

Sunkist Book Chat
Sunkist Branch Library
April 2015

Don't forget the ***Open Book Series*** at the Carnegie Library building on Anaheim Blvd.
Starting with a social at 6:00pm, the presentation followed by a Q & A session,
and finally a book signing from 6:30 to 8:0pm.

May 21 - Sylvia Chavez, "Amor A Mordidas" – an evening of poetry

June 18 - Chris Lowe, "Elephant Rides for Free" – a Children's History of Placentia

**Join us at our next meeting for cookies, coffee and conversation on
Thursday, May 28 at 1:00 pm**

Reviews

The numbers in parenthesis, following the title, indicates the reader's rating of the book.

The ratings are (1) poor, (2) so-so, (3) good, (4) very good, (5) great

John Simon reported on 3 books.

Eye of Jade (4) by Diane Wei Liang takes us to present day Beijing. Mei Wang is a modern, independent woman. She has her own apartment, owns a car and has her own business. Her short career with China's Ministry for Public Security has given her intimate insight into the complicated and arbitrary world of Beijing's law enforcement, but it is her intuition, curiosity, and her uncanny knack for listening to things that make Mei, Beijing's first successful female private investigator. Mei's family friend "Uncle" Chen hires her to find a Han dynasty jade of great value. He believes the piece was stolen from the Luoyang Museum during the Cultural Revolution when the Red Guards swarmed the streets, destroying so many traces of the past and that the jade is currently for sale on the black market. Given the jade's provenance Mei knows that she has to treat the investigation as a most delicate matter; she cannot know, however, that this case will force her to delve not only into China's brutal history, but also into her family's dark secrets.

American Sniper (3) by Chris Kyle is the story of a U.S. Navy SEAL who is sent to Iraq with only one mission, to protect his brothers-in-arms. Born in Texas, Kyle grew up in a family where the males all became hunters at an early age. His pinpoint accuracy saved countless lives on the battlefield, but on the home-front, he faced a different kind of battle, striving to be a good husband and father from halfway around the world. Putting his country above his family and despite the danger, Chris served through four harrowing tours of duty in Iraq, personifying the spirit of the SEAL creed to "leave no one behind." But upon returning to his wife, Taya Renae Kyle and kids, Chris found that it was the war that he couldn't leave behind.

Ripper (3.5) by Isabel Allende is about Indiana and Amanda Jackson who have always had each other and though their bond is strong, mother and daughter are as different as night and day. Indiana, is a beautiful holistic healer, a free-spirited bohemian while teenage Amanda is fascinated by the dark side of human nature. Her father is the SFPD's deputy chief of homicide. Brilliant and introverted, Amanda is a natural-born sleuth addicted to Ripper, the online mystery game she plays with her grandfather and friends from around the world. When a string of strange murders occurs across San Francisco, Amanda begins her own investigation, probing hints and deductions that elude the police department. But the case becomes all too personal when Indiana suddenly vanishes. Amanda suspects that her mother's disappearance might have something to do with the series of deaths. Now, with her mother's life on the line, the young detective and her friends must solve the most complex mystery she's ever faced before it's too late.

Ruth Hirsch reported on 6 books.

Top Secret Twenty-One (3) by Janet Evanovich is the latest in the Stephanie Plum series. Unfortunately, if you have read one book it is the same as if you have read them all. Stephanie is still a bounty hunter and is still emotionally involved with Morelli and Ranger. Grandma Mozur is still funny as are Lulu and the rest of the New Jersey characters. Used-car dealer, Jimmy Poletti, was caught selling a lot more than used cars out of his dealerships. Now he's out on bail and has missed his date in court, and bounty hunter Stephanie Plum is looking to bring him in. Even Joe Morelli, the city's hottest cop, is struggling to find a clue to the suspected killer's whereabouts. Desperate times call for desperate measures, so Stephanie is going to have to protect former hospital security guard and general pain in the neck Randy Briggs. Briggs was picking up quick cash as Poletti's bookkeeper and knows all his boss's dirty secrets.

The Drowning Pool (3) by Monica Ferris is a pleasant mystery novel set in Crewel World, a needlework shop owned by Betsy Devonshire. Betsy knows how to untangle even the most knotty of mysteries but a soggy murder case might have Betsy in over her head. Running Crewel World keeps Betsy busy, but when the local senior complex, Watered Silk, asks her to teach a class on the hole punching, Betsy jumps at the opportunity to win over some new customers and earn some extra money. When a young woman is found floating in Watered Silk's therapy pool, Betsy's sleuthing skills are called upon to figure out who drowned her. When she finds out that the victim had three lovers, it's up to Betsy to sort out the snarl of romantic entanglements and find a killer, or the wrong man is bound to get pinned for a crime he didn't commit

Murder on Martha's Vineyard (3) by David Osborn is the first entry in a new series. The location of the story makes this a pleasant read. The plot is very complex and not too interesting but the characters make up for this. Margaret Barlow, a widow in her late 50s, summers on Martha's Vineyard, where she has also taken up ballooning with eccentric Essie Peck, a year-round resident. Islanders are stunned when socialite Rose Perkins is found drowned in the pond of elderly recluse Grace Chadwick. Some years previously, Chadwick had sold her old Victorian house, retaining lifetime residency rights, to artist Algar Mikele and his wife, who have been in financial difficulties ever since. When another murder occurs, suspicion begins to fall on Algar. To help her friends, Margaret begins to investigate, despite warnings from the local police lieutenant.

Shadow of Doubt (3.5) by Jennie Jacobs is a well written, cozy mystery. Attorney Kali O'Brien comes home to settle her father's estate and agrees to help a childhood friend accused of murdering her husband. She hadn't counted on a missing teenage girl and the envelope of incriminating photos or of the need to confront her own past. This is the first in the Kali O'Brien series.

The Key (3.5) by Jennifer Sturman is a mystery where Rachel Benjamin finds herself working for Wall Street terror Glenn Gallagher on his latest pet project. Rachel thinks that the deal and Glenn are more than a little shady, but she has a promotion at stake. It's either keep her lips sealed or kiss her partnership goodbye. At least she has Peter, Rachel's too-good-to-be-true fiancé who has moved in, and while his stuff is everywhere and he's strangely jealous of her friendly new coworker, she's confident they'll figure things out. It would help if Glenn's schedule didn't have Rachel working around the clock. Rachel's jokes about killing her boss don't seem so funny when Glenn is murdered and she becomes the prime suspect. Rachel is learning the hard way to be careful what you wish for. She needs to catch the true killer quickly, before the killer catches her.

Splintered Bones (4) by Carolyn Haines is a well written book set in the Deep South. Southern belle Sarah Delaney runs a private detective agency in Zinnia, MS, and remains single at 33. Her longtime friend and equestrienne Eulalee "Lee" McBride confesses to murdering her abusive husband, foists her problematic teenage daughter on Sarah, and asks Sarah to dig up all the dirt that she can find about the victim. Before Sarah's research goes very far, plenty of motives for murder crop up, including gambling debts, psychological abuse, and possible adultery. There's certainly no lack of suspects in Zinnia, Mississippi, including Bud Lynch, a horse trainer who arouses killer lust in the town's women. As Sarah begins to put together the pieces of the case, a killer is preparing to strike again, and this time it could send one late-blooming southern sleuth into an early grave.

Ruth Flanagan reported on 3 books.

Memories of Midnight (5) by Sidney Sheldon is the story of a woman who is shadowed by tragedy and burdened by amnesia. Catherine Douglas is a beautiful woman who is desperately trying to return to reality. Catherine is destined to once again challenge the cruel, charismatic power of Constantin Demiris, the Greek shipping tycoon who murdered Catherine's husband. Now Demiris has set his deadly sights on Catherine and the single, treacherous secret whose shattering truth is known to her alone...

Never Go Back (5) by Lee Child has Jack Reacher, the former military cop heading to the Virginia headquarters of his old unit, the 110th MP, in hopes of meeting Major Susan Turner, the new commanding officer of his old unit. When Reacher finally arrives in Virginia, he finds out that Turner is under investigation for corruption and is awaiting trial for conspiracy and that's only the beginning. The army drafts him back into service to face two trumped-up legal cases, homicide charges for an assault 16 years earlier in L.A. and a paternity suit from a former girlfriend alleging that Reacher fathered her 14-year-old daughter. As usual, head-busting physicality and analytical problem solving play key roles in Reacher's fight to prove his innocence and that of Susan Turner and expose their enemies

The Talbot Odyssey (4) by Nelson DeMille is about a Russian mole in the CIA. For forty years Western intelligence agents have known a terrible secret about a mole, code-named Talbot, inside the CIA. At the end of WWII, an ex-cop/trainee lawyer soon finds himself embroiled in a world of violence and double-crossing enemy agents. A plan by Talbot to spread a world of suspicion and deceit onto the streets of New York is the first step to a new Soviet weapon and a first-strike war plan threatening the foundations of the American government.

Sally Nuttelman reported on 1 book.

The Winter Garden Mystery (3) by Carola Dunn is the first book in a series about Daisy Dalrymple. In 1923 England, Daisy has shocked her family by setting out on her own to make her own living. She has been writing articles for publication about country manor houses. They have been well received and she has now been invited by an old school friend to visit her home. Soon after her arrival, the body of a pregnant maid is discovered in the winter Garden. The question that comes up, is who committed the murder and why. There are many suspects and because of their status, the family wants everything hushed up. The book was well written but the story dragged.

Betty Hesse reported on 1 book.

The Nazi Officer's Wife (3.5) by Edith Hahn Beer is the story of Edith Hahn, an outspoken young woman living in Vienna when the Gestapo forced her into a ghetto and then into a slave labor camp. After she was released and returned home, she went underground. With the help of a Christian friend, she moved to Munich and took the name of Grete Denner. There she met Werner Vetter, a Nazi Party member who fell in love with her. Despite Edith's protests and even her eventual confession that she was Jewish, he married her and kept her identity a secret. Edith recalls a life of constant fear. She tells how during childbirth she refused all painkillers, afraid that in an altered state of mind she might reveal something of her past; and how, after her husband was captured by the Soviets, she was bombed out of her house and had to hide while drunken Russian soldiers raped women on the street. Despite the risk it posed to her life, Edith created a remarkable record of survival. She saved every document, as well as photographs she took inside the labor camps and they are now part of the permanent collection at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.