

## **Book Buzz**

With Carolyn Larson

Head Librarian at Lihue Public Library

*Bringing you the buzz on new, popular and good books available at your neighborhood library.*

*Book annotations are culled from online publishers' descriptions and published reviews.*

### **MAKE NOISE for LIBRARIES -- Aug 12, 2009 Column**

So why are our public libraries important?

Let us count some of the ways.

Is it because they promote and support literacy, the foundation of a free and participatory democracy?

Or because they provide free access to books and materials that inform and entertain readers from all walks of life and at every stage in their lives?

Perhaps it is because they have huge collections of books of all kinds from many points of view or because they help preserve local history.

Are our libraries important because they provide internet access at the library and are a portal for public access to online government programs and services?

Maybe because they serve every demographic and are a community meeting place where people from all segments of the population mingle fostering a sense of community?

Or because libraries are an important tool for life-long learning, or because they provide such rich healthy enjoyment for readers, listeners, and viewers?

The Hawaii State Public Library System provides downloadable e-books and access to many powerful databases for remote users--is that why our public libraries are important?

Whichever reasons you choose, libraries are important in our communities for what they stand for (our democratic freedom of information, our freedom to read), for what they preserve (records of our past, evidence of our lives, successes, failures and wisdom), for what they provide public access to (both new and old informational and recreational material) and for all the many services they provide for all ages.

Along with agencies throughout the state government, libraries are suffering during these difficult financial times. Make some noise for public libraries this week. Express your support for the goals and activities of libraries in our neighborhoods and the continuing role of libraries in our democratic nation and in the lives of our children. This week's Book Buzz list features books about libraries.

Happy Reading!

### **FOR CHILDREN**



## The Library Lion

By Michelle Knudsen

Easy Picture Book Kn

One day, a lion came to the library... Scowling circulation assistant Mr. McBee seems intent on having the enormous cat ejected, but his boss, Miss Merriweather the head librarian, declares that as long as he breaks no rules, he is welcome. Lion makes himself useful and enjoys story hour. Everyone appreciates him—except Mr. McBee. When Lion lets out a tremendous RAAHHHRRR! the man bursts into Miss Merriweather's office to snitch—and there he finds her in distress, having fallen from a stool and broken her arm. A satisfying ending and lively detailed illustrations will endear this book to readers of all ages. Also try **Our Librarian Won't Tell Us Anything!** by Toni Buzzeo.



## The Boy Who Was Raised by Librarians

By Carla Morris

Illustrated by Brad Sneed

Easy Picture Book Mo

Little Melvin loves his library, and his librarians—Marge, Leeola, and Betty—are his very favorite people. As he grows up, they help him learn about his world and explore all kinds of things. In a heartwarming ending, another little boy comes to the library with questions, and Melvin is the new librarian, ready to help. Also check out **Help! I'm a Prisoner in the Library** by Eth Clifford.



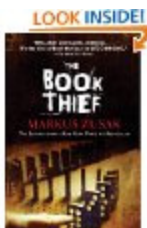
## The Librarian of Basra:

By Jeannette Winter

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Books "are more precious than mountains of gold," says Basra librarian Alia Muhammad Baker. When war seemed imminent in her town, Alia was determined to protect the library's holdings. She transferred the 30,000 volumes to neighborhood homes preventing the collection's destruction when a bomb hit and burned the library building. Winter's bright, folk-art style does much to mute the horrific realities of war. Palm trees, architecture, dress, and Arabic writing on the flag convey a sense of place and culture. Although the invading country is never mentioned, this is an important story that puts a human face on the victims of war and demonstrates that a love of books and learning is a value that unites people everywhere. Elsewhere in the world of libraries try **My Librarian is a Camel: How Books are Brought to Children Around the World** by Margriet Ruurs.

## FOR TEENS



### **The Book Thief**

By Markus Zusack

YA Fiction Z

Death himself narrates the World War II-era story of Liesel Meminger from the time she is taken, at age nine, to live with a foster family in a working-class neighborhood. The child arrives having just stolen her first book—although she has not yet learned how to read. Stolen books form the spine of the story. Death first meets the book thief, when he comes to take her little brother, and she becomes an enduring force in his life, despite his efforts to resist her. Death, like Liesel, has a way with words. And he recognizes them not only for the good they can do, but for the evil as well. What would Hitler have been, after all, without words? As this book reminds us, what would any of us be?



### **Here Lies the Librarian**

By Richard Peck

YA Fiction Peck

Peewee idolizes Jake, a big brother whose dreams of auto mechanic glory are fueled by the hard road coming to link their Indiana town and futures with the twentieth century. Then motoring down the road comes Irene Ridpath, a young librarian with plans to astonish them all. She will turn Peewee's life upside down. Offbeat, deliciously wicked comedy that is also unexpectedly moving.



### **Fly By Night**

By Frances Hardinge

YA Fiction Hardinge

Twelve-year-old Mosca Mye hasn't got much in this imaginary world in which all books have been banned. Her cruel uncle keeps her locked up in his mill, and her only friend is her pet goose who'll bite anything that crosses his path. But Mosca does have one small, rare thing: the ability to read. She doesn't know it yet, but in a world where books are dangerous things this gift will change her life.



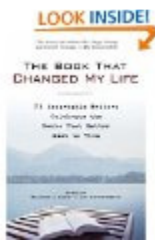
## Little Brother

By Cory Doctorow

YA Fiction Do

Seventeen-year-old techno-geek Markus is caught near the site of a terrorist attack on San Francisco and held by the Department of Homeland Security for six days of intensive interrogation. After his release, he vows to use his skills to fight back against an increasingly frightening system of surveillance. Set in the near future, Doctorow's novel blurs the lines between current and potential technologies, and rapidly confronts issues, from civil liberties to cryptology to social justice. Teen espionage fans will appreciate the numerous gadgets made from everyday materials. Marcus is a wonderfully developed character: hyperaware of his surroundings, trying to redress past wrongs, and rebelling against authority. For another sci-fi look at the freedom or control of information try **Feed** by M.T. Anderson about Titus, whose ability to read, write, and even think for himself has been almost completely obliterated by his "feed," a transmitter implanted directly into his brain and about Violet, a girl who decides to fight the "feed."

## ADULTS



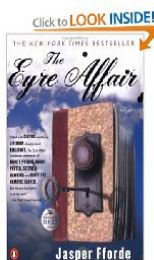
## The Book That Changed My Life

71 Remarkable Writers Celebrate the Books That Matter Most to Them

Edited by Roxanne J. Coady

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A collection of essays that celebrates books and testifies to the transformative power of reading. Authors, journalists, doctors, professors, religious leaders, poets, politicians, historians, chefs, and CEOs each share the story of a book that changed the way they see themselves and the world around them. Through reading we can live lives that are completely different from our own, experience foreign worlds that we would otherwise know nothing about, and learn to understand others and develop compassion for their situations and what they endure.



## The Eyre Afair

By Jasper Forde

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Imagine this. Great Britain in 1985 is close to being a police state. The only recognizable thing about this England is her citizens' enduring love of literature. And in this world where high lit matters Special Operative Thursday Next (literary detective) seeks to retrieve the stolen manuscript of Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The evil Acheron Hades has plans for it: after kidnapping Next's mad-scientist uncle, Mycroft, and commandeering his invention, the Prose Portal, which enables people to cross into a literary text, he sends a minion into *Chuzzlewit* to seize and kill a minor character, thus forever changing the novel. But worse is to come as Hades has set his sights on one of the plums of literature, *Jane Eyre*, and he must be stopped. How Thursday achieves this inside Charlotte Brontë's masterpiece and manages to preserve one of the great books of the Western canon makes for delightfully hilarious reading. Witty and clever, this literate romp heralds a fun new series set in a wonderfully original world.

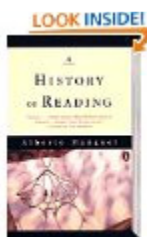


## The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society.

By Mary Ann Shaffer

Adult Fiction Shaffer

This epistolary novel, based on the Author's painstaking, lifelong research is an homage to booklovers and a nostalgic portrayal of an era. As her quirky, loveable characters cite the works of Shakespeare, Austen, and the Brontës, Shaffer subtly weaves those writers' themes into her own narrative. However, it is the tragic stories of life under Nazi occupation that animate the novel and give it its urgency; furthermore, the novel explores the darker side of human nature without becoming maudlin. Although some criticize the novel's lighthearted tone and characterizations, most critics agreed that, with its humor and optimism, *Guernsey* affirms the power of books to nourish people during hard times.

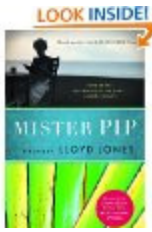


## A History of Reading

By Alberto Manguel

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An erudite and beguiling study of an abiding human passion. The author takes us on a fascinating exploration of what it means to be a reader of Books. This work is a brilliant reminder of why we cherish the act of reading—despite distractions through the ages, from the Inquisition to the lures of cyberspace. He shows us what happens when we read; who we become; and how reading teaches us how to live. He shows us how our reading habits have developed over the centuries, and how, ever since humans first transcribed their thoughts and deeds on clay and papyrus, the act of reading is itself a part of being human.

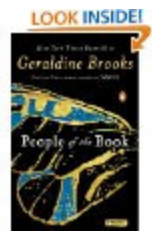


## Mister Pip

By Lloyd Jones

Adult Fiction Jones

On an island called Bougainville in the early 1990s, civil war rages. 13-year-old Matilda Laimo and her mother, Dolores, are unified with the rest of their village in their efforts for survival. All the whites have fled except one: Mr. Watts, a New Zealander married to a local woman. He offers to replace the departed village school teacher and begins to read *Great Expectations* aloud. Suddenly, the village's children have a refuge from the incomprehensible conflict engulfing their world. The precocious Matilda forms a strong attachment to the novel's hero, Pip, which rankles Dolores. She considers her daughter's fixation blasphemous. But with a mixture of thrill and unease, Matilda discovers independent thought. This haunting fable explores the power and limitations of art as Matilda chronicles 21 increasingly desperate months. In time Matilda also comes to understand that literature doesn't just offer escape, it can take you home.

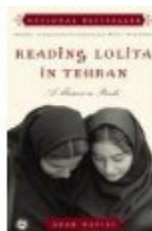


## People of the Book

By Geraldine Brooks

Adult Fiction Brooks

In 1996 Hanna Heath, a young Australian rare book conservator is called to analyze the *Sarajevo Haggadah*, a priceless 600-year-old Jewish prayer book illuminated with images that has been salvaged from a destroyed Bosnian library. The volume has survived centuries of purges and wars thanks to people of all faiths who risked their lives to safeguard it. The Pulitzer Prize-winning author has turned the intriguing but sparsely detailed history of this precious volume into an emotionally rich, thrilling fictionalization that retraces its turbulent journey. When Hanna discovers a series of artifacts in the centuries-old codex, she unwittingly exposes an international cover up. While readers experience crucial moments in the book's history through a series of fascinating, fleshed-out short stories, Hanna pursues its secrets scientifically, and finds that some interests will still risk everything in the name of protecting this treasure. A complex love story, thrilling mystery, vivid history lesson, and celebration of the enduring power of ideas.



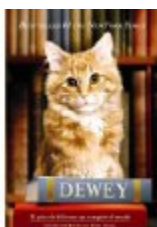
## Reading Lolita in Tehran:

### A Memoir in Books

By Azar Nafisi

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This book is an original work on the relationship between life and literature, a moving testament to the power of art and its ability to change and improve people's lives. The book transcends categorization as memoir, literary criticism or social history, though it is an inspired blend of all three. In 1995, after resigning from her job as a professor at a university in Tehran due to repressive policies, Azar Nafisi invited seven of her best female students to attend a weekly study of great Western literature in her home. Since the books they read were officially banned by the government, the women were forced to meet in secret. Threaded into the memoir are trenchant discussions of the work of Vladimir Nabokov, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jane Austen, and other authors who provided the women with examples of those who successfully asserted their autonomy despite great odds. "There, in that living room, we rediscovered that we were also living, breathing human beings;" she writes, "and no matter how repressive the state became, no matter how intimidated and frightened we were, like Lolita we tried to escape and to create our own little pockets of freedom." Nafisi's Iran, with its omnipresent slogans, morality squads and one central character struggling to stay sane, recalls literary totalitarian worlds from George Orwell's 1984 to Margaret Atwood's **The Handmaid's Tale**.



## Dewey:

### The Small Town Library Cat

By Vicki Myron

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One frigid Midwestern winter night in 1988, a ginger kitten was shoved into the after-hours book-return slot at the public library in Spencer, Iowa. In this tender story, Myron, the library director, tells of the impact the cat, named Dewey Readmore Books, had on the library and its patrons, and on Myron herself. Dewey brings disabled children out of their shells, invites businessmen to pet him with one hand while holding the *Wall Street Journal* with the other, eats rubber bands and becomes a media darling. The author's beguiling, poignant, and tender tale of survival, loyalty, and love is an unforgettable study in the mysterious and wondrous ways animals, and libraries, enrich humanity.