

Luke AFB Library and
Information Center
7424 N Homer Dr
Luke AFB, AZ 85309
1-623-856-7191



Book Club and Discussion Group

September 2007 Vol. 4, no. 6

Book Discussion Group

Discussion Group meets on October 10, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. at the library. Read what you like and share your thoughts with others.

“You don’t have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.”

-----Ray Bradbury

The Big Read

Through a grant written by the West Valley Arts Council, Luke AFB will be participating in the National Endowment for The Arts Big Read Program. The Big Read is an effort to encourage reading across America. A study entitled the “Reading at Risk” determined that reading in America is on the decline. Surprising results showed that less than half (46.7%) of the American adult population read literature. All book reading, regardless of genre, has declined by 7% over the past decade. Literary reading is declining among all age groups. The steepest decline is 28% among 18-24 year olds. The purpose of the BIG READ is to get people to read and strengthen their communities by getting them together to discuss dilemmas, conflicts, and hopes reflected in great books selected by the National Big Read Committee.

To get the program started, the Big Read Committee selected eight classic titles. The one selected for our area is *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Check the next newsletter for additional details.

Adult Summer Reading Program

This program continues through September 15, 2007. Read and earn a chance to win a Book Lover's basket of goodies: books, food, beverage, and a gift card to Barnes and Noble. Interested? What do I do? Read on.

Earn entry forms as follows: Read three books or listen to three books between June 1 and September 15, 2007; write the book titles and authors plus a sentence or two describing each book along with your name on an entry form; put your entry in the specially labeled jar at the library circulation desk. Additional entries may be earned by reading three more books and filling out an additional entry form. This program is for individuals 18 and older.

BOOK REVIEWS

How to Read a Novel by John Sutherland

The title of this book suggests that Mr. Sutherland will give the reader pointers on reading a novel a la English Lit 101, plot, imagery, etc. Actually he gives instructions on how to select a novel to read. With 2000 new titles plus republication of classics entering the market each week, it becomes mind boggling what to buy, especially as the average price of a hard cover book is upwards of \$25. The author provides us with some key items that might help us decide.

The first thing one encounters when browsing the shelves is the dust jacket. Take a good look at the jacket. If the author's name is bigger than the title, it will sell based on the reputation of the author rather than the quality of the book. The back of the jacket usually contains critical praise. Be suspicious of this. The bad reviews will not be there. The synopsis on the inside of the jacket is usually written by the author. It tells you what the books is about and what it means. Important! A photo of the author can tell you a lot (a serious look and a cigar hanging out of the mouth shows a tough guy) or nothing at all.

On to the book itself. The copyright page is seldom read except by librarians. But the reader should check the first publication date and date of current printing—what is the book's longevity. The title of the work can tell you what it is about (Jane Eyre is about Jane Eyre), or not (Graham Green's, *The Comedians*, is about the unamusing era of Papa Doc in Haiti.)

The first really personal encounter with the novel is the first sentence. It can convey mystery, charm, truth or any number of things. Do not take it at face value. And remember that, as you read, these words have been written before, sometime, somewhere. It is unlikely than any novel can be totally original because of the sheer volume of work. Finding a genre you like is much easier these days since bookstores and libraries routinely separate out westerns, mysteries, sci-fi, biographies, etc.

Mr. Sutherland explores other areas of novel selection: Hardback or paperback; book vs. cassette vs. movie; pure fiction vs. autobiographical context (and does it really matter;) hot button issues like race, sex, religion and their socio-historical significance, reviews and critics; book awards; and best seller lists.

The author ends his book with this comment. "Novels can do many things. They can instruct, enlighten, confuse, mislead, soothe, excite, indoctrinate, misinform, education and waste time...novels can indeed be the one bright book of life. The trick is finding which, among the millions now accessible, fits the bill. For you, that is".

Carol Cop