

Sunkist Book Chat
Sunkist Branch Library
February 2015

I hope that you enjoyed the Valentine's Day celebration with a stroll along Center Street Promenade, making a first stop at the Pond to watch a little hockey on the Olympic rink and some team ice dancing on the professional rink. From there it was only a short walk to watch las niñas y el niños dance the Jarabe Tapatio (Mexican Hat Dance) and the Zapateado. The next stop was the Muzeo where members of the Anaheim Ballet presented interpretations of various dances. Between these musical extravaganzas, were the booths displaying different types of arts and crafts. For those with an appetite, there were plenty of places to grab a bite. If you missed this Art Crawl Experience, try to make the next one on May 9th.

Don't forget the upcoming events at the Muzeo

BRING YOUR LUNCH AND LEARN will host Phillip Simone – 'Retirement Explorer' - a financial analyst/adviser who will offer ideas for your financial well-being on March 11. And on March 19, the 'OPEN BOOK SERIES' will present Marie Jones, author of 'EKHO-Evil Kid Hunting Organization'.

Join us at our next meeting for cookies, coffee and conversation on
Thursday, March 26 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:

Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers (4) by Mary Roach is another book recommended by a patron. Although not sure about the subject, it took a couple of pages to find out exactly what the author was trying to accomplish. The author traveled around the globe to conduct her forensic investigations, and her findings are wryly intelligent. While the myriad uses for cadavers recounted are often graphic, Roach imbues her subject with a sense of dignity, choosing to emphasize the oddly noble purposes corpses serve, from organ donation to lifesaving medical research. Readers should come away convinced of the enormous debt that we, the living, owe to the study of the remains of the dead. For two thousand years cadavers, some willingly and some unwillingly, have been involved in science's boldest strides and weirdest undertakings. In this fascinating account, Mary Roach visits the good deeds of cadavers over the centuries and tells the engrossing story of our bodies when we are no longer with them. She explores the "lives" of human cadavers from the time of the ancient Egyptians all the way up to current campaigns for human composting.

The Drop (3) by Michael Connelly is a Harry Bosch novel. While most LAPD officers are counting the days until retirement, Bosch views that landmark date as if it were the end of the world. Bosch has been given three years before he must retire from the LAPD, and he now wants cases more than ever and in one morning, he gets two. One involves a DNA cold case that threatens to undermine all of the recent convictions that were aided by the Regional Crime Laboratory. The other is a homicide that seems to be entangled in internal politics. As usual, Harry is in the midst of the trouble. The first case is from a 1989 rape and murder where the DNA matches a 29-year-old convicted rapist which means that he was an eight-year-old killer when the murder was committed. The second case has Bosch and his partner called to a death scene filled with internal politics. Councilman Irvin Irving's son jumped or was pushed from a

window at the Chateau Marmont and Irving has demanded that Harry handle the investigation. Pursuing both cases, Bosch makes two chilling discoveries: there has been an unknown killer operating in the city for as many as three decades, and a political conspiracy that goes back into the history of the police department. The only problem is that the story leaves some unanswered problems. Will they be solved in the next book?

Micro (3) by Michael Crichton and Richard Preston reveals a universe too small to see and too dangerous to ignore. Unfinished at the time of his death and later completed by Preston, Crichton's last book is the story of Hawaii-based micro technology company Nanigen. The company has developed the ability to shrink objects and people. The head of the company, Vin Drake, sees the potential to make billions of dollars, but when one of Drake's executives, Eric Jansen, threatens his plans, Jansen suddenly goes missing and is presumed dead. When Eric's brother, Peter, arrives along with six fellow graduate students and begins to ask questions, Drake shrinks them and leaves them to die in the Hawaiian rain forest. What follows is an interesting nonstop fight for survival in the micro-world, where insects are as big as cars, bats the size of airplanes, and everything is hungry.

Ruth Hirsch reported on 4 books.

Black Cross (3.5) by Greg Iles is a work of fiction based on Nazi exploits in World War II. The story is extremely graphic and was very hard to read. When a young Atlanta physician attends the funeral of the grandparents who raised him, he is approached by a silver-haired rabbi who claims to have known his grandfather well. Returning together to the family home, they open the grandfather's safe where they discover four mysterious objects. They are the relics of a man haunted by something he did one winter night in 1944, an act that brought him unparalleled honors, but left wounds in his soul that would never heal. On that night, four people held the fate of the world in their hands. At the command of Winston Churchill, four strangers are brought together to embark on a murderous mission into Germany. Their target is a small SS-run concentration camp serving as the incubator for a weapon of staggering lethality; a weapon U.S. General Omar Bradley later admitted could have wiped out the D-day invasion force on Omaha Beach. The plot is very well written but Ruth found it emotionally upsetting.

Gray Mountain (3) by John Grisham is about Samantha Kofer, a young woman lawyer who loses her job with a big New York firm during the recession of 2008 and accepts an assignment as an unpaid intern at a legal aid clinic in Appalachia. This area is impoverished and the residents have many problems. For the first time in her career, Samantha was confronted with real clients with real problems. She also stumbled across secrets that should have remained buried deep in the mountains forever. Even though this book made the L.A. times top twenty list, Ruth found the story to be dull, depressing and uninteresting.

15 Seconds (4.5) by Andrew Gross is an exciting, very well written suspense novel. Henry Steadman never knew what was about to hit him when he was stopped by the police for a minor traffic violation. He was pulled from his vehicle, handcuffed, and told that he was under arrest. When a blue sedan drives up, the police officer is shot dead, and the car speeds away, leaving behind one suspect, Henry Steadman. Suddenly, Henry is the target of a massive police manhunt while also being pursued by a cunning, unnamed predator bent on terrifying vengeance. The author states that he had a similar experience which made the story much more riveting and accurate.

Burn (4.5) by James Patterson and Michael Ledwidge is full of exciting police work, warm family relationships and was extremely pleasant reading. Detective Michael Bennett finally returns to New York City after a long leave in California to resume his police work in the Big Apple. Thanks to Bennett,

the ruthless crime lord whose vengeful mission forced the Bennett family into hiding has been brought down for good. Bennett takes over a chaotic Outreach Squad in Harlem, where he receives an unusual call: a man claims to have seen a group of well-dressed men holding a bizarre party in a condemned building. With no clear crime or evidence, Bennett dismisses the report. But when a charred body is found in that very same building, he is forced to take the demented caller seriously--and is drawn into an underground criminal world of terrifying depravity.

Ruth Flanagan reported on 3 books.

Quicksand (3) by Iris Johansen drags Eve Duncan right back to that terrible moment years ago when her only daughter vanished without a trace. Since then, Eve's life has become an obsession to find her daughter's remains. Only one man, a brilliant, ruthless killer, knows the truth about what happened to Bonnie. Eve has a talent as a brilliant forensic sculptor. She has a friend, a former Navy SEAL Joe Quinn, who is now an Atlanta detective and who will do anything to help Eve put the pain of Bonnie's death to rest. When other children are kidnapped, Eve is introduced to Megan, a woman who is called a listener. Megan is able to pick up clues from the dead by noises coming from the buried deceased.

Murder in Georgetown (3) by Margaret Truman is the story of Valerie Frolich, a beautiful senator's daughter who is killed at a posh Georgetown party. Joe Potamos, of the Washington Post's police beat, is assigned to report on the murder. He finds out a number of things about Valerie which lead him to a number of startling questions about Georgetown's most powerful men and women, questions whose answers have the power of life or death.

Taken (3) by Robert Crais is the 15th Elvis Cole novel. Jack Berman, a USC dropout, and his girlfriend, Krista Morales, a star student at Loyola Marymount, get caught in a battle between human traffickers and "bajadores"—predators who prey on other criminals—while visiting the site of an old desert plane crash near Rancho Mirage, Calif. When Krista's mother receives a phone call telling her that Krista has been kidnapped and demands a ransom, she hires Cole to find her daughter. The mother suspects that Jack and Krista are pretending to be kidnapped as part of a scheme that Jack cooked up to extort money so that they can get married. Cole and his sidekicks Joe Pike and Jon Stone join forces as Cole plays a dangerous game that makes him a prisoner of the deadly bajadore known as the Syrian.

Recipe

We haven't had a cookie recipe for a while and I've been saving a section of the L.A. Times since December. As I've said in the past, I try to give you recipes that sound easy enough for even me to bake.

Vesta Bars

Glaze

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons milk

¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups powdered sugar, sifted

2 tablespoons melted butter

In a medium bowl, whisk together the milk and vanilla into the powdered sugar, then whisk in the butter, to form a glaze. Cover and set aside until ready to coat the cookies.

Vesta Cookies

2 ¼ cups flour

½ teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

1 cup light brown sugar

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened

½ cup chocolate chips

1. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 13 x 9 inch baking pan. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment and grease the parchment.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.
3. In the bowl of a standard mixer, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. Slowly beat in the flour mixture until fully combined, then stir in the chocolate chips.
4. Press the dough into the prepared pan and bake until the cookies just begin to brown, 20 to 25 minutes (the cookie should be soft even as it cools). Rotate the pan halfway through for even baking.
5. While the cookie is still warm, pour the glaze over and tilt the pan so that the glaze spreads evenly. Cut the cookie while still warm into bars.