

RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2017



Welcome to the March 2017 issue of **RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER**

In this issue: Recommended Reads *I am Malala, A Thousand Acres, and An Unquiet Mind*

Women's History Month

"Read the Book-Watch the Movie": *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

The Judges Book Club

Website of the Month: Countryfile

Recommended Reads from the RTC community

I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

I am Malala is an engaging and inspirational memoir by Malala Yousafzai, the brave young Pakistani girl who continues to advocate for the educational rights of girls in her country and beyond. Born in the Swat District of northwestern Pakistan, Malala is only 10 when the Taliban enter the area and life takes on dramatic changes for the area residents. At first, some residents are happy to see the Taliban arrive, but their optimism is short lived. Shops are closed, DVDs and TVs are confiscated, people are dragged from their homes and publicly whipped or killed, and women are banned from public places.

As we read Malala's account, it is difficult to know who the "good guys" are – certainly not the Taliban, who impose Draconian methods to enforce a rigid brand of Islam, not the Pakistani military, who often seem no better than the Taliban as they turn a blind eye to Taliban activities, not the Americans, whose drone strikes are killing innocent men women and children and who many Pakistani distrust (rightfully so). We learn of an American University supplying textbooks to children in refugee camps that teach basic math using examples of war. One lesson reads: If there are 10 Russian infidels and 5 are killed by 1 Muslim, 5 would be left.

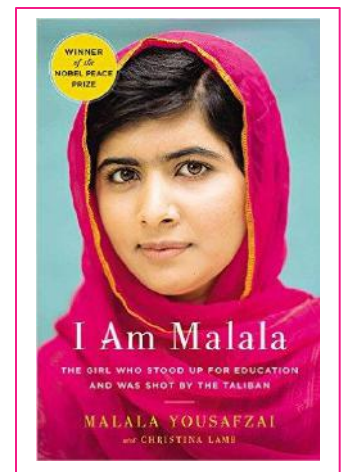
We discover it is men like Malala's father, who in a country where sons are valued above all else, fiercely loves and supports his daughter and encourages her to speak out as he himself does in support of education. It is women like Malala's mother, who although uneducated and illiterate herself, supports her outspoken daughter. And it is young Pakistanis like Malala, who reject Taliban oppression.

In 2008, at the age of 11, Malala visits Peshawar with her father. Speaking before a local press club, she states "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education" In 2009, as a seventh grader, Malala becomes a blogger for the BBC. Although activists are being threatened and killed, Malala continues to speak out for the rights of girls to attend school. In 2012, at the age of 15, Malala is shot three times and seriously wounded by a Taliban member while riding in a school bus. At 17, Malala becomes the youngest person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

At times, we experience the events through the eyes of a naïve teenager. At other times, we marvel at the maturity of Malala's commitment and determination. Malala's story is highly recommended. **Amrita McKinney, Librarian**

Location: Main

Call No.: 920 Y82i



Quotes:

"Peace in every home, every street, every village, every country – this is my dream. Education for every boy and every girl in the world. To sit down on a chair and read my books with all my friends at school is my right. To see each and every human being with a smile of happiness is my wish."

"As we crossed the Malakand Pass I saw a young girl selling oranges. She was scratching marks on a piece of paper with a pencil to account for the oranges she had sold, as she could not read or write. I took a photo of her and vowed I would do everything in my power to help educate girls just like her. This was the war I was going to fight."

"I was a girl in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a son, while daughters are hidden away behind a curtain, their role in life simply to prepare food and give birth to children."

"They destroyed everything old and brought nothina new."

A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley

Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1992. It has been called an American version of Shakespeare's tragedy, *King Lear*. In *A Thousand Acres*, Ginny, the oldest daughter, replaces Goneril as the storyteller. The story, which centers on the Cook family, is set in rural Iowa in the late 1970s. Midwestern farm life is threatened as farmers can no longer compete with large farming corporations that are buying up family farms, some of which have been farmed for generations. A way of life is disappearing.

Ginny and Rose are sisters, two years apart. They are a staple in each other's life. Now in their mid-thirties, Rose has two daughters and cancer, and Ginny has had five miscarriages. As young teenagers after their mother died, they raised their younger sister, Caroline, who is now a lawyer living in Des Moines.

As the story progresses, we discover that Larry Cook, the patriarch of the family is not a very nice man. He is, however, the most successful farmer in the area and owns the largest tract of farm land – a thousand acres. As such, he is looked up to in the community. As Smiley writes, *"Most issues on a farm return to the issue of keeping up appearances. Farmers extrapolate quickly from the farm to the farmer. A farmer looks like himself, when he goes to the café, but he also looks like his farm, which everyone has passed on the way into town"*

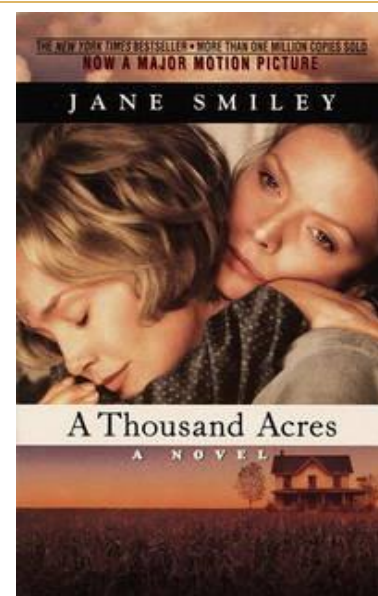
In a rash decision, brought on by a combination of drunkenness and dementia, Larry draws up a contract to give his land over to his three daughters, a decision he soon regrets. And now, he wants his land back. After a series of unjust accusations against Ginny and Rose, sides are drawn and old, unresolved issues threaten to unravel their precariously threaded lives.

As anger and resentment towards their father rises to the surface, Rose becomes more vocal and Ginny, who comes to accept her father's abuse, begins to find her voice. Their marriages are in trouble and Jess Clark, a handsome neighbor, returning after a long absence, steps into the picture – to fill a void or create a wedge between the sisters?

Smiley weaves a wonderful, complex tale of family love and loyalties. With pitch perfect dialogue and detailed description, we are transported to the flat Iowa landscape of six foot tall cornfields that stretch as far as the eye can see, where men work the fields and women cook and can fruits and vegetables. Behind a fragile façade of idyllic family life, Smiley draws us into the dysfunctional lives of the Cooks. And we watch as things fall apart. **Amrita McKinney, Librarian**

Location: FIC

Call No.: FIC S6412t



Quotes:

"I waited for Rose to die, but the weather was warm for sauerkraut and sausage; that was a winter dish."

"Daddy thinks history starts fresh every day, every minute, that time itself begins with the feelings he's having right now. That's how he keeps betraying us, why he roars at us with such conviction. We have to stand up to that, and say, at least to ourselves, that what he's done before is still with us, still right here in this room until there's true remorse."

"One of the many benefits of this private project, I thought at the time, was it showed me a whole secret world, a way to have two lives, to be two selves."

"Rose left me a riddle I haven't solved, of how we judge those who have hurt us when they have shown no remorse or even understanding."

"Rather than feeling 'not myself,' I felt intensely, newly, more myself than ever before."

"One thing was surely true about going to court. It had marvelous divided us from each other and from our old lives. There could be no reconciliation now."

An *Unquiet* Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness by Kay Redfield Jamison

Jamison is a recognized scholar and authority on manic-depression (now known as bipolar disorder). She has a Ph.D. in psychology and has co-authored a standard textbook on manic depression (the term she prefers). She also suffers from the illness. Jamison's memoir, *An Unquiet Mind*, is a moving and honest account of her lifelong battle with manic depression. If you have ever wondered what it might be like to suffer with manic depression/bipolar disorder, I highly recommend reading this engaging, very personal and informative memoir.

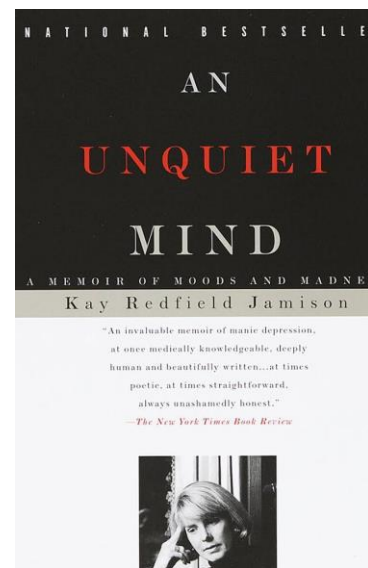
Jamison shares with us her episodes of psychotic mania. Her periods of extreme highs would often lead to excessive shopping sprees, erratic behavior, sleepless nights, exceptional creativity, and scholarly productivity. After each high, however, she would plummet into depression. One such descent propels her to attempt suicide.

The author convincingly relates the seductiveness of mania. For years, she resists taking lithium, believing she can control her mood swings. While lithium prevents the highs and lows, its side effects diminish her concentration and attention span. It flattens her emotions and makes reading nearly impossible – a liability in her profession. In this sluggish state, Jamison would feel a mere shadow of her vibrant self and as soon as lithium stabilized her depression, she would stop taking it, eventually spiraling her into another manic depressive episode. Her life became a crescent of highs and lows.

Over time, Jamison accepts that if she doesn't stay on lithium, she will wind up dead or in a psych ward. As a result of her own successful medical treatment and therapy, Jamison becomes a staunch supporter and advocate for a combination of medication and therapy for managing bipolar patients. She writes, *"Attitudes about mental illness are changing, however glacially, and it is in large measure due to a combination of these things – successful treatment, advocacy, and legislation."*

We learn that for many battling bipolar disorder, it is the seductiveness of the mania and the fear of losing one's creativity that often causes them to resist taking their medication. Throughout her professional career and personal relationships, the author had to consider how and when (and if) to tell others about her illness. Often times, she feared repercussions (professionally and personally) for doing so. Jamison expresses her concerns about writing this frank personal account. I am glad she was willing to share her story. **Amrita McKinney, Librarian**

Location: Main Call No.: 920 J325u 1995



Quotes:

"I was late to understand that chaos and intensity are no substitute for lasting love, nor are they necessarily an improvement on real life."

"I was constantly recovering from, or delving into, new moods and new experiences."

"Love, like life, is much stranger and far more complicated than one is brought up to believe."

"No amount of love can cure madness or unblacken one's dark moods. Love can help, it can make the pain more tolerable, but always, one is beholden to medication that may or may not always work and may or may not be bearable. Madness, on the other hand, most certainly can, and often does, kill love through its mistrustfulness, unrelenting pessimism, discontents, erratic behavior, and especially, through its savage moods."

"No matter what struggles I had had with lithium, it was painfully clear to me that without it I would have been long dead or on the back wards of a state hospital."

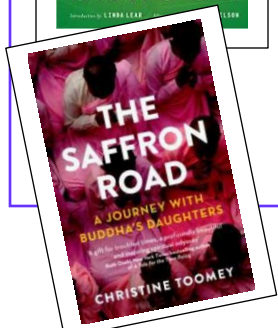
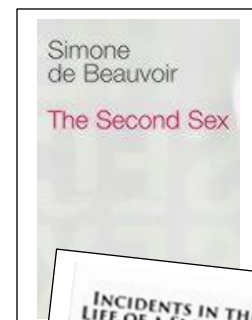
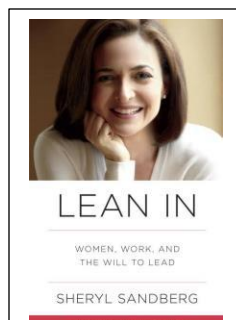
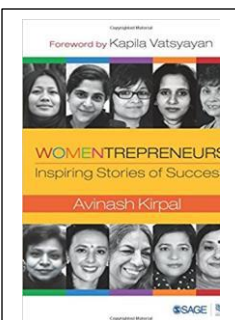
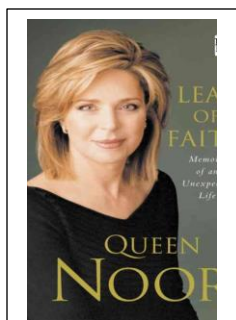
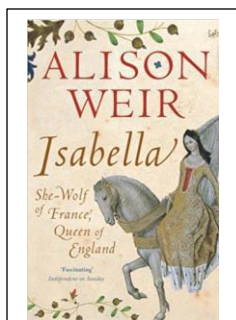
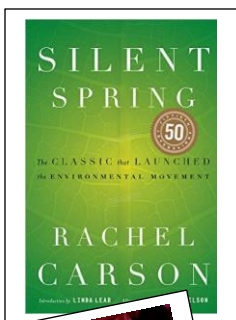
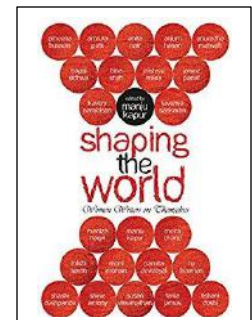
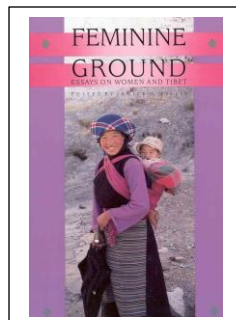
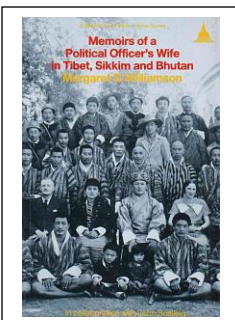
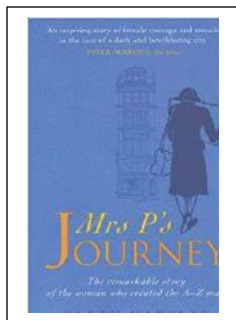
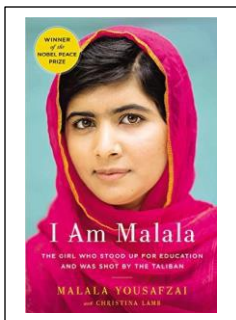
This month is: Women's History Month

Most ancient cultures were patriarchal and practiced customs that held women in low esteem and limited their freedom. Through the centuries courageous women have stepped forward to fight this inequality and champion causes for the benefit of society. These pioneering women paved the way so that today, women serve as leaders of countries and hold respected positions in all fields of study and work.

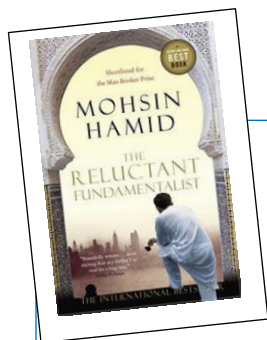
Women's History Month is an annual acknowledgement that highlights the contributions women have made to the events in history and contemporary society. We celebrate Women's History month to honor these women.

Here are some suggestions for ways you can celebrate Women's History Month

- Volunteer or make a donation to a women's organization
- Post a link about your favorite famous woman on Facebook.
- Read a book by a woman author this month.
- Read a book about a woman this month.
- Appreciate and give thanks to the women in your life.
- Browse our library display for books by and about women (a few are listed below)



Read the book, watch the movie!



The Reluctant Fundamentalist **by Moshin Hamid**



Pakistani author, Moshin Hamid utilizes two distinctive styles in writing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. He uses a frame approach to tell a story within a story and presents the story as a one-sided monologue between Changez and an unidentified American that transpires in a Lahore café amid tea and local food. From the very start, the author has us in his grip as Changez approaches the stranger and says, "Excuse me, sir, but may I be of assistance?" Changez then proceeds to tell the American about himself, his unrequited love for Erica, his time as a student at Princeton, and as an analyst at the prestigious firm of Underwood Samson. Changez attempts to allay any fears the American may have about his intentions by telling the American, "Do not be afraid of my beard, I am a lover of America." Of the American, we know nothing. Through Changez observations, we begin to wonder who is to be feared - Changez or the silent American?

As Changez tells his story, we learn he has returned from America a different man than the optimistic eighteen year old who left Pakistan to pursue the American dream. Changez, bright and ambitious, nails a job at the firm of Underwood Samson, where he thrives under the tutelage of his mentor, Jim. Changez is in the Philippines on business when he watches the twin towers collapse on television and is surprised when he feels a certain pleasure in their falling. Upon returning to the US, Changez is racially profiled at JFK airport. He is singled out to be detained and searched. After 9/11, Changez's world begins to collapse - at work and with Erica. He is no longer sure of himself and his identity.

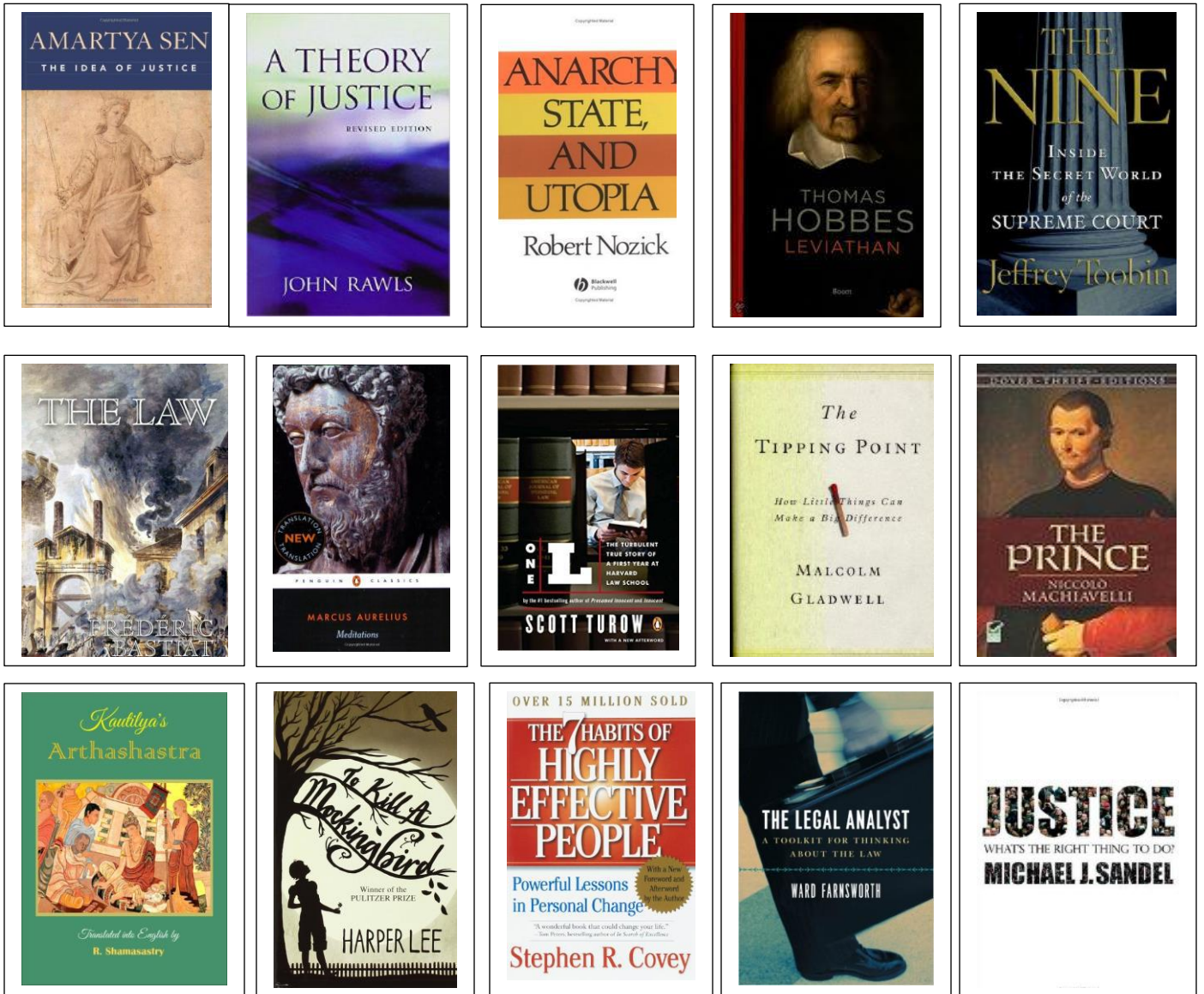
The life changing moment for Changez comes during the course of a conversation with a publisher in Chile. His employer has been hired to render the publisher redundant. The publisher asks Changez if he has heard about the Janissaries. The Janissaries, he is told were Christian boys captured by the Ottomans and trained as soldiers for the Muslim army to erase their own civilization. The publisher says, "The truth is we can all become janissaries today, unless we actively, consciously resist the processes that seek to render us so." Thinking on these words, Changez leaves the employ of Underwood Samson and returns to Lahore.

After reading the book I was eager to watch the movie, curious to see how Changez' monologue and the book's unhurried pace would be rendered into film. The movie, which adds a kidnapping, projects a completely different tempo and becomes a political thriller. There are a number of other differences between the book and the movie. The unidentified man is given a name: Bobbie. Erica's character has a different twist and it is Turkey that Changez travels to rather than Chile. The movie does a good job of portraying the ultra-patriotism and distrust in America following 9/11. The music is wonderful as are the picturesque scenes of Lahore and Istanbul. The book and movie tell a similar story, albeit in a different manner, an accomplishment that makes it easy to recommend both the book and the movie. To quote another reviewer, "The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a solid movie from a brilliant book."

Both the book and the movie are available on the MSS

The Judges Book Club

Curious what Bhutanese lawyers and judges are reading? Here is a selection of titles that have been read and discussed by members of The Judges Book Club. The following titles are available to download from the MSS. We also have hard copies in the Library of *The Prince*, *Kautilya's Arthashastra*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to do?* and *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.



Source: The Judges Book Club. (2016). *Bhutan Law Review*, 6 (Nov). (Available in the Library)

Selected website of the month – recommended by Gyanu Pradhan, Asst. Librarian

Countryfile is a British based website which is run by a team featuring articles that explore the British countryside. It includes news, TV shows, outdoor skills, tips on photography, wildlife stories, and features current and past magazine issues of Countryfile.

“If we can teach people about wildlife, they will be touched. Share my wildlife with me. Because humans want to save things that they love.” – **Steve Irwin**

<http://www.countryfile.com>

The screenshot shows the Countryfile website homepage. At the top is a teal navigation bar with the 'COUNTRYFILE MAGAZINE' logo and the tagline 'EXPLORE THE BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE'. To the right are social media icons (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), a search bar, and a 'SUBSCRIBE' button. Below the navigation bar is a secondary menu with categories: 'WHAT'S NEW', 'TV SHOW', 'GO OUTDOORS', 'PHOTOGRAPHY', 'WILDLIFE', 'HOW TO', 'MAGAZINE', and 'DIRECTORY'. The main content area features several article tiles:

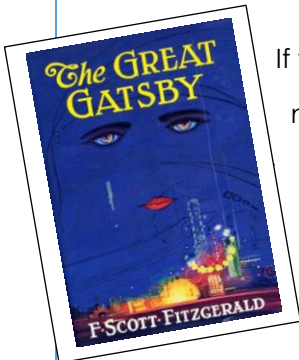
- Wildlife stories: Conservation 21: Natural England publish their strategy for the future** (with a sunset landscape image)
- Wildlife stories: Britain's longest river to reopen to fish species** (with a wide river image)
- Wildlife: Rare species thriving in East Devon site, finds report** (with a field image)
- Outdoor Skills: Video: how to make a newspaper plant pot** (with a plant in a newspaper pot image)
- Wildlife stories: "My job is to get children and their parents interested in nature"** (with a group of people in a field image)
- Wildlife: Where to hear a nightingale sing this spring** (with a nightingale image)
- How to identify: Flower of the month - January** (with a snowflake flower image)
- Wildlife: Nature's fireworks: four vibrant creatures to look out for** (with a colorful moth image)
- Wildlife stories: Pesticides affect bees' spatial memories, finds study** (with a bee on a flower image)
- Interview with paddleboarding environmentalist Lizzie Carr** (with a person on a paddleboard image)
- How to identify: Did you know? Which striped insects sting?** (with a wasp image)
- How to identify: ID Guide: small river fish** (with a small fish image)
- Wildlife stories: "My job is to get children and their parents interested in nature"** (with a group of people in a field image)
- Poldark gallery and DVD giveaway** (with a man in a hat image)
- What to read this autumn: 12 great books** (with a book cover 'SERPENT' image)
- What to read this August** (with a book cover 'RIVER BEAUTY' image)
- Go Outdoors Book Reviews: What to read this May** (with an open book image)
- Hedgehog decline: Are badgers to blame?** (with a hedgehog image)

News from the Reading Club:

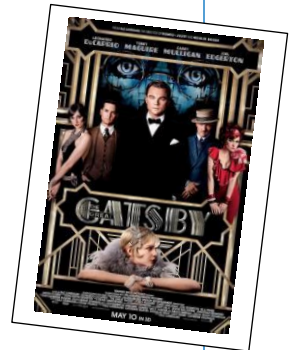
Greetings all! Happy Spring.

The Reading Club has selected its first book to read for the semester. Join us in reading the classic,

***The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald.**



If you are not much of a reader or don't have time to read the book, you might enjoy watching the movie. Whether you read the book or watch the movie, please join us on 27 April to discuss Fitzgerald's masterpiece. The story takes place on the affluent north shore of Long Island, New York. Set in the Roaring Twenties, the book explores themes of decadence, idealism, social upheaval, and excess.



PLEASE NOTE: the Media Sharing Space is currently under maintenance in order to expand space and enhance access.

If you would like to obtain a copy of the ebook or movie, please stop by the library, and we will provide you with a copy of the book and/or the movie.

Are you interested in writing a book recommendation?

Did you read a good book over the break? Are you reading one now?

Want to share your recommendation with others?

We would love to have you write a recommendation for the next Library newsletter.

Tell us a little about the book and why you liked it in 250-500 words.

Send your review to amckinney@rtc.bt or come by the library and see Amrita.

Thanks!