

Missouri ESO Newsletter-February 2023

**Grandma Gatewood’s Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail** by Ben Montgomery. Sent by Robyn Pippin.

This book was inspirational. I have walked portions of the Trail, but doing the who thing is daunting. I love books about people who follow their passions.

**A Spool of Blue Thread** by Ann Tyler. Sent by Mary Ridge.

This story of three generations of the Whitshank family and their house in a nice neighborhood in Baltimore is charming but deceptively told in unusual ways until its complexities are sorted out. We begin with Red and Abby living in the house, then their children all show up. Stem’s whole family moving in when Abby shows signs of possible dementia and Red has a heart attack. Even the prodigal son Denny moves back in. Eventually we learn the story of Junior and Linnie Mae, the first family to live in the house and raise Merrick and Red. We learn the history of Abby and Red, their daughters, and the toddler they took in. Tyler is a good writer who creates lifelike characters and puts them in interesting situations with insights into what makes them so.

**The Hiding Place** by Corrie Ten Boom with Elizabeth and John Sherrill. Sent by Eileen Roth.

I cannot take my mind off this book! This book reveals a personal story Corrie and her family experience during WWII. Their family was very strong and faithful. They secretly hid many from the German army. But Corrie and her family were arrested. She describes their horrendous experiences. But what was most important was their faith. They trusted God and knew that he gave them these experiences to share the gospel and of God’s unending love for his people. I learned so much from this book. Highly recommend.

**Once Upon A Wardrobe** by Patti Callahan. Sent by Lorelei Lee.

Meg is a brilliant Oxford University student studying physics and she has no interest in fantasy. However, her little brother, George, who does not have long to live, is captivated by the book, The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis. George begs Meg to find out where Narnia came from, and Meg timidly develops a friendship with C.S. Lewis and his brother Warren. Her hope is to be able to satisfy George’s curiosity about Narnia. C.S. Lewis shares many stories with Meg which she takes home to George. They never learn where Narnia came from, but they each come away with something even better: hope.

**Dead Man’s Walk** by Larry McMurtry. Sent by Rosie Buatte.

This book is about the American West and the first adventures of Gus and Call, the heroes of McMurtry’s *Lonesome Dove.* I enjoyed reading this book.

**Left Behind** by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. Sent by Rosemary Douglas.

An airborne Boeing 747 is headed to London when, without warning, passengers mysteriously disappear from their seats. Terror and chaos slowly spread not only through the plane but also worldwide as unusual events continue to unfold. The pilot Rayford Steele arrives home to find his wife Irene and son were part of the rapture. Irene tried to get Rayford and their daughter to understand and believe, but they weren’t interested. Now, they understand. They seek understanding at their church and embrace the beliefs, and watch as the apocalypse unfolds.

**The Essay** by Robin Yocum. Sent by Cathy Judy.

A story about a coach and an English teacher who want to give a boy from a poor family that has a history of trouble a chance to tell his story and be eligible for football. I highly recommend this book.

**City of Lies** by Ravita Naval. Sent by Cindy McEvoy.

This book of tales about real life in Tehran shows how everyday people struggle to live in the real world while following their religious beliefs. Several lives that vary, from a neglectful husband to a gay soldier or a young woman trying to pay her rent, show the struggle where everything is really a lie. While a pious religion holds up a standard to follow, everyone is involved in lying to cover up the base actions that are prevalent in every part of life. This is an incredibly gripping book that peeks into another world we’ve heard little about in details like this.

**Home Front** by Kristin Hannah. Sent by Kathy Baylor.

Jolene is a soldier. She is also a wife and mother, but when she is deployed to Iraq she has to leave her family and fly a Black Hawk helicopter. Before she left for duty things at home were rocky, her husband resented her career and was not prepared for taking over care of their two daughters on his own. Tami, Jolene’s best friend, is also deployed at the same time. One of them make it back home alive, but broken. The struggle with PTSD is frighteningly real and difficult to overcome. A very good story with a hopeful ending.

**M is for Mama: A Rebellion Against Mediocre Motherhood** by Abbie Halberstadt. Sent by Kelsey Fitzgerald.

The author is a homeschool mom of ten children. She wrote this book as a way to battle mediocre motherhood, a worldly and often sinful view of motherhood. She wants to connect with mothers to help them realize their potential through Christ. I highly recommend.

**Upstairs at the White House: My Life with the First Ladies** by J.B. West with Mary Lynn Kotz. Sent by Barbara Phillips.

This was an interesting book by the chief usher at the White House from the Franklin Roosevelt presidency until the beginning of the Nixon presidency. His focus is on the first ladies bot of course you learn about the presidents as well. It is not about their politics but rather their personalities, the changes that were made to the White House, the work of the staff, and more. I recommend this book for those with an interest in a more personal look at our presidents, their wives, and life in the White House.

**Bag Man: The Wild Crimes, Audacious Cover-Up and Spectacular Downfall of a Brazen Crook in the White House** by Rachel Maddow. Sent by Robyn Pippin.

This was a great book. Most people have forgotten about Spiro Agnew, but this country could have ended up much differently if our Department of Justice hadn’t done such an excellent job. It shows how our system of checks and balances works.

T**he Swedish Art of Aging Exuberantly** by Margareta Magnusson. Sent by Mary Ridge.

The Swedish author encourages older adults to do our best to enjoy and simplify our later years. She suggests being around younger people for stimulation, keeping in touch with friends from over the years, and to “death clean” out what no one else will want when we are gone. She shares amusing anecdotes about her family life spent raising five children in several different parts of the world. The pleasant book offers practical advice without pathos.

**Life Is Good: One Man’s Extraordinary Journey Through the 20th Century and How He Learned to Read at Age 98** by George Dawson and Richard Glaubman. Sent by Marilyn Stone.

The title says most of it. His journey was remarkable, his attitude so positive, his love for hard work a blessing, his experiences with adventure enriching. His memoir is an example for all of us to treat each other right and look for the good things in life in spite of the times in which he lived. He felt he could not advance to higher positions because of his inability to read but in order to keep this a secret he accepted it willingly. At age 98 he was given the chance to go to adult education and became an inspiration to many much younger who were motivated to get their GEDs because of his example. A great story.

**Drowning Ruth** by Christina Schwartz. Sent by Debbie Barber.

Amanda is a nurse during the war. She returns home when life gets to her. Struggling with her own sanity, Amanda moves back home with her sister and niece Ruth. The story takes several twists in the sisters’ lives. While raising Ruth, Amanda can manipulate her to remember things her way. Ruth grows up and remembers things a little bit different, but what will she do with this knowledge? A very interesting novel which I enjoyed.

**Can’t Wait to Get to Heaven** by Fannie Flagg. Sent by Carolyn Dye.

Elner Shimfissle, a widowed resident of Elmwood Springs, Missouri, is an integral part of the lives of many of the town’s residents. When she falls out of her fig tree after being stung by wasps she is taken by ambulance to a hospital in Kansas City. She finds herself wandering empty hallways until she gets on an elevator to find someone. After a strange ride she gets off and is surprised to meet her deceased younger sister. Her experiences are strange and she realizes she is in heaven. However she is told she has to go back. Five hours after having been pronounced dead she awakens and starts talking. Meanwhile, her family and friends have been told she died. After many tests and observation, she is allowed to return home. Her experience and newly gained insight affects the lives of those around her in unusual ways. Everyone ponders what life is about and why are we here. I enjoyed the humorous way the author explores life and death.

**The 6:20 Man** by David Baldacci. Sent by Pam Carr.

A great read. Travis Devine a former US Ranger with a MBA in finance, without fail puts on a cheap suit and boards the 6:20 train to Manhattan. Devine works as an analyst at a most prestigious investment firm. Suddenly he finds himself in the middle of four murders and the investigation of the darkest corners of the economic halls of power. Will his past secrets stay hidden? Why is there a killer out there who has Devine in the bulls eye? Baldacci never fails to captivate his readers. Fast paced and full of intrigue.

**Demon Copperhead** by Barbara Kingslover. Sent by Alicia Thomas.

The novel borrows its narrative structure from the Charles Dickens novel David Copperfield. It was named one of the “10 Best Books of 2022” by the Washington Post and New York times. Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, Demon Copperhead is the nickname given to the red-headed Damon Fields. This is a story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father’s good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. Relayed in his own unsparing voice, Demon braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities. I loved this book from the start.

**Dog Days of Summer** by Kathleen Y’Barbo. Sent by Donna Calvin.

Country singer Trina Potter took a break from Nashville to help her mother in Brenham, Texas. Trina decided to buy a ranch house with 40 acres from Dallas Wright where her niece, Marigold could fulfill her dream of setting up an animal rescue center called Second Chance Ranch. Trina’s two dog, however, became a menace to neighbor Deacon King who complained about their stealing meat from his grill. Vandalism at the animal shelter were eventually traced to King who hoped to scare Trina into selling her property. King was arrested along with Dallas’ daughter who was contriving to declare Dallas incompetent in selling the land in the first place. She wanted to gain back the property. Instead, Trina refused to sell and convinced her producer to buy property nearby for a recording studio, allowing him and Trina to divide their time between Brenham and Nashville.

**The Chance** by Karen Kingsbury. Sent by Bethel DeSpain.

Ellie’s life is forever changed when her mother has an affair and her father kicks her out. He takes Ellie away to California. Before Ellie leaves, she and her best friend Nolan write letters to each other about how they feel and place them in a metal box and bury them by a tree in the playground. They promise in 11 years to come back on June 1st and read each other the letters. Ellie writes to her mother and Nolan, but never hears back from them. Nolan becomes a basketball star and Ellie works in a salon. He searches for Ellie, but her last name has changed. Will they meet in 11 years? Excellent.

**Verity** by Colleen Hoover. Sent by Connie Robley.

This is a story of Lowen Ashleigh who is a struggling writer. She accepts an offer from Jeremy Crawford who hires her to complete the writing of books in his wife’s successful book series. His wife is Verity Crawford who has experienced an accident and is not able to complete writing the series herself. Lowen moves into their home so she can study notes and possibly find an outline for the remaining storyline. While she is doing this she discovers an unfinished autobiography by Verity that she is sure was never intended to be found. This gives Lowen an opportunity to look inside to see exactly what Verity’s personality is really like. This book has lots of twists and turns and the ending is one that keeps you wondering what really happened.

**The Boys in the Cave: Deep Inside the Impossible Rescue in Thailand** by Matt Gutman. Sent by Barbara Phillips.

This book tells the amazing story of the rescue of 12 boys and their coach from a cave. Th boys walked in but then water from recent heavy rains filled the cave so that they couldn’t walk back out. It was through persistence and skilled divers from around the world in addition to the Thai Navy Seals that all the boys survived the ordeal. I was glad I had the opportunity to learn more about this rescue.

**Ox, House, Stick: The History of Our Alphabet** by Don Robb. Sent by Rev. Linda Wansing.

This book provided some pretty interesting information regarding the use and development of the Alphabet system we use. The book was illustrated by Anne Smith and the illustration is interesting as well. Learning how the alphabet evolved was something I never knew.

**Welcome to Carol Hoagland**, our newest GFWC MO ESO member from the GFWC Achievers Club of Appleton City!
As always, thank you for participating in GFWC MO ESO and happy reading!!!! Lisa