by Jasper Fforde

When Humperdinck Jehoshaphat van Dumpty, better known as Humpty Dumpty, falls off the wall once too often and is shattered beyond repair, Detective Inspector Jack Spratt and his partner Mary Mary of the Nursery Crime Division of the city of Reading are assigned the investigation. The case turns from accidental death to one of murder.

Bel Canto by Anne Patchett

At a birthday party for Japanese industrialist Mr. Hosokawa somewhere in South America, famous American soprano Roxanne Coss is just finishing her recital in the Vice President's home when armed terrorists appear, intending to take the President hostage.

A Stubborn Season By Lauren B Davis

Set in Toronto during the Great Depression, the characters push and struggle not only within a society consumed in poverty and inequity, but also within their own stubborn seasons of the soul.

The Traveler by John Twelve Hawkes

Twelve Hawks presents big ideas about free will and determinism, good versus evil, social control, and alternate dimensions, all while impressing with knowledge ranging from the New Testament to string theory.

Pawn of Prophecy by David Eddings

Long ago the evil God Torak sought dominion and drove men and Gods to war. But Belgarath the Sorcerer led men to reclaim the Orb that protected men of the West. So long as it lay at Riva, the prophecy went, the men would be safe.

Astrid Grinvalds – Hamilton Public Library

Body and Soul - Frank Conroy

Body and Soul tracks the development of a young man named Claude Rawlings from the first intimations that this child has a unique musical talent through his childhood and young adulthood as he hones and develops that talent, finally to emerge as a full blown classical piano star.

One for the Money - Janet Evanovich

Stephanie Plum of Trenton, N.J., a recently laid-off lingerie buyer has no job, no car and no furniture. She does have a hamster, a deranged grandmother, two caring parents and several pairs of biking shorts and sports bras. Finding work with her cousin Vinnie, she becomes a bounty hunter and scrounges enough money to buy a gun, a Chevy Nova and some Mace.

Archangel - Sharon Shinn

In a world run largely by angels (complete with wings), who are supposed to intercede for men and ask the god of the world for such things as needed climate change

with the magic of song, this book focuses on the woman chosen by that god to become the wife of the archangel.

Dead until Dark - Charlaine Harris

Having an affair with a vampire has one main benefit for Sookie. Her predilection for reading minds doesn't seem to work with him. But as is common with vampires, violence follows in his wake, and she becomes afraid that she might be more than just a spectator.

Vengeance in Death - J.D. Robb

Robb's futuristic *In Death* series, set in 2058, features Lieutenant Eve Dallas, her multimillionaire husband, Roarke, and many interesting secondary characters as they solve homicide crimes in New York. Gritty, sexy and often very funny.

Bonnie Symons – Cobourg Public Library

Three Day Road by Joseph Boyden

Three Day Road tells the story of a pair of James Bay Cree, Xavier and Elijah, who become famous snipers in the Canadian Army during the First World War.

Sweetness in the Belly by Camilla Gibb

Gibb chronicles the remarkable spiritual and geographical journey of a white British Muslim woman who struggles with cultural contradictions to find community and love.

Gilead by Marilynne Robinson

The narrator, John Ames, is 76, a preacher who has lived almost all of his life in Gilead, Iowa. He is writing a letter to his almost seven-year-old son, the blessing of his second marriage. The novel is a meditation on fathers and children, particularly sons, on faith, and on the imperfectability of man.

Birth House by Amy McKay

Dora Rare becomes a midwife's apprentice, and together they help the women of an isolated Nova Scotia village through infertility, difficult labours, breech births, unwanted pregnancies and even unfulfilling sex lives.

Water for Elephants by Sarah Gruen-

The novel, told in flashback by nonagenarian Jacob Jankowski, recounts the wild and wonderful period he spent with the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth, a traveling circus he joined during the Great Depression.

Bessie Sullivan – Kingston Public Library

The Power of One by Bryce Courtenay

This is a coming of age story of a young white boy and the obstacles he faces in South Africa, a country rife with racial discrimination and hatred.

Plainsong by Kent Haruf

Holt, Colo., a tiny prairie community near Denver, is both the setting for and the psychological matrix of Haruf's beautifully executed novel. Alternating chapters focus on eight compassionately imagined characters whose lives undergo radical change during the course of one year.

The Solace of Leaving Early by Haven Kimmel

A romance evolves in the wake of a domestic shooting in Kimmel's intelligent and compassionate debut novel, which brings two friends of one of the victims together in a small Indiana town.

The Cider House Rules by John Irving

Wilbur Larch is the young physician who chooses to offer women either "an orphan or an abortion" in early 20th century rural Maine. Homer Wells is an orphan who just cannot stay permanently placed in a home and who gradually grows up as Larch's surrogate son and apprentice. As in all Irving novels, the characters are complex and the plot is multilayered.

Too Close to the Falls by Catherine Gildiner.

The fantastic, hilarious memoirs of a child with ADD, or "over-exuberant energy", growing up in Lewiston, New York in the 1950's. Instead of using today's remedy of Ritalin, 4 year old Cathy is put to work in her father's pharmacy.

Catherine AuYeung – Toronto Public Library

Moon Tiger by Penelope Lively

At the age of seventy-six and on her deathbed, Claudia Hampton decides to write "The history of the world as selected by Claudia: fact and fiction, myth and evidence, images and documents."

For the Time Being by Annie Dillard

Writing as if on the edge of a precipice, staring over into the abyss, Dillard offers a risk-taking, inspiring meditation on life, death, birth, God, evil, eternity, the nuclear age and the human predicament.

The Heart is an Involuntary Muscle by Monique Proulx

Monique Proulx's entertaining novel illuminates the life of writing and writers.

An Equal Music by Vikram Seth

Brilliantly interweaving themes of loss, longing, and the power of music, Vikram Seth has created a deeply moving story about the strands of passion that run through all our lives.

Island by Alastair Macleod

The Island is a powerful collection of short stories set on Canada's Eastern shore, where the traditions and Gaelic language of transplanted Scots continue in a harsh new world.

Julie Ringrose – Sault Saint Marie Public Library

Illusions by Richard Bach

Bach takes to the air to discover the ageless truths that give our souls wings: that people don't need airplanes to soar...that even the darkest clouds have meaning once we lift ourselves above them.

Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien

Bilbo Baggins was a hobbit who wanted to be left alone in quiet comfort. But the wizard Gandalf came along with a band of exiled dwarves and soon Bilbo was drawn into their quest, facing evil orcs, savage wolves, giant spiders, and unknown dangers.

Dragonlance Chronicles (first trilogy) by Margaret Weiss and Tracy Hickman

One of the finest fantasy trilogies ever written with its complexity of characters and the breadth of the tale, it is truly epic in proportion.

Widening Gyre by Robert B. Parker

The adoring wife of a senatorial candidate has a smile as sweet as candy and dots her "i's" with little hearts. A blond beauty, she is the perfect mate for an ambitious politician, but she has a little problem with sex and drugs--a problem someone has managed to put on videotape.

Certain Justice by P. D. James

A superior murder mystery, *A Certain Justice* is also a gripping anatomy of wild justice.

Marcia Aronson – Ottawa Public Library

No great mischief by Alistair MacLeod

No Great Mischief is far more than the straightforward saga of one family over the generations. Instead the author has created a painfully beautiful myth in which the long-ago is in many ways more present than modern existence.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Austen's most popular novel portrays life in the genteel rural society of 1813, and tells of the initial misunderstandings and later mutual enlightenment between Elizabeth Bennet and the haughty Mr. Darcy.

Fine Balance by Rohinton Mistry

The setting of Mistry's quietly magnificent second novel is India in 1975-76, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, defying a court order calling for her resignation,

declares a state of emergency and imprisons the parliamentary opposition as well as thousands of students, teachers, trade unionists and journalists.

Colony of Unrequited Dreams by Wayne Johnston

This is the story of Joey Smallwood, the true-life controversial political figure who ushered the island through confederation with Canada and became the first premier of Newfoundland.

Captain Corelli's Mandolin by Louis De Bernieres

De Bernieres mixes history and fantasy in this love story set on an idyllic Greek island torn apart by Nazi occupation.

Paul Trumphour – Toronto Public Library

A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving

Owen Meany is a dwarfish boy with a strange voice who accidentally kills his best friend's mom with a baseball and believes--accurately--that he is an instrument of God, to be redeemed by martyrdom.

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce

A masterpiece of subjectivity, a fictionalized memoir, a coming-of-age prose-poem, this brilliant novella introduces Joyce's alter ego, Stephen Daedalus, the hero of Ulysses, and begins the experimentation that would help change the concept of literary narrative forever.

Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien

Hobbits and wizards and Sauron--oh, my! Mild-mannered Oxford scholar John Ronald Reuel Tolkien had little inkling when he published *The Hobbit; Or, There and Back Again* in 1937 that, once hobbits were unleashed upon the world, there would be no turning back.

Such a Long Journey by Rohinton Mistry

In this novel, Gustad Noble and his wife Dilnavaz, living in a congested apartment building in Bombay, try to lead good lives and inspire their children during Indira Gandhi's rule in the 1970s, with all its political, professional, and social upheaval.

Rabbit is Rich by John Updike

If you remember the Carter era, gas shortages, Cheryl Ladd replacing Farrah Fawcett in "Charlie's Angels" and Toyota's "Oh, what a feeling!" commercials, you will love this look back at America in 1979 and into the early 80's.

