

Missouri ESO Newsletter-May 2023

**This Child is Mine** by Mildred Colvin. Sent by Lisa Fitzgerald.

This is a story of two children switched at the hospital at birth and two years later the parents find out. Each family has had a spouse pass away in the meantime. Neither Jonathon or Beth want to give up the child they have raised, but also want to be able to see their biological child. Will they be able to work things out? A very good book.

**Running With Sherman: The Donkey With the Heart of A Hero** by Christopher McDougall. Sent by Barbara Phillips.

The author decided to take in a donkey that had been neglected by an animal hoarder. The donkey was in bad shape but the author worked with him and got advice from people who actually knew about donkeys. He was told that Sherman would do best if he had a job so Chris decided to compete Sherman in the World Championship burro races in Colorado. By the time they went from Pennsylvania to Colorado for the races, there were three donkeys and three runners that made up their team. Throughout the book, the story of Sherman is interspersed with only information—the value of having pets, depression among athletes, how to adjust to high altitudes when training, etc. It was an interesting and inspiring true story.

**The Boy From Block 66** by Limor Regev. Sent by Alicia Thomas.

This is the incredible true story of Mosha Kessler and Block 66—the children’s block that was at the forefront of one of the most shocking and inspiring stories of the Holocaust survival. January, 1945, 14 year old Mosha steps off the train at Buchenwald concentration camp. Having endured the horrors of Auschwitz-Birkenau, lost touch with his entire family, and survived the death march in the freezing European winter, he has seen more than his share of tragedy. Mosha knows only one thing about Buchenwald. Everyone knows it. If you want to survive, you have to get to Block 66. The Germans are cruel and determined—but they are not prepared for Buchenwald’s secret resistance, which rises up with one mission only: to protect the camp’s children from harm.

**Unnatural Exposure** by Patricia Cornwell. Sent by Debbie Barber.

Dr. Kay Scarpetta must examine the remains of a torso, missing all extremities. This is not the first. And now the killer is sending her cyber messages. Although the press and almost everyone else thinks this is another of the many others, she and only a very few know this is a copycat. When she sees body number two she realizes it was exposed to a smallpox type virus. The case must be solved before the virus goes everywhere and she herself is not feeling well. Very good thriller.

**The Gnats of Knotty Pine** by Bill Peet. Sent by Bethel DeSpain.

Excellent children’s book. Hunting day was coming tomorrow and all the animals met to come up with a plan to chase off the hunters. Even the gnats came, but the animals ran them off. Who saves the day?

**Code of the Hills** by Nancy Allen. Sent by Amy Boone.

Nancy Allen is a writer from Southwest Missouri who is now writing with James Patterson. Elsie Arnold, prosecutor, is determined to break a code of silence to protect three young girls from abuse. As she tries to help, things go wrong. The star witness disappears, and the girls refuse to talk. Elsie receives threats. This book leaves one a lot to think about with some of our judicial systems.

**The Flight Girls** by Noelle Scalazar. Sent by Geneva Melcher.

A novel inspired by real female pilots during World War II who have joined the WASP program. A love story and a powerful tale of courage and sacrifices by the Women Air Force Pilots.

**Empty Mansions** by Bill Dedman and Paul Clark Newell, Jr. Sent by Carol Duke.

I decided to start on the book list offered by the national ESO chair. Picked up this book and thought I would hate it. Boy, was I wrong. What an interesting story about a wealthy family I had never heard of. I felt sorry for the youngest daughter, Huguette, but realized that she lived a life very full and seemed to be happy giving away her money, working on her doll houses, collecting antique dolls, and painting. She spoke French and Spanish and continued to read French magazines and papers her entire life. I can’t even imagine the wealth the Clark family worked with.

**The Mothers** by Brit Bennett. Sent by Mary Ridge.

This is an in-depth consideration of how a decision made in youth can affect lives dramatically. Nadia Turner has recently lost her mother to suicide and is desperate to be loved. However, she had seen how what she thought was an unwanted pregnancy derailed her own mother’s life. She falls in love with a preacher’s son, Luke, who had a bright future until a football injury. Nadia spends the summer before going to college working in the Upper Room where churchwomen gather to pray for or offer help for those in need. Luke’s mother is harsh toward Nadia. Nadia becomes best friends with another worker, Aubrey. This story kept my interest throughout with its lovely prose and intimate insights into the characters’ minds as it explores consequences. An especially good book.

**The Same Sky** by Amanda Eyre Ward. Sent by Eileen Roth.

This story presents the needs of two very different families. One family lives in complete poverty in Honduras and the other lives in Texas. Reading about other cultures sheds a light on their experience; their fears, their dreams, and their hardships. The family in Texas has a successful business but not all their dreams are fulfilled. I enjoyed reading about these two different families and how their lives changed. This story provided more understanding of what people living in poverty experience and their difficult choices.

**All That She Carried, The Journey of Ashley’s Sack, A Black Family Keepsake** by Tiya Miles. Sent by Margaret Richardson.

Imagine if you knew you had to let your 9 year old daughter go the next day to the slave market to be sold. What would you send with her? This book covers in depth the years 1840-1850’s in South Carolina when a woman named Rose would be sending her daughter Ashley, with a linen bag with a tattered dress, 3 handfuls of pecans, a braid for her hair, and love to fill the bag to be sold at the slave auction due to the death of their plantation owner and the disbursement of his slaves. Decades later Ashley’s granddaughter Ruth would embroider this family history on the sack, that now resides at the Smithsonian Museum. This is an amazing, well researched book on this amazing story of resilience, love, and the oral history passed down many generations. I highly recommend this book as I learned more about the conditions of the slaves of this time period.

**The Secrets of Midwives** by Sally Hepworth. Sent by Kathy Baylor.

This is a work of fiction, but it details many aspects of the midwife’s ethical and moral responsibilities. The story spans 3 generations of midwives, each with her own set of difficult circumstances. Gran, Grace, and Neva all share the same life’s work, but have very different life stories. There are secrets and consequences which make for a very interesting story.

**Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: First in Her Class** by David L. Hudson, Jr. Sent by Rosemary Douglas.

This was a very enlightening book about how Ruth Bader Ginsburg became RBG. From her early start and struggles not only as a woman entering law, but as a Jewish woman. She consistently battled for gender equality and made her mark on the world.

**Love of a Lifetime** by Carol Voss. Sent by Lisa Fitzgerald.

Maggie’s first love comes back to town after 10 years. How does she tell him that he’s a father? Can this relationship mend and will he stay or leave? This was a very good book.

**The Railway Children** by E. Nesbit. Sent by Kelsey Fitzgerald.

Why can’t they write books like this anymore? I absolutely love the wholesome story and the beautiful language used. First published in 1906, this story is about three siblings that must move away from their home to go to live by a railway. They love to go to the station where they’ve made a variety of friends.

**Barking Up the Wrong Tree** by Janice Thompson. Sent by Bethel DeSpain.

Kristi Keller is a veterinarian. A client comes in with their champion dog Remington. He is not acting his normal self. Kristin finds that Remington is not himself because he is not Remington. He has been swapped with a look alike dog. Kristin and the staff at the clinic decide to find the real Remington. Where is he?

**Wrong Place, Wrong Time** by Gillian McAllister. Sent by Marilyn Stone.

How far should a mother go to save her son—back before he was even born? Jen witnesses her older, brilliant teenage son, Todd, commit a murder—the most unlikely act ever suspected. Her husband’s reaction is a strange one and she can’t figure out what has led to this event. Suddenly, she starts going backwards in time, eventually going back before Todd was even born to try to figure out what led to the event. She discovers her husband has been lying to her for 20 years and she has to know the reason why in order to prevent the future murder. She is told by a scholar that has written a paper on time-travel that there is a reason for her; she must really observe her surroundings and the actions taking place. This was a fascinating book with a different twist---highly recommend.

**Before We Were Yours** by Lisa Wingate. Sent by Carol Hoagland.

This book is about a twelve year old girl, Rill Foss and her four younger siblings who are stolen from their family’s shantyboat and thrown into a Tennessee Children’s Home Society Orphanage in 1939 and the connection between wealthy, Avery Stafford, present day. Rill and her siblings are told they are “in holding” until their parents can come but soon realize that will not happen. Rill does all she can to keep her siblings together but loses the battle to Georgia Tann, the homes director. Present day, Avery, unfolds a long hidden family secret when she meets Mary Crandell. This book is heartbreaking but also gives hope. A very good read.

**The Wedding Dress Sewing Circle** by Jennifer Ryan. Sent by Geneva Melcher.

Three women lift the spirits of Home-Front brides in wartime Britain when clothes rationing leaves wedding dresses scarce. A local vicar’s daughter Grace is trying in vain to repair her mother’s gown, her only chance of a white wedding. Grace asks Cressida renowned fashion designer for her help at the local SEWING Circle meetings, but she has much more to teach the ladies than just simple sewing skills. Before long the village group finds themselves mending wedding dresses not only for local brides but for brides across the country.

**True Believer** by Jack Carr. Sent by Pam Carr.

Former Navy Seal James Reece is America’s most wanted domestic terrorist, yet seems to be America’s only hope in combatting a shadowy former Iraqi commando that is set on bringing America and her allies to their knees. This tale is filled with terrorist, a traitorous CIA officer leader, and a sinister assassination plot. Action packed, based on the knowledge that a True Believer is trained to kill and doesn’t care how hard it is. He believes that he wins or he dies, knowing only the “cause”. Great political thriller.

**Divine Justice** by David Baldacci. Sent by Robyn Pippin.

Action and espionage are tied up in a package with personal stories filling the background. Tightly plotted and believable, this story follows one of Baldacci’s most popular hero’s through a scary scenario…..who are the good guys? I would recommend this book.

**Sarah the Duchess of York: My Story** with Jeff Copion. Sent by Debbie Barber.

Sarah Ferguson married Prince Andrew. This is her story of life as a princess of the British Royal family. So unsure of herself before she married, life in Buckingham Palace made that even harder for her. She had her husband’s support, however, he was never there, and she had to idea what to do. This was a very interesting book, learning how hard it is to make a life in such a public position. I really enjoyed the look into the life of a famous family.

**The Best Cook in the World: Tales from My Momma’s Table** by Rick Bragg. Sent by Alicia Thomas.

Part cookbook, part memoir, these “rollicking, poignant, sometimes hilarious tales” are the Pulitzer Prize winner’s loving tribute to the South, his family, and especially to his extraordinary mother. Here are irresistible stories and recipes from across generations. They come, skillet by skillet, from Bragg’s ancestors, from feasts and near famine, from funerals and celebrations, and from a thousand tales of family lore as rich and as sumptuous as the dishes they inspired. Not like one of those Betty Crocker volumes….Bragg’s work is more a narrative cookbook that’s heavy on stories about growing up poor, wearing out stoves and the role food plays both in his family and his native South. Bragg is one of my favorite American authors.

**Welcome to Lisa Fitzgerald, Vicki Branstetter**, our newest GFWC MO ESO members from the GFWC Mina Sauk Club**. Welcome to Gina Bennett** from the GFWC Woman’s Club of Ste. Genevieve. **Welcome to** **Maureen Hacker** from the GFWC Mexico Women’s Club!!!

As always, thank you for participating in GFWC MO ESO.

Happy Reading!

Lisa