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Recommended Reading

1. The Last Second by Catherine Coulter © March 26, 2019
2. The First Lady by James Patterson © March 12, 2019
3. Deep Harbor by Fern Michaels © March 26, 2019
4. The Perfect Alibi by Philip Margolin © March 5, 2019
5. California Girls by Susan Mallery
6. Redemption by David Baldacci © April 16, 2019

Willie Simmons, Mail a Book Librarian
The Chatter Box

“Presidents of War” by Michael Beschloss
Reviewed by Kathy Cohen

Michael Beschloss, well known Presidential historian, and author of books about John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Dwight Eisenhower, Harry S. Truman and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, has written a book about American war time Presidents. Mr. Beschloss is writing a “political history of Presidents who sought and waged war” and “suggests some of the most important qualities of leadership Americans should demand when they choose a candidate for that office.” He begins by pointing out that “the Founders created a Constitution that gave Congress the sole power to declare war, and divided the responsibility to wage war between the executive and legislative branches.”

Beginning with James Madison, who began the War of 1812 with Great Britain although the condition of “imminent danger” to the Republic which he had helped to write into the Constitution, was not really met. Instead, Madison asked Congress to declare that there already existed, “on the side of Great Britain, a state of war against the United States.” An unprepared and ill-equipped America thus threw down the gauntlet against the world’s largest military force with the biggest navy. Beschloss points out that, “by pleading for a war in the absence of a large, immediate threat to American survival, Madison lowered the threshold so that future Presidents and Congresses could-contrary to the spirit of most of the Founders-more easily enmesh the nation in sundry military conflicts for lesser purposes.”

James Polk’s war against Mexico was entered into cynically for many reasons, none of which had any relation to “imminent danger” to the nation. Americans who expanded westward into Texas when it was a part of Mexico, did so to develop new cotton crops and acquire land for little or nothing. As the Republic of Texas they could ask to be taken under the protection of the United States, and ultimately be accepted as the twenty-eighth state. Land-hungry Americans looked further west to California, also part of Mexico at that time, and to the lands north of Texas which would ultimately become the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The question of whether slavery would become part of these new territories was in the background, whether expressed or not, with the pro-slavery people in favor of war with Mexico. A newly elected congressman,

Abraham Lincoln, gave a 45 minute speech in 1847, “building a prosecutor’s argument that Polk had created a counterfeit pretext in order to fight a gratuitous war.” The peace terms of this war extended the United States to the other end of the continent and doubled in size the extent of territory controlled by it.

Continued on the next page
Abraham Lincoln, the next President considered, struggled valiantly to keep the United States from splitting apart, but ended by presiding over a bitter and divisive Civil War whose sentiments still echo in our national life.

Michael Beschloss continues by describing Presidents William McKinley, who entered into war with Spain, Woodrow Wilson, who reluctantly entered World War I and then Franklin Delano Roosevelt who entered World War II.

The more recent history of Presidents who headed the United States during war begins with John F. Kennedy who sent advisors to Vietnam. After his assassination LBJ continued the US involvement in Vietnam, escalating the war into one of the longest in which the country had been involved. Richard Nixon ended that war in 1973, but the bitterness from Vietnam lingers. In 1991 George H. W. Bush asked Congress for a resolution of war against Iraq, received agreement, entered into an International coalition with whom the United States fought and won the war against Iraq and deposed Sadam Hussein.

Since then the United States has been embroiled in various conflicts around the globe and Michael Beschloss reminds us to carefully consider the decision making process before beginning a war. This is a thoughtful and well written book which addresses issues which are in the news today.

Kathy Cohen
Movie Review
RBG
DVD/DOC/2018/98 minutes
Reviewed by Marion Mango

RBG---a woman for the ages! A trail-blazing power house, practitioner of prudens of the juris genre. Only the second woman to ever have been appointed to the Supreme Court, she has set standards of the highest level. Her work ethic could put many half her age (85) to shame. Her dedication to the Constitution and the justice it empowers is beyond reproach. No wonder she’s considered by many of our youth, including potential “legal beagles,” to be a “rock star.”

Born Ruth Bader in Brooklyn, New York to descendants of Russian immigrants, she entered Cornell University at age 17 where she met future husband Marty Ginsberg then 18. She—quiet and reserved—he, gregarious and fun-loving, were married out of college for fifty years. This strong mother of two, indefatigable 107th Supreme Court Justice has overcome countless obstacles to which many would have succumbed.

She laid a foundation that literally changed the way the world is for American women by putting women on the same plane as men. In a 1975 landmark case, she fought and won on behalf of a man who was denied Social Security Survivors benefits after his wife passed away in childbirth. This was accomplished by presenting to the Justices the viewpoint that there is gender equality. She has survived two bouts with cancer, plus a more recent occurrence, without missing a day on the bench. Her tri-weekly workouts at the gym would exhaust many an aspiring athlete. Transferring to Harvard Law School where she was one of nine women in class of over 500 men, she made the Harvard Law Review in her second year. Her story will amaze and inspire you.

RUTH = TRUTH. Long may she blaze! (DVD available from the Library)
When one hears the name Stephen Hawking, the mind conjures up a limited vision of a slim, bespectacled man in a wheelchair bedecked with a computer. But the brilliance of his mind knew no bounds. Considered by many of his peers and laymen alike to have been arguably one of the greatest minds in history, this physicist, astronomer and cosmologist was also the possessor of quite a wicked sense of humor as well as a pair of exceptionally expressive eyebrows which he used to effect to communicate.

Although diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gerhig’s disease) in his early twenties and given only two years to live, he was not deterred from completing his education at Cambridge University in England, his birthplace, marrying and fathering three children. By working closely with Assisted Technology developers, he has been a pioneer in enabling those with physical challenges to broaden their horizons. He is also a respected advocate in the areas of social and humanitarian issues.

In this his last book on which he was working prior to his passing in 2018, the reader will find scientific subjects previously deemed off-putting such as quantum mechanics and black holes explained in layman’s terms. Of further interest may be the fascinating film, “The Theory of Everything” starring Eddie Redmayne in his Oscar – winning role as Stephen Hawking. (DVD available from the library.)

This book is available in large print.

Enjoy!
“The Generals” by Winston Groom
Reviewed by Kathy Cohen

The lives and careers of three generals who contributed to the winning of World War II are covered exhaustively by Winston Groom, author of numerous books on history, as well as fiction, including “Forrest Gump”.

Through his careful research into their personal lives and military careers he brings to life Generals George S. Patton, Douglas Mac Arthur and George C. Marshall. Each of these extraordinary men had in common tremendous intelligence, courage and tenacity which kept them going through the darkest days of America’s from its entry into World War II in 1941 to its end in 1945. He pulls no punches in describing both their strengths and weaknesses. General Patton’s foul language is described, but so is his work and determination to create an American tank Corp after tanks were first developed during World War I. Thanks to his tireless advocacy of tanks; American tanks were ready to battle the Germans in North Africa.

Douglas Mac Arthur departure from the Philippines when it was overwhelmed by the Japanese didn’t stop him from continuing the fight from far away in Australia to return and liberate the Philippine people. His independent spirit was described by some as dictatorial, but it is undeniable that he battled tirelessly with his troops to overcome the initial great advantage the Japanese had in the beginning.

George Marshall didn’t lead troops himself, but was part of the essential group of military leaders who did the planning and organizing of battles, then carried out by others. While constantly asking to be given a front line assignment Marshall was so good at his job that he was always refused and told to continue his role far behind the lines. After the war Marshall advocated for helping the defeated Germans, rather than punishing them as the other Allies wished. He organized aid both to those on the Allied, as well as the Axis side, helping to rebuild Europe and creating a basis for a more peaceful world.

This is an interesting addition to many excellent histories about World War II.
Movie Review
Title: The Palm Beach Story
Starring: Claudette Colbert, Joel McCrea, Mary Astor, Rudy Vallee
DVD/Comedy/1942/BW/90 Minutes.

Are you still suffering from the winter doldrums, tired of looking at the four walls on which Fred Astaire has definitely not been dancing, and not yet in the throes of spring fever? Well, here’s a screwball comedy, better than any medicine, to soothe your sagging spirits!

Claudette and Joel are a loving couple living an idyllic life in a Manhattan luxury apartment. There’s only one fly in the ointment—They’re broke and about to be evicted! Enter the Weenie King—a cantankerous curmudgeonly millionaire who’s being shown the couple’s apartment unbeknownst to them. In an effort to hide, Claudette jumps in the bathtub but is soon discovered by the King. She pours out their sad story, melts his heart and his wallet and---in a flash of cash---financial flames temporarily tampered. But this does not sit well with Joel who assumes the worst and takes on the mantle of the suspicious spouse. Claudette tries to reason with Joel to no avail. There’s a frenetic fight, she leaves with only the clothes on her back, winds up on a train full of rich, raucous revelers headed to Palm Beach, Florida, where she hopes to get a quickie divorce, marry a millionaire “Rudy Vallee” whose sister “Mary Astor” has just obtained her third divorce and funnels funds to Joel’s dream of building midtown elevated airport. What ensues is a blithe blend of train tunnel, delightful ditheriness, identity idiocy, wardrobe wonders, abiding affection, and lots and lots of laughs.

Enjoy! Happy Spring!

Marion Mango
Poetry

Written by you

The Cosmos by Larry Dicker

O You stars, you burning
Bastions of light
That guide us from chaos
In the night
Tell me the truth
All that you know
Is there a divine being
That keeps you aglow?
Or can man in his infinite
Wisdom explain in the end
Your marvelous system.

"If ever there was a Day" By Jerry Sexton

If ever there was a day
without a yesterday,
yesterday was it.
Yesterday it all began.
From the beginning,
we were not prepared.
And now here we are,
moving toward what?
We try to cover it
with lots of aphorisms
to make it seem ok.
Is it
or will we ever know?
Up ahead,
the possibility of this
pulls us
toward it.
And we go on.

Awards By Marion Mango

I'd love to be an
Oscar award winner,
that is what
I'd truly like to be;
but if
I can't be an
Oscar award winner,
an Oscar Meyer wiener's
good enough for me!

Are you a clover cleaver? By Marion Mango

In the Middle Ages
children believed that
carrying a four-leaf clover
would allow them
to see fairies.
But only one out of
10,000 shamrocks
has four leaves.
According to Celtic lore,
each leaf has a
special meaning:
the first is Hope,
the second is faith,
the third is Love,
and the fourth
is for Luck.
So get out there
and pluck some Luck!
**Jack**

By Marion Mango

Jack, Jack,
Old Jack o'lantern,
whenever we see you,
away from you we'd be scamperin'
Jack, Jack,
Jack in-the-box,
we're always surprised
when you we unlock.
Jack, Jack,
Jack Benny on TV,
whenever I see you,
I always tee hee.
Jack, Jack,
jack of the flat tire,
I'm always so glad
when you make me higher!
Jack, Jack,
Jack Prelutsky in the book,
your poems always cheer me
when I'm feeling kaput.
Jack, Jack,
flap jacks on the griddle,
Whenever I eat you,
I expand in the middle.
Jack, Jack,
Hugh Jackman on the screen,
whenever I watch you,
that at night of you I dream.
Jack, Jack,
Oh, I'm running out of Jacks!
Thank goodness
now I can relax!
**Spring Sighting**  By Marion Mango

I saw a Robin
in the snow.
His footprints
were like hieroglyphs
on papery papyrus
awaiting translation
by Champollion.

**Daffy-nitions**  By Marion Mango

wal-nut: squirrel market
poets: people who take a turn for the verse

**THE NORTHERN RANGE 1990**
(Viewed from the deck of a ship)
By: Calvin Archibald

Who amongst you scholars
Can decipher the rugged signature
Of the eons that are etched out by
the ridges on this page of sky
As Maracas and Blanchisseuse pass by?

From this deck they seem to be
Terraced landward from the beach
And to a crescendo on the main ridge reach.

Then on this beach in time
Should not we clue design
So that in eons to come
When this beach a ridge becomes
Those puzzled scholars from some deck will find
The story of an age by the time’s incline?

For perhaps the profile of the ridges
Like a cursor’s trace
In unison, and with precision
All the forces that have taken place.

**Poetry and Prose**
by poet Rita Tabb

what shalt I say as love thee
I do as G-d is our witness he sent me to you
’tis such ’tis true you heal as G-d does anew
you love me you do ’tis such ’tis true.

**********************
as such as such he said
I love thee truly
do perhaps shalt want thee to love me
as I do, you please tell me if such ‘tis so
as praise G-d in heaven do
as we loveth his kindness please love me
love me as such 'tis such 'tis such 'tis true.

Rita Tabb

**********************

**Advise #3** from Marion Mango

Don't be afraid
of computers---
They won't byte.
Poems by Mary Stallings

Trees

Trees are beautiful in fall.
Some are short and some are tall.
Colors of red, orange and gold,
Hues are vibrant and bold.
Wondrous golden autumn leaves,
How can anyone be peeved?
Beauty all around us shine,
Oh! So lovely and divine.

Gratitude

There is always time for gratitude,
No matter what's the magnitude.
Gratitude is a feeling inside,
Of kindness received from outside.

I am grateful for all the kindness,
That has been shown along the way
To brighten up my day.

Which has made life worth while,
And has made me smile.

Mail-A-Book

Crosswords to expand your minds,
New vocabulary you will find

Bingo just for fun
Ladies with all their puns

Books galore
No one can be bored

Nice people you meet
A welcoming treat

Information always to be found
That is clear and sound

Librarians always gracious and friendly
With words spoken candidly

Poetry that make you think
Some that make you blink

Happy to have mail-a-book
A warm little nook

Ground Hog

That furry little fellow
claims to make the weather mellow

Did he run
because of the sun?

Or was it the noise of the crowd
he strutted away proud?
The Circle of Love
By: Cynthia Groopman

A Circle of Love joins hands,
As we sing together songs of peace and hope to enable us to navigate life's land.
Smiles appear on each rainbow face,
As the sunshine of radiant deep friendship glitters and glows in our hearts in every place.
Hands are clasped in friendship so sincere,
For each one of us in God's eyes is precious and dear.
For brothers and sisters are we,
With one loving Father God blessing us lovingly.

Diamond Stars Glowing
By: Cynthia Groopman

Diamond stars are glowing in the night sky,
As we feel a sparkle as they dance by.
Smiling at us and illuminating our night,
Ah the diamond stars are such a beautiful amazing creational sight.

Whispering a prayer from heaven afar,
We wish upon a star.
For the glowing diamond stars are candles illuminating the birthday cake of the world,
Like a glorious flower each of them gloriously unfold.
Classic Spring Poetry

Spring by William Blake, 1789

*Songs of Innocence*

Sound the flute!
Now it's mute!
Bird's delight,
Day and night,
Nightingale,
In the dale,
Lark in sky,—
Merrily,
Merrily merrily, to welcome in the year.

Little boy,
Full of joy;
Little girl,
Sweet and small;
Cock does crow,
So do you;
Merry voice,
Infant noise;
Merrily, merrily, to welcome in the year.

Little lamb,
Here I am;
Come and lick
My white neck;
Let me pull
Your soft wool;
Let me kiss
Your soft face;
Merrily, merrily, to welcome in the year.

A Light Exists In Spring by Emily Dickinson, 1896

A Light exists in Spring
Not present on the Year
At any other period —
When March is scarcely here

A Color stands abroad
On Solitary Fields
That Science cannot overtake
But Human Nature feels.

It waits upon the Lawn,
It shows the furthest Tree
Upon the furthest Slope you know
It almost speaks to you.

Then as Horizons step
Or Noons report away
Without the Formula of sound
It passes and we stay –

A quality of loss
Affecting our Content
As Trade had suddenly encroached
Upon a Sacrament.
Sonnet 98 by William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud pied April dress’d in all his trim
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laugh’d and leap’d with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue
Could make me any summer’s story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew;
Nor did I wonder at the lily’s white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem’d it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer’s lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature’s changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander’st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st,
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
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Queens Library Mail a Book Calendar - Virtual Programs for Older Adults

Queens Library