

'B' Is For Baby, Boat And Book Club

by Kaimi Rose Lum

I always wanted to be in a book club but I was always too—what's that tiresome word?—"busy." There were deadlines; there was housework; there was a boat. To be fair, I was not directly involved in the maintenance of the boat, but I felt the pain of it by proxy; that is, my husband, whose dinner-hour narration of an afternoon spent installing new scuppers on the deck or replacing a through-hull fitting could take on the scope and complexity of a Dickens novel.

For a few months back in 2009 or '10, when the boat was overwintering under its tarp and the children had not been born yet, two of my girlfriends and I managed to carve out a couple of hours every other Thursday to meet in Wellfleet and discuss a book of our choosing. We read "The Picture of Dorian Gray" and "Madame Bovary," fanning through the pages of our paperback copies for the underlined passages while we talked at the table in the warm kitchen of a house on Main Street. I remember that the floorboards sagged, either from age or from the weight of the books piled everywhere (the home's owner ran a bookstore out of the building next door). And I remember that we brewed pots of tea and made sure we had good food to go with our discussions—scones for Oscar Wilde, stew for Flaubert.

Then spring came, work picked up, and the fishing season started. The book club disbanded. After our first baby came along in 2012, I found it difficult to find time to read at all, much less attend a monthly book club meeting. As the family got bigger, so did the boat—from 23 feet to 26. Those dinner-hour narrations became epic accounts of engine bearings and other boat parts that rebelled and were finally conquered. A second baby was born. Now I work at a library. I am still guilty of using the "b" word, but if you are busy at the library it is going to be about books, and I was delighted to discover a month into the job that one of my responsibilities is leading the fiction side of the First Tuesday Book Club, which meets at 3 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month (unless there's a

holiday, in which case it gets bumped to the second Tuesday). The group gathers around a long wooden table in the Cape Cod Room, home to the library's literature and poetry collection, and while food is off-limits in the library, sometimes foil-wrapped chocolates are slipped to the members to take home.

The titles, we hope, are equally tempting and span a range of styles and genres. Sometime we'll read contemporary fiction, like Andrew Martin's "Early Work," last July's pick. Sometimes we'll tackle more classic pieces of literature, like Edith Wharton's "Ethan Frome,"

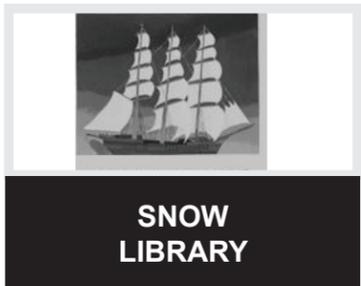
W. Somerset

Maugham's "The Moon and Sixpence" and F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Tender is the Night." We talked about the Belle Epoque in our study of Colette's short stories in January and researched Greek mythology for our discussion of Madeline Miller's "Circe" in May. This past Tuesday we dove into Virginia Woolf's "The Waves."

The monthly meetings alternate between fiction and non-fiction, with library director Tavi Prugno leading the non-fiction discussions. The next of those takes place on Dec. 3 (the title for December's meeting was announced just as this newspaper was going to press, so check at the circulation desk or visit the library's website to find out what it is). This year's non-fiction groups so far have explored everything from the extinction of the dinosaurs ("The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs" by Steve Brusatte) to the philosophy of aesthetics ("The History of Beauty" edited by Umberto Eco).

New members are always welcome. The club is not clubby at all; there are regulars who attend, as well as summer folks who skip the winter meetings and year-round working folks who can't always make it in summer because they are too...you know. Let books unite us, not busy-ness divide us. Copies of the coming month's selection are available at the front desk, and if you are interested in coming, there is a place for you at the table. Hope to see you at book club.

Kaimi Rose Lum is assistant director of Snow Library.



SNOW
LIBRARY

For Goodness Bakes!

by Caroline Imparato

With the holidays nigh upon us, the Atwood is here to help you with your baking obligations. On Nov. 26, we will be hosting the Best Bake Sale in History. This popular annual bake sale will once again feature many pies, cookies, breads, and more. Proceeds help support programs and events at the Chatham Historical Society and Atwood Museum.

We recently stocked our museum shop with copies of "New England Pie: History Under a Crust." While flipping through the pages of this interesting book, written by Robert S. Cox, we learned a lot about how important pie is to New England and how it is an absolute "must" all year round. How could we not share some of the author's thoughts?

Starting from when the Pilgrim Separatists landed on these shores 400 years ago, and continuing to today, pie is a staple on the New Englander's table. Though the tradition of pie came over from England with the early settlers, as the American Revolution came and went, New Englanders began to diverge from the traditional English pie. They were looking to become their own country and culture, and cooking was another form of cultural independence. "Rustic, plebeian and plain, the pie fit. Americans seized on their rustic reputation and made it a virtue, landing the superiority of simple fare and bumptious manners," says Cox.

We took and ran with this idea. Americans have at least one pie for every season! You'll have your rhubarb pie (or key lime and lemon meringue) in the spring, summer brings us a continuous stream of blueberry pies, fall foists apple and pumpkin pies on us, and the cold winter months encourage the eating of pecan and

mince pies with a cup of coffee.

Although we New Englanders are all accustomed to the same pies, different regions have pies that are more common to them than in other areas. In northern parts of New England, like Maine and Vermont, you will find savory pies inspired by this area's French roots. A perfect example for us to relate to would be the clam/seafood pie that Cape Codders love and isn't common in other parts of the region.

In an ever-changing world, we can proudly say that the tradition of pie in New England has remained. Each one of us has a memory of their grandmother's pie recipe or a neighbor who would always drop off their version of this comfort food. The perfect mix of filling surrounded by a "coffin" of crust. To use Aristotle's theory of logic: New Englanders love pie. I am a New Englander, therefore I love pie.

So stop by the Atwood Museum on Tuesday, Nov. 26 starting at 9 a.m. until we are sold out. We will have copies of Robert Cox's "New England Pie: History Under a Crust." It is full of old recipes, poems, photos, quotes, and more...all having to do with pie! You'll eat it up.

Caroline Imparato is administrator at the Atwood Museum.



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