North State Cooperative Library System’s Book Club in a Box Program

List of Titles January 2016

All Over but the Shoutin’ by Rick Bragg 16 Copies
Rick Bragg grew up in poverty, the second of three sons of an alcoholic, abusive father and a loving mother. The early chapters give a beautiful description of warm and happy moments he enjoyed with her and his family even as she struggled to provide for them after they’d been abandoned. Teens will enjoy reading about the resourceful, talented, and lucky young man’s career as he moved from local reporter to working for regional and national papers. This is a book for students with an interest in writing, journalism, or the South and of use for autobiography assignments. Patricia Noonan, Prince William Public Library, VA
Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang 13 Copies
Gene Yang's intelligent and emotionally challenging American Born Chinese is made up of three individual plotlines: the determined efforts of the Chinese folk hero Monkey King to shed his humble roots and be revered as a god; the struggles faced by Jin Wang, a lonely Asian American middle school student who would do anything to fit in with his white classmates; and the sitcom plight of Danny, an All-American teen so shamed by his Chinese cousin Chin-Kee that he is forced to change schools. Each story works well on its own, but Yang engineers a clever convergence of these parallel tales into a powerful climax that destroys the hateful stereotype of Chin-Kee, while leaving both Jin Wang and the Monkey King satisfied and happy to be who they are. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Angle of Repose by Wallace Stegner 5 Copies
This long, thoughtful novel about a retired historian who researches and writes about his pioneer grandparents garnered Stegner a Pulitzer Prize. (Compliments of Publishers Weekly)

Assembling California by John McPhee 3 copies
As an explainer, John McPhee is a national treasure. The longtime "New Yorker" staff writer has taken us inside the world of art museums, environmental groups, fruit markets, airship factories, basketball courts, and atomic-bomb labs the world over. Here he covers the complex geological history of California, the source of much news today. As Californians daily await the inevitable great earthquake that will send their cities tumbling down like so many matchsticks, McPhee piles fact on luminous fact, wrestling raw data into a beautifully written narrative that gainsays a sedimentologist's warning: "You can't cope with this in an organized way," he told McPhee, "because the rocks aren't organized." As always, McPhee enlarges our understanding of the strange, making it familiar--and endlessly interesting. (Compliments of Amazon.com)
Atonement by Ian McEwan — 16 Copies/2 Book on CD
We meet 13-year-old Briony Tallis in the summer of 1935, as she attempts to stage a production of "The Trials of Arabella" to welcome home her older, idolized brother Leon. But she soon discovers that her cousins, the glamorous Lola and the twin boys Jackson and Pierrot, aren't up to the task, and directorial ambitions are abandoned as more interesting prospects of preoccupation come onto the scene. The charlady's son, Robbie Turner, appears to be forcing Briony's sister Cecilia to strip in the fountain and sends her obscene letters; and upstairs, Briony's migraine-stricken mother Emily keeps tabs on the house from her bed. Soon, secrets emerge that change the lives of everyone present.... The interwar, upper-middle-class setting of the book's long, masterfully sustained opening section might recall Virginia Woolf or Henry Green, but as we move forward--eventually to the turn of the 21st century--the novel's central concerns emerge, and McEwan's voice becomes clear, even personal. For at heart, Atonement is about the pleasures, pains, and dangers of writing, and perhaps even more, about the challenge of controlling what readers make of your writing. McEwan shouldn't have any doubts about readers of Atonement: this is a thoughtful, provocative, and at times moving book that will have readers applauding. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Barrio Boy by Ernesto Galarza and Julian Samora — 13 Copies
Barrio Boy is the remarkable story of one boy's journey from a Mexican village to the barrio of Sacramento, California, bustling and thriving in the early decades of the twentieth century. When the turmoil precipitated by the Mexican Revolution begins to escalate, the family leaves their tiny village in search of safety and work in a nearby city. Subsequent moves introduce the boy to the growing turbulence of the Revolution and the uncertainties of city life. With vivid imagery and a rare gift for re-creating a child's sense of time and place, Galarza gives an account of the early experiences of his extraordinary life that will continue to delight readers for decades to come. (Compliments New York Review of Books)

Bee Season by Myla Goldberg — 7 Copies/1 Book on Tape
An eccentric family falls apart at the seams in an absorbing debut that finds congruencies between the elementary school spelling-bee circuit, Jewish mysticism, Eastern religious cults and compulsive behavior. Saul shifts his focus from Aaron to Eliza, devoting his afternoons to their practice sessions, while neglected Aaron joins the Hare Krishnas. Goldberg's insights into religious devotion, guilt, love, obsessive personalities and family dynamics ring true, and her use of spelling-as-metaphor makes a clever trope in a novel populated by literate scholars and voracious readers. Her quiet wit, balanced by an empathetic understanding of human foibles, animates every page. Goldberg's attentive ear makes accounts of fast-paced spelling competitions or descriptions of Miriam's struggles to resist her own compulsions riveting, and her unerring knack for telling details (as when Eliza twitches through a spelling bee in itchy tights) captures a child's perceptions with touching acuity. While coming-of-age stories all bear
a certain similarity, Goldberg strikes new ground here, and displays a fresh, distinctive and
totally winning voice. (Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly)

Bel Canto by Ann Patchett 11 Copies
Readers curious about the emotional flow between hostages and their takers should cotton to
this novel based on the 1996 Tupac Amaru takeover of the Japanese ambassadorial residence in
Lima, Peru. It traces the hostages’ adjusting attitudes during the torpor of a months-long siege.
Relief from their tedium takes the form of luscious world-class soprano Roxane Coss, who had
been entertaining an international assortment of diplomats and businesspersons when the
terrorists took the Peruvian vice president’s house. Unhurriedly, even languorously, Patchett
brings readers into the minds of the characters. (Booklist - Reviewed June 1, 2001)

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sijie 9 copies
The Cultural Revolution of Chairman Mao Zedong altered Chinese history in the 1960s and '70s,
forcibly sending hundreds of thousands of Chinese intellectuals to peasant villages for "re-
education." This moving, often wrenching short novel by a writer who was himself re-educated
in the '70s tells how two young men weather years of banishment, emphasizing the power of
literature to free the mind. Sijie’s unnamed 17-year-old protagonist and his best friend, Luo, are
bourgeois doctors' sons, and so condemned to serve four years in a remote mountain village,
carrying pails of excrement daily up a hill. Only their ingenuity helps them to survive. The two
friends are good at storytelling, and the village headman commands them to put on "oral
 cinema shows" for the villagers, reciting the plots and dialogue of movies. When another city
boy leaves the mountains, the friends steal a suitcase full of forbidden books he has been
hiding, knowing he will be afraid to call the authorities. Enchanted by the prose of a host of
European writers, they dare to tell the story of The Count of Monte Cristo to the village tailor
and to read Balzac to his shy and beautiful young daughter. Luo, who adores the Little
 Seamstress, dreams of transforming her from a simple country girl into a sophisticated lover
with his foreign tales. He succeeds beyond his expectations, but the result is not what he might
have hoped for, and leads to an unexpected, droll and poignant conclusion. The warmth and
humor of Sijie’s prose and the clarity of Rilke's translation distinguish this slim first novel, a
wonderfully human tale. (Sept. 17) Forecast: Sijie’s debut was a best-seller and prize winner in
France in 2000, and rights have been sold in 19 countries; it is also scheduled to be made into a
film. Its charm translates admirably strong sales can be expected on this side of the Atlantic.
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The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver 7 copies
Feisty Marietta Greer changes her name to "Taylor" when her car runs out of gas in Taylorville,
Ill. By the time she reaches Oklahoma, this strong-willed young Kentucky native with a quick
tongue and an open mind is catapulted into a surprising new life. Taylor leaves home in a beat-
up '55 Volkswagen bug, on her way to nowhere in particular, savoring her freedom. But when a
forlorn Cherokee woman drops a baby in Taylor's passenger seat and asks her to take it, she
does. A first novel, The Bean Trees is an overwhelming delight, as random and unexpected as real life. The unmistakable voice of its irresistible heroine is whimsical, yet deeply insightful. Taylor playfully names her little foundling "Turtle," because she clings with an unrelenting, reptilian grip; at the same time, Taylor aches at the thought of the silent, staring child's past suffering. With Turtle in tow, Taylor lands in Tucson, Ariz., with two flat tires and decides to stay. The desert climate, landscape and vegetation are completely foreign to Taylor, and in learning to love Arizona, she also comes face to face with its rattlesnakes and tarantulas. Similarly, Taylor finds that motherhood, responsibility and independence are thorny, if welcome, gifts. This funny, inspiring book is a marvelous affirmation of risk-taking, commitment and everyday miracles. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc (Compliments of Publishers Weekly)

The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession by Mark Obmascik 12 Copies
In one of the wackiest competitions around, every year hundreds of obsessed bird watchers participate in a contest known as the North American Big Year. Hoping to be the one to spot the most species during the course of the year, each birder spends 365 days racing around the continental U.S. and Canada compiling lists of birds, all for the glory of being recognized by the American Birding Association as the Big Year birding champion of North America. In this entertaining book, Obmascik, a journalist with the Denver Post, tells the stories of the three top contenders in the 1998 American Big Year: a wisecracking industrial roofing contractor from New Jersey who aims to break his previous record and win for a second time; a suave corporate chief executive from Colorado; and a 225-pound nuclear power plant software engineer from Maryland. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Black Dog of Fate by Peter Balakian 16 Copies
The author of four volumes of verse, Peter Balakian writes with the precision of a poet and the lyricism of a privileged suburban child in 1950s New Jersey. He is shadowed by his relatives' carefully guarded memories of past trauma: the brutal Turkish extermination in 1915 of more than a million Armenians, including most of his maternal grandmother's family. Balakian seamlessly interweaves personal and historical material to depict one young man's reclamation of his heritage and to scathingly indict the political forces that conspired to sweep under the rug the 20th century's first genocide. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak 13 Copies/ 1 Book on CD
Grade 9 Up—Zusak has created a work that deserves the attention of sophisticated teen and adult readers. Death himself narrates the World War II-era story of Liesel Meminger from the time she is taken, at age nine, to live in Molching, Germany, with a foster family in a working-class neighborhood of tough kids, acid-tongued mothers, and loving fathers who earn their living by the work of their hands. The child arrives having just stolen her first book—although she has not yet learned how to read—and her foster father uses it, The Gravediggers Handbook, to lull her to sleep when she’s roused by regular nightmares about her younger brothers death.
Across the ensuing years of the late 1930s and into the 1940s, Liesel collects more stolen books as well as a peculiar set of friends: the boy Rudy, the Jewish refugee Max, the mayors reclusive wife (who has a whole library from which she allows Liesel to steal), and especially her foster parents. Zusak not only creates a mesmerizing and original story but also writes with poetic syntax, causing readers to deliberate over phrases and lines, even as the action impels them forward. Death is not a sentimental storyteller, but he does attend to an array of satisfying details, giving Liesels story all the nuances of chance, folly, and fulfilled expectation that it deserves. An extraordinary narrative. —Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA

The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics by Daniel James Brown 8 copies
For readers of Unbroken, out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times—the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant.

It was an unlikely quest from the start. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington’s eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world. Drawing on the boys’ own journals and vivid memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, Brown has created an unforgettable portrait of an era, a celebration of a remarkable achievement, and a chronicle of one extraordinary young man’s personal quest. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by William Kamkwamba 19 copies
Readers will have their imaginations challenged by 14-year-old Kamkwamba's description of life in Malawi, a famine-stricken, land-locked nation in southern Africa: math is taught in school with the aid of bottle tops ("three Coca-Cola plus ten Carlsberg equal thirteen"), people are slaughtered by enemy warriors "disguised... as green grass" and a ferocious black rhino; and everyday trading is "replaced by the business of survival" after famine hits the country.

After starving for five months on his family's small farm, the corn harvest slowly brings Kamkwamba back to life. Witnessing his family's struggle, Kamkwamba's supercharged curiosity leads him to pursue the improbable dream of using "electric wind"(they have no word for windmills) to harness energy for the farm. Kamkwamba’s efforts were of course derided; salvaging a motley collection of materials, from his father's broken bike to his mother's clothes line; he was often greeted to the tune of "Ah, look, the madman has come with his garbage." This exquisite tale strips life down to its barest essentials, and once there finds reason for hopes and dreams, and is especially resonant for Americans given the economy and increasingly heated debates over health care and energy policy. (Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly)
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<th>Title and Author</th>
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<td><em>Bridges of Madison County</em> by Robert James Waller</td>
<td><strong>10 copies</strong></td>
<td>The legendary love story, the best-selling hardcover novel of all time, and the major motion picture starring Clint Eastwood and Meryl Streep. This is the story of Robert Kincaid, the photographer and free spirit searching for the covered bridges of Madison County, and Francesca Johnson, the farm wife waiting for fulfillment of a girlhood dream. It shows readers what it is to love and be loved so intensely that life is never the same again. (<a href="https://www.amazon.com">Compliments of Amazon.com</a>)</td>
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<td><em>California Uncovered</em> by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni &amp; others</td>
<td><strong>9 copies</strong></td>
<td>Hear and feel this dynamic California in the words of established writers like John Steinbeck, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Joan Didion, as well as compelling new voices that reveal California in all its complexity. California Uncovered is a central component of the California Stories Uncovered campaign—a statewide program sponsored by the California Council for the Humanities designed to inspire people to tell and listen to stories that get at the reality beneath the headlines, statistics, and stereotypes about the state and its people. (<a href="https://www.amazon.com">Compliments of Amazon.com</a>)</td>
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<td><em>The Coffee Trader</em> by David Liss</td>
<td><strong>8 copies</strong></td>
<td>Price-fixing and stock market manipulation may sound like the makings of a modern Wall Street thriller. But in the case of David Liss's second novel, the setting is the Amsterdam stock exchange in 1659, where Miguel Lienzo, a Jew recently resettled from Portugal, struggles to save his name and fortune in the face of unscrupulous commodity traders, family rivalries, tension between Jews and Christians, and infighting within the community of Portuguese Jews escaping the Inquisition. The story is fascinating for its account of seventeenth-century Dutch society and coffee's introduction to Europe. (<a href="https://www.amazon.com">Compliments of Amazon.com</a>)</td>
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<td><em>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</em> by Mark Haddon</td>
<td><strong>17 Copies/ 1 Book on CD</strong></td>
<td>Mark Haddon's bitterly funny debut novel, <em>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</em>, is a murder mystery of sorts—one told by an autistic version of Adrian Mole. Fifteen-year-old Christopher John Francis Boone is mathematically gifted and socially hopeless, raised in a working-class home by parents who can barely cope with their child's quirks. He takes everything that he sees (or is told) at face value, and is unable to sort out the strange behavior of his elders and peers. Late one night, Christopher comes across his neighbor's poodle, Wellington, impaled on a garden fork. Wellington's owner finds him cradling her dead dog in his arms, and has him arrested. After spending a night in jail, Christopher resolves—against the objection of his father and neighbors—to discover just who has murdered Wellington. (<a href="https://www.amazon.com">Compliments of Amazon.com</a>)</td>
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<td><em>Daisy Bates in the Desert</em> by Julia Blackburn</td>
<td><strong>8 copies</strong></td>
<td>Blackburn (<a href="https://www.amazon.com">The Emperor's Last Island</a>) here presents a biography of the extraordinarily determined and independent Daisy Bates who, in 1913, at age 54, removed herself from...</td>
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England to Australia's red desert outback as a self-appointed champion of the Aborigines. She remained there until her death in 1956. She not only shared the Aborigines way of life but so gained their confidence that she was made privy to the men's secret rites. The author traces Bates's steps and draws on her voluminous notebooks and letters, which reveal her as an acute observer of nature and a gifted writer whose works were imbued with dreams and hallucinations. Blackburn superbly fills in gaps with her own research and sympathetic imagination, while preserving the enchantment that Bates herself wove. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. (Compliments of Publishers Weekly)

Desert God by Wilbur Smith 9 Copies
Ex-slave. Philosopher. Chosen one. Taita has risen from nothing to become the most trusted man at the Pharaoh's side. Only he can plot a mission that will return Egypt to its former glory. Only he can muster the force that can break the back of Egypt's greatest enemy. On the banks of the Nile, a hero will rise. Across the lush plains of Egypt, Taita, a freed eunuch slave, wears his authority lightly. Not only is he the close advisor to the Pharaoh, but he is guardian to Pharaoh Tamose's two teenage sisters, the young beauties Tehuti and Bekatha. But the kingdom is not at peace. They have been fighting Southern Egypt's constant and historic enemy, the Hyksos people in the north, since time began. To finally crush them, Pharaoh must turn to his most trusted friend. Taita, philosopher, poet and expert strategist, has a plan that will see Egypt destroy the Hyksos army and form a coveted alliance with Crete in one move. This plan will take him, his expedition commander Zaras, and their mighty warriors on a perilous journey up the Nile, through Arabia to the magical city of Babylon, then across the open seas to Crete. The many dangers will cost lives and time, and they will meet battle and betrayal head on. But Taita must not forget his two charges, the spirited young princesses, whose attraction to the very warriors who lead the fight threatens Taita's meticulous plan and the future of Egypt itself. (Compliments of Wilbure Smith Books)

Digging to America by Anne Tyler 6 copies
"The appearance of a new novel by Anne Tyler is like the arrival of an old friend . . . With her 17th novel, Tyler has delivered something startlingly fresh while retaining everything we love about her work . . . Her success at portraying culture clash and the complex longings and resentments of those new to America confirms what we knew, or should have known, all along: There’s nothing small about Tyler’s world, nothing precious about her attention to the hopes and fears of ordinary people.”—Ron Charles, Washington Post Book World“Ms. Tyler deserves her reputation as a master of the fine threads of human relationships. The barely registered slights, fleeting intuitions and shivers of pity that pass between these characters are a pleasure to behold.”—Tara Gallagher, The Wall Street Journal“Anne Tyler has written 17 novels and you only wish for more. Her newest, Digging to America, is wonderfully wry, yet intimately involving. There’s a definite sense of loss when it’s over and done.”—Sheryl Connelly, New York Daily News "Tyler encompasses the collision of cultures without losing her sharp focus on the daily dramas of modern family life in her 17th novel . . . [A] touching, humorous story.”—Publishers Weekly“Tyler creates many blissful moments of high emotion and keen humor while
broaching hard truths about cultural differences, communication breakdowns, and family configurations. This deeply human tale of valiantly improvised lives is one of Tyler’s best.”—Donna Seaman, Booklist (starred review) “The veteran novelist extends her range without losing her essence in this tale of two families drawn together by their adopted daughters despite the friction created by their very different personalities and ethnicities . . . The ensuing culture clash enriches Tyler’s narrative without diminishing her skills as an engaging storyteller and delicate analyst of personality . . . Readers will hope that these flawed, lovable people will find happiness, but they won’t be sure until the final page, so deftly has the author balanced the forces that keep us apart against those that bring us together. Vintage Tyler, with enough fresh, new touches to earn her the next generation of fans.”—Kirkus Reviews “The author’s 17th novel exemplifies her skill at depicting seemingly quiet and unremarkable lives with sympathy and humor . . . A touching, well-crafted tale of friendship, families, and what it means to be an American.” (Library Journal)

**The Distance Between us by Reyna Grande**

Reyna Grande vividly brings to life her tumultuous early years in this “compelling . . . unvarnished, resonant” (BookPage) story of a childhood spent torn between two parents and two countries. As her parents make the dangerous trek across the Mexican border to “El Otro Lado” (The Other Side) in pursuit of the American dream, Reyna and her siblings are forced into the already overburdened household of their stern grandmother. When their mother at last returns, Reyna prepares for her own journey to “El Otro Lado” to live with the man who has haunted her imagination for years, her long-absent father. Funny, heartbreaking, and lyrical, The Distance Between Us poignantly captures the confusion and contradictions of childhood, reminding us that the joys and sorrows we experience are imprinted on the heart forever, calling out to us of those places we first called home. (Compliments of Simon and Schuster)

**The Dive from Clausen’s Pier by Ann Packer**

Packer’s engrossing debut novel begins without ostentation. On Memorial Day, Carrie Bell and her fiancé, Mike Mayer, drive out to Clausen’s Pier for their annual ritual, a picnic with their friends, a trip they make the way a middle-aged couple might, in grudging silence. Before their resentments can be aired, Mike dives into too shallow water, suffering injuries that change their lives. If Mike survives, he will survive as a quadriplegic, and Carrie faces unexpected responsibilities. Ultimately, Carrie does what is both understandable and unthinkable. She leaves her hometown of Madison, Wis., and shows up on the doorstep of a friend in New York City. There she discovers a different world, different friends and a different self. The hovering question--what will Carrie do? Abandon Mike or return to him?--generates genuine suspense. Packer portrays her characters--both New Yorkers and Madisonites--deftly, and her scenes unfold with uncommon clarity. But if Packer has a keen eye, she has an even keener ear. The dialogue is usually witty; more important, it is always surprising, as if the characters were actually thinking--one of the reasons they become as familiar to the reader as childhood friends. This is the sort of book one reads dying to know what happens to the characters, but loves for its wisdom: it sees the world with more clarity than you do. (Compliments of
Don’t Let’s Go to the Dogs Tonight by Alexandra Fuller  11 Copies
A classic is born in this tender, intensely moving and even delightful journey through a white African girl's childhood. Born in England and now living in Wyoming, Fuller was conceived and bred on African soil during the Rhodesian civil war (1971-1979), a world where children over five "learn[ed] how to load an FN rifle magazine, strip and clean all the guns in the house, and ultimately, shoot-to-kill." With a unique and subtle sensitivity to racial issues, Fuller describes her parents' racism and the wartime relationships between blacks and whites through a child's watchful eyes. Fuller's remarkable affection for her parents (who are racists) and her homeland (brutal under white and black rule) shines through. This affection, in spite of its subjects' prominent flaws, reveals their humanity and allows the reader direct entry into her world. Fuller's book has the promise of being widely read and remaining of interest for years to come. (Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly)

Dreaming in Cuban by Cristina Garcia  12 Copies
Poignant and perceptive... it tells of a family divided politically and geographically by the Cuban revolution...and of the generational fissures that open on each side. In Cuba, between a grandmother who is a fervent Castro supporter and a daughter who retreats into an Afro-Cuban Santeria cult; in America, between another daughter, militantly anti-Castro, and her own rebellious punk-artist daughter, who mocks her obsession...The realism is exquisite. (Richard Eder – Los Angeles Times)

East of Eden by John Steinbeck  12 Copies
This sprawling and often brutal novel, set in the rich farmlands of California's Salinas Valley, follows the intertwined destinies of two families--the Trasks and the Hamiltons--whose generations helplessly reenact the fall of Adam and Eve and the poisonous rivalry of Cain and Abel. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Eat, Pray, Love: one woman’s search for everything across Italy, India, and Indonesia by Elizabeth Gilbert  14 Copies/ 1 Large Print/ 1 Book on CD
At the age of thirty-one, Gilbert moved with her husband to the suburbs of New York and began trying to get pregnant, only to realize that she wanted neither a child nor a husband. Three years later, after a protracted divorce, she embarked on a yearlong trip of recovery, with three main stops: Rome, for pleasure (mostly gustatory, with a special emphasis on gelato); an ashram outside of Mumbai, for spiritual searching; and Bali, for "balancing." These destinations are all on the beaten track, but Gilbert's exuberance and her self-deprecating humor enliven the proceedings: recalling the first time she attempted to speak directly to God, she says, "It was all I could do to stop myself from saying, 'I've always been a big fan of your work.'" (New Yorker)
**Empire Falls by Richard Russo  30 Copies**
In his biggest, boldest novel yet, the much-acclaimed author of Nobody's Fool and Straight Man subjects a full cross-section of a crumbling Maine mill town to piercing, compassionate scrutiny, capturing misfits, malefactors and misguided honest citizens alike in the steady beam of his prose. Wealthy, controlling matriarch Francine Whiting lives in an incongruous Spanish-style mansion across the river from smalltown Empire Falls, dominated by a long-vacant textile mill and shirt factory, once the center of her husband's family's thriving manufacturing dominion. Even the minor members of Russo's large cast are fully fleshed, and forays into the past lend the narrative an extra depth and resonance. (*Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly*)

**English Creek by Ivan Doig  13 Copies**
The summer of his 14th year brings challenges and changes to Jick McCaskill and his family, in this book which echoes with "the pioneering and human spirit," observed PW. Jick's older brother decides not to attend college, becoming a cowboy instead; a fire in Two Medicine National Forest threatens to destroy the community; and, "by summer's end, Jick has learned the secret his father and an old campjack have kept from the rest of the community," (*Compliments of Amazon.com*)

**English Passengers by Matthew Kneale  7 copies**
The brutal hand of British imperialism provides the foundation for this broad historical swashbuckler about the English colonization of Tasmania in the early and mid-19th century. U.K. author Kneale debuts stateside with this lengthy novel of hapless smugglers, desperate convicts, simpering bureaucrats, mad vicars and displaced aborigines. The English passengers are the Reverend Wilson, a vicar determined to prove that Tasmania was the site of the original Garden of Eden, and Doctor Potter, a ruthless scientist equally determined to prove Wilson wrong and gain fame in the victory. They're on their way to Tasmania aboard the good ship Sincerity, commanded by Captain Illiam Quillian Kewley, a high-seas smuggler and rascal of renown. This is an unpleasant voyage for everyone, especially Kewley, for he has been forced to charter his ship in order to escape punishment for dodging customs duties on his illicit cargoes. Storms, pirates and foul tempers, however, are just the prelude to the hardships that await everyone when they land in Tasmania. British self-righteousness in forcing civilization and Christianity on the aborigines causes wholesale slaughter and subjugation of the islanders, and the natives are more than just restless. Wilson and Potter's overland expedition is guided by Peevay, a wily aborigine not about to knuckle under to the white man. Of course, the expedition is a bloody disaster. Murder, madness, betrayal, mutiny and shipwreck spice up the action and provide intricate plot twists with surprising and satisfying resolutions, particularly for Captain Kewley. This rich tale is told by 20 different voices skipping back and forth across the years, but somehow Kneale manages to keep the reader from becoming confused. Kneale's careful research and colorful storytelling result in an impressive epic. BOMC featured selection. (Mar.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc (*Publishers Weekly*)
**Epitaph for a Peach by David Mas Masumoto**  
13 Copies  
Tells the passionate story of one farmer's attempt to rescue one of the last truly sweet and juicy fruits from becoming obsolete in a world that increasingly values commerciality over quality. The story of Mas Masumoto's Sun Crest peaches begins on the day he turns the bulldozers away from his orchards and vows to give himself four seasons to find a home for the fruits of his labor. At once a deeply personal story, a sharp commentary about the state of American agriculture, a lighthearted rhapsody of nature, and an intimate glimpse into the Asian American experience, Epitaph for a Peach is about saving a peach, saving a farm, saving a family, saving a way of life—it is a story about finding "home." *(Compliments of Amazon.com)*

**Ether Day by J.M. Fenster**  
7 copies  
The fates of the men involved in the first use of anesthesia in surgery in Boston, on October 16, 1846 and its aftermath read like a tragedy by Aeschylus or Racine. Fenster, a columnist for American Heritage and a contributor to the New York Times, ably renders the three main characters, who typify that common 19th-century American combination of brilliance, ambition and mental instability. Charles Jackson, related by marriage to Ralph Waldo Emerson, was more renowned for his geological studies than his medical practice. Horace Wells had been the first to use nitrous oxide in dentistry. William Morton, who designed the delivery device for the ether and administered it, had enjoyed a long career as a con man. After their "unwilling collaboration," they argued about who actually made the discovery and should reap the financial rewards. Jackson, who claimed that Samuel Morse stole the idea for the telegraph from him, was supported by Emerson in his Atlantic Monthly. He spent his final years in a mental institution. Wells was championed by the Connecticut legislature. Later, addicted to chloroform, he committed suicide in jail. Morton failed in his efforts to patent a mixture of ether and oil of orange. After some years unsuccessfully lobbying Congress to reward him, he collapsed in Central Park in 1868 and died en route to a hospital. Fenster jumps between the figures' backstories somewhat confusingly, and her occasionally laughable rhetorical devices would give a high school yearbook editor pause. Nonetheless, this extensive book will attract fans of the history of medicine and 19th-century Americana. Photos and illus. *(Aug. 5)* Forecast: A 25-city national radio campaign coupled with author appearances in New York City, Boston and Philadelphia will give this book the exposure necessary to sell its 25,000 initial printing. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc *(Publishers Weekly)*

**Ethics for the New Millennium- by His Holiness the Dali Lama**  
20 Copies  
"This is not a religious book," asserts the Dalai Lama about a volume that's his most outspoken to date on moral and social issues. "My aim has been to appeal for an approach to ethics based on universal rather than religious principles." The Dalai Lama adopts this approach because, he notes, the majority of humanity ignores religion, the traditional vehicle for ethics, yet observation shows him that happiness, which he discerns as the prime human goal, depends upon "positive ethical conduct." The entire book, written in simple, direct prose, reflects this sort of step-by-step reasoning, taking on color and drama with numerous anecdotes drawn from the Tibetan leader's personal experience. Methodically, the Dalai Lama explores the
foundation of ethics, how ethics affects the individual and the role of ethics in society. The Dalai Lama refers, for instance, to his unwillingness to sell his watch collection for money to feed the poor as an example of ethical limitation. With its disarmingly frank, kindly manner and authoritative air, the book is what one would expect from a Nobel Peace Prize winner, and could appeal as widely as the Dalai Lama's current bestseller, The Art of Happiness. 

From Publishers Weekly

Everything is Illuminated by Jonathan Safran Foer 5 copies
What would it sound like if a foreigner wrote a novel in broken English? Foer answers this question to marvelous effect in his inspired though uneven first novel. Much of the book is narrated by Ukrainian student Alex Perchov, whose hilarious and, in their own way, pitch-perfect malapropisms flourish under the influence of a thesaurus. Alex works for his family's travel agency, which caters to Jews who want to explore their ancestral shtetls. Jonathan Safran Foer, the novel's other hero, is such a Jew an American college student looking for the Ukrainian woman who hid his grandfather from the Nazis. He, Alex, Alex's depressive grandfather and his grandfather's "seeing-eye bitch" set out to find the elusive woman. Alex's descriptions of this "very rigid search" and his accompanying letters to Jonathan are interspersed with Jonathan's own mythical history of his grandfather's shtetl. Jonathan's great-great-great-great-grandmother Brod is the central figure in this history, which focuses mostly on the 18th and 19th centuries. Though there are some moments of demented genius here, on the whole the historical sections are less assured. There's a whiff of kitsch in Foer's jolly cast of pompous rabbis, cuckolded usurers and sharp-tongued widows, and the tone wavers between cozy ethnic humor, heady pontification and sentimental magic-realist whimsy. Nonetheless, Foer deftly handles the intricate story-within-a-story plot, and the layers of suspense build as the shtetl hurtles toward the devastation of the 20th century while Alex and Jonathan and Grandfather close in on the object of their search. An impressive, original debut. (Apr. 16)Forecast: Eagerly awaited since an excerpt was featured in the New Yorker's 2001 "Debut Fiction" issue, Everything Is Illuminated comes reasonably close to living up to the hype. Rights have so far been sold in 12 countries, the novel is a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club and a main selection of Traditions Book Club, and Foer will embark on an author tour expect lively sales. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. (Publishers Weekly)

“F” is for Fugitive by Sue Grafton 35 Copies
Everyone knew the kind of girl Jean Timberlake was -- ask anybody in the sleepy surf town of Floral Beach and they'd say Jean was wild, looking for trouble. But she certainly wasn't looking for murder. She was found dead on the beach seventeen years ago, and a rowdy ex-boyfriend named Bailey Fowler was convicted of her murder and imprisoned -- and then Bailey escaped. Now private eye Kinsey Millhone steps into a case that should have never been closed, in a town where there's no such thing as a private investigation. (Compliments of Amazon.com)
Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser

Schlosser’s incisive history of the development of American fast food indictsthe industry for some shocking crimes against humanity, including systematically destroying the American diet and landscape, and undermining our values and our economy. The first part of the book details the postwar ascendancy of fast food from Southern California, assessing the impact on people in the West in general. The second half looks at the product itself: where it is manufactured (in a handful of enormous factories), what goes into it (chemicals, feces) and who is responsible (monopolistic corporate executives). In harrowing detail, the book explains the process of beef slaughter and confirms almost every urban myth about what in fact "lurks between those sesame seed buns." Given the estimate that the typical American eats three hamburgers and four orders of french fries each week, and one in eight will work for McDonald's in the course of their lives, few are exempt from the insidious impact of fast food. Throughout, Schlosser fires these and a dozen other hair-raising statistical bullets into the heart of the matter. While cataloguing assorted evils with the tenacity and sharp eye of the best investigative journalist, he uncovers a cynical, dismissive attitude to food safety in the fast food industry and widespread circumvention of the government's efforts at regulation enacted after Upton Sinclair's similarly scathing novel exposed the meat-packing industry 100 years ago. By systematically dismantling the industry's various aspects, Schlosser establishes a seminal argument for true wrongs at the core of modern America. (Jan.) Forecast: This book will find a healthy, young audience; it's notable that the Rolling Stone article on which this book was based generated more reader mail than any other piece the magazine ran in the 1990s.

Field Notes from a Catastrophe: man, nature, and climate change by Elizabeth Kolbert

20 Copies

On the burgeoning shelf of cautionary but occasionally alarmist books warning about the consequences of dramatic climate change, Kolbert's calmly persuasive reporting stands out for its sobering clarity. Expanding on a three-part series for the New Yorker, Kolert (The Prophet of Love) lets facts rather than polemics tell the story: in essence, it's that Earth is now nearly as warm as it has been at any time in the last 420,000 years and is on the precipice of an unprecedented "climate regime, one with which modern humans have had no prior experience." An inexorable increase in the world's average temperature means that butterflies, which typically restrict themselves to well-defined climate zones, are now flitting where they've never been found before; that nearly every major glacier in the world is melting rapidly; and that the prescient Dutch are already preparing to let rising oceans reclaim some of their land. In her most pointed chapter, Kolert chides the U.S. for refusing to sign on to the Kyoto Accord. In her most upbeat chapter, Kolert singles out Burlington, Vt., for its impressive energy-saving campaign, which ought to be a model for the rest of the nation—just as this unbiased overview is a model for writing about an urgent environmental crisis. From Publishers Weekly

Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver

The extraordinary New York Times bestselling author of The Lacuna (winner of the Orange...
Prize), The Poisonwood Bible (nominated for the Pulitzer Prize), and Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, Barbara Kingsolver returns with a truly stunning and unforgettable work. Flight Behavior is a brilliant and suspenseful novel set in present day Appalachia; a breathtaking parable of catastrophe and denial that explores how the complexities we inevitably encounter in life lead us to believe in our particular chosen truths. Kingsolver's riveting story concerns a young wife and mother on a failing farm in rural Tennessee who experiences something she cannot explain, and how her discovery energizes various competing factions—religious leaders, climate scientists, environmentalists, politicians—trapping her in the center of the conflict and ultimately opening up her world. Flight Behavior is arguably Kingsolver's must thrilling and accessible novel to date, and like so many other of her acclaimed works, represents contemporary American fiction at its finest. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

French Lessons: Adventures with Knife, Fork and Corkscrew by Peter Mayle
12 Copies/ 1 Book on CD
In this books Mayle travels throughout France. French Lessons is a celebration of many of France’s gastronomic joys. Mayle takes his readers in hand and shows all, wide-eyed yet knowing, ever affable but with a touch of mischief, he’s an ideal companion, the best possible narrator of his lively food adventures. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

From the Notebooks of Dr. Brain by Minister Faust
12 copies
Faust's latest is a self-help book for superheroes struggling with a post-Gotterdammerung lack of supervillains to fight, based on psychiatrist Eva Brain-Silverman's case studies of six fractious members of the Fantastic Order of Justice, aka the F*O*O*J. As "Dr. Brain" takes her six patients through some fascinating therapeutic processes, secrets and hidden tensions come to light. In the midst of it all, Hawk King, an ancient Egyptian deity and the most respected superhero, dies. Immediate grave repercussions include accusations of murder and conspiracy by self-proclaimed world's greatest detective and former LAB (League of Angry Blackmen) member X-Man, and the resignation from F*O*O*J of Omnipotent Man, a 71-year-old refugee from the planet Argon. As the F*O*O*J descends into a maelstrom of recrimination, internal power struggles, and personal secrets brought to unforgiving light, the role of the superhero becomes less antisupervillain and more—for lack of a better word—preemptive. Faust's follow-up to The Coyote Kings of the Space-Age Bachelor Pad (2004) is an excellent superhero comedy as well as an unsettling satire. Regina SchroederCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Galileo's Daughter by Dava Sobel
14 Copies/ 1 Book on Tape
Everyone knows that Galileo Galilei dropped cannonballs off the leaning tower of Pisa, developed the first reliable telescope, and was convicted by the Inquisition for holding a heretical belief—that the earth revolved around the sun. But did you know he had a daughter? In Galileo's Daughter, Dava Sobel tells the story of the famous scientist and his illegitimate
daughter, Sister Maria Celeste. Sobel bases her book on 124 surviving letters to the scientist from the nun. As Sobel notes, "It is difficult today ... to see the Earth at the center of the Universe. Yet that is where Galileo found it." With her fluid prose and graceful turn of phrase, Sobel breathes life into Galileo, his daughter, and the earth-centered world in which they lived. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

**The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy**  
**14 Copies**  
With sensuous prose, a dreamlike style infused with breathtakingly beautiful images and keen insight into human nature, Roy's debut novel charts fresh territory in the genre of magical, prismatic literature. Set in Kerala, India, during the late 1960s when Communism rattled the age-old caste system, the story begins with the funeral of young Sophie Mol, the cousin of the novel's protagonists, Rahel and her fraternal twin brother, Estha. In a circuitous and suspenseful narrative, Roy reveals the family tensions that led to the twins' behavior on the fateful night that Sophie drowned. Beneath the drama of a family tragedy lies a background of local politics, social taboos and the tide of history?all of which come together in a slip of fate, after which a family is irreparably shattered. Roy captures the children's candid observations but clouded understanding of adults' complex emotional lives. Roy's clarity of vision is remarkable, her voice original. (Compliments of Publisher's Weekly)

**Girl with the Dragon Tattoo by Stieg Larsson**  
**13 Copies/1 Large Print/ 1 Book on CD**  
Cases rarely come much colder than the decades-old disappearance of teen heiress Harriet Vanger from her family's remote island retreat north of Stockholm, nor do fiction debuts hotter than this European bestseller by muckraking Swedish journalist Larsson. At once a strikingly original thriller and a vivisection of Sweden's dirty not-so-little secrets (as suggested by its original title, Men Who Hate Women), this first of a trilogy introduces a provocatively odd couple: disgraced financial journalist Mikael Blomkvist, freshly sentenced to jail for libeling a shady businessman, and the multipierced and tattooed Lisbeth Salander, a feral but vulnerable superhacker. Hired by octogenarian industrialist Henrik Vanger, who wants to find out what happened to his beloved great-niece before he dies, the duo gradually uncover a festering morass of familial corruption—at the same time, Larsson skillfully bares some of the similar horrors that have left Salander such a marked woman. Larsson died in 2004, shortly after handing in the manuscripts for what will be his legacy. Copyright © Reed Business Information

**Glass Castle by Jeannett Walls**  
**16 Copies/1 Book on CD**  
Starred Review. Freelance writer Walls doesn't pull her punches. She opens her memoir by describing looking out the window of her taxi, wondering if she's "overdressed for the evening" and spotting her mother on the sidewalk, "rooting through a Dumpster." Walls's parents—just two of the unforgettable characters in this excellent, unusual book—were a matched pair of eccentrics, and raising four children didn't conventionalize either of them. Her father was a self-taught man, a would-be inventor who could stay longer at a poker table than at most jobs and had "a little bit of a drinking situation," as her mother put it. With a fantastic storytelling knack,
Walls describes her artist mom's great gift for rationalizing. Apartment walls so thin they heard all their neighbors? What a bonus—they'd "pick up a little Spanish without even studying." Why feed their pets? They'd be helping them "by not allowing them to become dependent." While Walls's father's version of Christmas presents—walking each child into the Arizona desert at night and letting each one claim a star—was delightful, he wasn't so dear when he stole the kids' hard-earned savings to go on a bender. The Walls children learned to support themselves, eating out of trashcans at school or painting their skin so the holes in their pants didn't show. Buck-toothed Jeannette even tried making her own braces when she heard what orthodontia cost. One by one, each child escaped to New York City. Still, it wasn't long before their parents appeared on their doorsteps. "Why not?" Mom said. "Being homeless is an adventure."

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The Golden Compass by Phillip Pullman 13 Copies/1 Book on CD
In The Golden Compass, readers meet for the first time 11-year-old Lyra Belacqua, a precocious orphan growing up within the precincts of Jordan College in Oxford, England. It quickly becomes clear that Lyra's Oxford is not precisely like our own - nor is her world. In Lyra's world, everyone has a personal daemon, a lifelong animal familiar. This is a world in which science, theology and magic are closely intertwined. These ideas are of little concern to Lyra who, at the outset of the story, spends most of her time with her friend Roger, a kitchen boy. Together, they share a carefree existence scampering across the roofs of the college, racing through the streets of Oxford, or waging war with the other children in town. But that life changes forever when Lyra and her daemon, Pantalaimon, prevent an assassination attempt on her uncle, the powerful Lord Asriel, and then overhear a secret discussion about a mysterious entity known as Dust. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck 17 Copies/2 Spanish/5 Plays
Set during the Great Depression, it traces the migration of an Oklahoma Dust Bowl family to California and their subsequent hardships as migrant farm workers. It won a Pulitzer Prize in 1940. The work did much to publicize the injustices of migrant labor. The narrative, interrupted by prose-poem interludes, chronicles the struggles of the Joad family's life on a failing Oklahoma farm, their difficult journey to California, and their disillusionment once they arrive there and fall prey to a parasitic economic system. The insularity of the Joads--Ma's obsession with family togetherness, son Tom's self-centeredness, and daughter Rose of Sharon's materialism--ultimately gives way to a sense of universal community. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Growing Seasons by Annie Spiegelman 16 Copies
In journal entries written to her young son, Jack, Spiegelman characterizes the balancing act that is daily life for a thoughtful, caring, contemporary woman. Although her toddler won't be able to read the book for years to come, readers will find the refreshingly zany writing to be compelling as Spiegelman muses on becoming a master gardener, and rides the turbulent yet
joyful waves of first-time motherhood. Spiegelman presents a covey of kooky sisters getting together to deal with their mother’s illness, not to mention the commotion a marriage undergoes after a child arrives. Booklist

Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Society by Mary Ann Shaffer 10 Copies “Traditional without seeming stale, and romantic without being naïve” (San Francisco Chronicle), this epistolary novel, based on Mary Ann Shaffer’s painstaking, lifelong research, is a 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. Guernsey “affirms the power of books to nourish people during hard times” (Washington Post). (Compliments of Bookmarks Magazine).

Guns, Germs & Steel by Jared M Diamond 4 copies Most of this work deals with non-Europeans, but Diamond's thesis sheds light on why Western civilization became hegemonic: "History followed different courses for different peoples because of differences among peoples' environments, not because of biological differences among peoples themselves." Those who domesticated plants and animals early got a head start on developing writing, government, technology, weapons of war, and immunity to deadly germs. (LJ 2/15/97) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. (Library Journal)

Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood 13 Copies/1 Book on Tape In a startling departure from her previous novels (Lady Oracle, Surfacing), respected Canadian poet and novelist Atwood presents here a fable of the near future. In the Republic of Gilead, formerly the United States, far-right Schlafly/Falwell-type ideals have been carried to extremes in the mono-theocratic government. The resulting society is a feminist’s nightmare: women are strictly controlled, unable to have jobs or money and assigned to various classes: the chaste, childless Wives; the housekeeping Marthas; and the reproductive Handmaids, who turn their offspring over to the "morally fit" Wives. The tale is told by Offred (read: "of Fred"), a Handmaid who recalls the past and tells how the chilling society came to be. (Compliment’s of Library Journal).

The Happiness Project by Gretchen Rubin 11 copies Gretchen Rubin had an epiphany one rainy afternoon in the unlikeliest of places: a city bus. "The days are long, but the years are short," she realized. "Time is passing, and I'm not focusing enough on the things that really matter." In that moment, she decided to dedicate a year to her happiness project.

In this lively and compelling account, Rubin chronicles her adventures during the twelve months
she spent test-driving the wisdom of the ages, current scientific research, and lessons from popular culture about how to be happier. Among other things, she found that novelty and challenge are powerful sources of happiness; that money can help buy happiness, when spent wisely; that outer order contributes to inner calm; and that the very smallest of changes can make the biggest difference.

**The Help by Katheryn Stockett**

13 Copies/1 Book on CD

Starred Review. What perfect timing for this optimistic, uplifting debut novel (and maiden publication of Amy Einhorn's new imprint) set during the nascent civil rights movement in Jackson, Miss., where black women were trusted to raise white children but not to polish the household silver. Eugenia Skeeter Phelan is just home from college in 1962, and, anxious to become a writer, is advised to hone her chops by writing about what disturbs you. The budding social activist begins to collect the stories of the black women on whom the country club sets relies and mistrusts enlisting the help of Aibileen, a maid who's raised 17 children, and Aibileen's best friend Minny, who's found herself unemployed more than a few times after mouthing off to her white employers. The book Skeeter puts together based on their stories is scathing and shocking, bringing pride and hope to the black community, while giving Skeeter the courage to break down her personal boundaries and pursue her dreams. Assured and layered, full of heart and history, this one has bestseller written all over it. Copyright © Reed Business Information

**Hole in My Life by Jack Gantos**

26 Copies/1 Book on Tape

Gantos uses the same bold honesty found in his fiction to offer a riveting autobiographical account of his teen years and the events may well penetrate the comfort zone of even the most complacent young adults. The memoir begins with the dramatic image of the author as a young convict ("When I look at my face in the photo I see nothing but the pocked mask I was hiding behind"). The book then goes on to provide an in-depth examination of the sensitive and intelligent boy residing behind a tough facade. Inspired by the words and lives of some of his favorite American authors, Gantos sought adventure after leaving high school. He eagerly agreed to help smuggle a shipment of hashish from Florida to New York without giving thought of the possible consequences. Knowing that the narrator is destined to land in jail keeps suspense at a high pitch, but this book's remarkable achievement is the multiple points of view that emerge, as experiences force a fledgling writer to continually revise his perspective of himself and the world around him. The book requires a commitment, as it rambles a bit at times, but it provides much food for thought and fuel for debate. It will leave readers emotionally exhausted and a little wiser. (Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly).

**Home Front by Kristin Hannah**

10 copies

In her bestselling novels Kristin Hannah has plumbed the depths of friendship, the loyalty of sisters, and the secrets mothers keep. Now, in her most emotionally powerful story yet, she
explores the intimate landscape of a troubled marriage with this provocative and timely portrait of a husband and wife, in love and at war.

All marriages have a breaking point. All families have wounds. All wars have a cost.

Like many couples, Michael and Jolene Zarkades have to face the pressures of everyday life—children, careers, bills, chores—even as their twelve-year marriage is falling apart. Then an unexpected deployment sends Jolene deep into harm’s way and leaves defense attorney Michael at home, unaccustomed to being a single parent to their two girls. As a mother, it agonizes Jolene to leave her family, but as a soldier she has always understood the true meaning of duty. In her letters home, she paints a rose-colored version of her life on the front lines, shielding her family from the truth. But war will change Jolene in ways that none of them could have foreseen. When tragedy strikes, Michael must face his darkest fear and fight a battle of his own—for everything that matters to his family.

At once a profoundly honest look at modern marriage and a dramatic exploration of the toll war takes on an ordinary American family, Home Front is a story of love, loss, heroism, honor, and ultimately, hope. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

The Hours by Michael Cunningham 5 copies
At first blush, the structural and thematic conceits of this novel—three interwoven novellas in varying degrees connected to Virginia Woolf—seem like the stuff of a graduate student’s pipe dream: a great idea in the dorm room that betrays a lack of originality. But as soon as one dips into Cunningham’s prologue, in which Woolf’s suicide is rendered with a precise yet harrowing matter-of-factness (“She hurries from the house, wearing a coat too heavy for the weather. It is 1941. She has left a note for Leonard, and another for Vanessa.”), the reader becomes completely entranced. This book more than fulfills the promise of Cunningham’s 1990 debut, A Home at the End of the World, while showing that sweep does not necessarily require the sprawl of his second book, Flesh and Blood. In alternating chapters, the three stories unfold: “Mrs. Woolf,” about Virginia’s own struggle to find an opening for Mrs. Dalloway in 1923; “Mrs. Brown,” about one Laura Brown’s efforts to escape, somehow, an airless marriage in California in 1949 while, coincidentally, reading Mrs. Dalloway; and “Mrs. Dalloway,” which is set in 1990s Greenwich Village and concerns Clarissa Vaughan’s preparations for a party for her gay—and dying—friend, Richard, who has nicknamed her Mrs. Dalloway. Cunningham’s insightful use of the historical record concerning Woolf in her household outside London in the 1920s is matched by his audacious imagining of her inner life and his equally impressive plunges into the lives of Laura and Clarissa. The book would have been altogether absorbing had it been linked only thematically. However, Cunningham cleverly manages to pull the stories even more intimately together in the closing pages. Along the way, rich and beautifully nuanced scenes follow one upon the other: Virginia, tired and weak, irked by the early arrival of headstrong sister Vanessa, her three children and the dead bird they bury in the backyard; Laura’s afternoon escape to an L.A. hotel to read for a few hours; Clarissa’s anguish witnessing of her friend’s suicidal jump down an airshaft, rendered with unforgettable detail. The overall effect of
this book is twofold. First, it makes a reader hunger to know all about Woolf, again; readers may be spooked at times, as Woolf’s spirit emerges in unexpected ways, but hers is an abiding presence, more about living than dying. Second, and this is the gargantuan accomplishment of this small book, it makes a reader believe in the possibility and depth of a communality based on great literature, literature that has shown people how to live and what to ask of life. (Nov.)

FYI: The Hours was a working title that Woolf for a time gave to Mrs. Dalloway. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. (Publishers Weekly)

A House for Mr. Biswas by V.S. Naipaul 15 Copies
The early masterpiece of V. S. Naipaul’s brilliant career, A House for Mr. Biswas is an unforgettable story inspired by Naipaul’s father that has been hailed as one of the twentieth century’s finest novels. In his forty-six short years, Mr. Mohun Biswas has been fighting against destiny to achieve some semblance of independence, only to face a lifetime of calamity. Shuttled from one residence to another after the drowning death of his father, for which he is inadvertently responsible, Mr. Biswas yearns for a place he can call home. But when he marries into the domineering Tulsi family on whom he indignantly becomes dependent, Mr. Biswas embarks on an arduous—and endless—struggle to weaken their hold over him and purchase a house of his own. A heartrending, dark comedy of manners, A House for Mr. Biswas masterfully evokes a man’s quest for autonomy against an emblematic post-colonial canvas. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Housekeeping by Marilynne Robinson 20 Copies
Housekeeping is the story of Ruth and her younger sister, Lucille, who grow up haphazardly, first under the care of their competent grandmother, then of two comically bumbling great-aunts, and finally Sylvie, their eccentric and remote aubt. Their lives spun off the tilting world like thread off a spindle," says Ruthie, the novel's narrator. The interwoven themes of loss and love, longing and loneliness—"the wanting never subsided"—require a cool, almost impersonal touch. Originally published in 1980 and filmed in 1987. Winner of the Pen/Hemingway Award.

I Dreamed I Married Perry Mason by Susan Kandel 8 copies
“This lively and slightly idiosyncratic heroine, the sometimes exotic California surrounds, and the complicated plotting make this series debut essential.” (Library Journal)

If He Hollers Let Him Go by Chester Himes 12 copies
If He Hollers Let Him Go is a masterpiece for its bitter and honest portrayal of the life of a normal black man in America, and it speaks to any person who has felt, at some time or other, that he or she has had enough abuse on account of the color of their skin. Himes demonstrated in the person of Bob Jones that one of the most critical rights that black people have been denied is the right to just live their lives unbothered and unmolested and to follow their impulses and desires with no greater reward or punishment than nature's laws of cause and effect.
The Immortal Evening: A Legendary Dinner with Keats, Wordsworth and Lamb by Stanley Plumly

A window onto the lives of the Romantic poets through the re-creation of one legendary night in 1817. The author of the highly acclaimed Posthumous Keats, praised as “full of . . . those fleeting moments we call genius” (Washington Post), now provides a window into the lives of Keats and his contemporaries in this brilliant new work. On December 28, 1817, the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon hosted what he referred to in his diaries and autobiography as the “immortal dinner.” He wanted to introduce his young friend John Keats to the great William Wordsworth and to celebrate with his friends his most important historical painting thus far, “Christ’s Entry into Jerusalem,” in which Keats, Wordsworth, and Charles Lamb (also a guest at the party) appeared. After thoughtful and entertaining discussions of poetry and art and their relation to Enlightenment science, the party evolved into a lively, raucous evening. This legendary event would prove to be a highlight in the lives of these immortals. A beautiful and profound work of extraordinary brilliance, The Immortal Evening regards the dinner as a lens through which to understand the lives and work of these legendary artists and to contemplate the immortality of genius. (Compliments of WW Norton)

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

Best Books of the Month, February 2010: From a single, abbreviated life grew a seemingly immortal line of cells that made some of the most crucial innovations in modern science possible. And from that same life, and those cells, Rebecca Skloot has fashioned in The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks a fascinating and moving story of medicine and family, of how life is sustained in laboratories and in memory. Henrietta Lacks was a mother of five in Baltimore, a poor African American migrant from the tobacco farms of Virginia, who died from a cruelly aggressive cancer at the age of 30 in 1951. A sample of her cancerous tissue, taken without her knowledge or consent, as was the custom then, turned out to provide one of the holy grails of mid-century biology: human cells that could survive--even thrive--in the lab. Known as HeLa cells, their stunning potency gave scientists a building block for countless breakthroughs, beginning with the cure for polio. Meanwhile, Henrietta’s family continued to live in poverty and frequently poor health, and their discovery decades later of her unknowing contribution--and her cells' strange survival--left them full of pride, anger, and suspicion. For a decade, Skloot doggedly but compassionately gathered the threads of these stories, slowly gaining the trust of the family while helping them learn the truth about Henrietta, and with their aid she tells a rich and haunting story that asks the questions, Who owns our bodies? And who carries our memories? --Tom Nissley

The Insider’s Journey by Irving Kraus

Sociologist Irving Krauss and Political Scientist Wilma Rule show that academics are not cloistered in their ivory tower. In their life-long journey as students and professors at major
universities and regional institutions they give a firsthand account of their universities’ inner workings and their struggle for justice in cases of gender discrimination, sexual harassment and wrongful dismissal. Their odyssey begins as sweethearts at U.C. Berkeley and goes on to their ten years in Hawaii, sixteen in Illinois and retirement in a small mountain community in California’s Sierra Nevada Mountains. Of greatly different origin—living from New York’s South Bronx and Wilma from Basin, Wyoming—they had similar values and interests that made them sensitive to injustice. During their 53 years of married life they also had major roles in Congressional and community politics. As children of the Great Depression of the 1930’s Irving tells of occurrences in his working class neighborhood that did not get into the history books and Wilma relates events in her family that darken the lore of early ranching. They had a zest for living and describe unusual experiences in East Berlin and Egypt in their worldwide travel, mostly to professional conferences. They are indebted to their families’ emphasis on education and stress how important the availability of excellent and affordable schooling was for their successful pursuit of the American Dream. (Compliments of Author House)

The Interestings by Meg Woltzer

The summer that Nixon resigns, six teenagers at a summer camp for the arts become inseparable. Decades later the bond remains powerful, but so much else has changed. In The Interestings, Wolitzer follows these characters from the height of youth through middle age, as their talents, fortunes, and degrees of satisfaction diverge.

The kind of creativity that is rewarded at age fifteen is not always enough to propel someone through life at age thirty; not everyone can sustain, in adulthood, what seemed so special in adolescence. Jules Jacobson, an aspiring comic actress, eventually resigns herself to a more practical occupation and lifestyle. Her friend Jonah, a gifted musician, stops playing the guitar and becomes an engineer. But Ethan and Ash, Jules’s now-married best friends, become shockingly successful—true to their initial artistic dreams, with the wealth and access that allow those dreams to keep expanding. The friendships endure and even prosper, but also underscore the differences in their fates, in what their talents have become and the shapes their lives have taken.

Wide in scope, ambitious, and populated by complex characters who come together and apart in a changing New York City, The Interestings explores the meaning of talent; the nature of envy; the roles of class, art, money, and power; and how all of it can shift and tilt precipitously over the course of a friendship and a life. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

In the Lake of the Woods by Tim O’Brien

In 1994 O’Brien wrote In the Lake of the Woods, a novel that, while imbued with the troubled spirit of Vietnam, takes place entirely after the war and in the United States. The main character, John Wade, is a man in crisis: after spending years building a successful political career, he finds his future derailed during a bid for the U.S. Senate by revelations about his past as a soldier in Vietnam. The election lost by a landslide, John and his wife, Kathy, retreat to a small cabin on the
shores of a Minnesota lake--from which Kathy mysteriously disappears.

Was she murdered? Did she run away? Instead of answering these questions, O'Brien raises even more as he slowly reveals past lives and long-hidden secrets If Kathy's disappearance is at the heart of this work, then John's involvement in a My Lai-type massacre in Vietnam is its core, and O'Brien uses it to demonstrate how wars don't necessarily end when governments say they do. In the Lake of the Woods may not be true, but it feels true--and for Tim O'Brien, that's true enough—Alex Wilber

**In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez**  
9 Copies  
During the last days of the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic, three young women, were ambushed and assassinated as they drove back from visiting their jailed husbands. Thus martyred, the Mirabal sisters have become mythical figures in their country, where they are known as las mariposas (the butterflies), from their underground code names. Herself a native of the Dominican Republic, Alvarez (How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents ) has fictionalized their story in a narrative that starts slowly but builds to a gripping intensity. Each of the girls--Patria, Minerva and Maria Terese (Mate) Mirabal--speaks in her own voice, beginning in their girlhood in the 1940s; their surviving sister, Dede, frames the narrative with her own tale of suffering and dedication to their memory. Alvarez captures the terrorized atmosphere of a police state, in which people live under the sword of terrible fear and atrocities cannot be acknowledged. As the sisters' energetic fervor turns to anguish, Alvarez conveys their courage and their desperation, and the full import of their tragedy. (*Compliments of Amazon.com*)

**Into the Forest by Jean Hegland**  
14 Copies  
Hegland's powerfully imagined first novel will make readers thankful for telephones and CD players while it underscores the vulnerability of lives dependent on technology. The tale is set in the near future: electricity has failed, mail delivery has stopped and looting and violence have destroyed civil order. In Northern California, 32 miles from the closest town, two orphaned teenage sisters ration a dwindling supply of tea bags and infested cornmeal. They remember their mother's warnings about the nearby forest, but as the crisis deepens, bears and wild pigs start to seem less dangerous than humans. From the first page, the sense of crisis and the lucid, honest voice of the 17-year-old narrator pull the reader in, and the fight for survival adds an urgent edge to her coming-of-age story. Flashbacks smartly create a portrait of the lost family: an iconoclastic father, artistic mother and two independent daughters. (*Compliments of Publisher's Weekly*)

**The Jane Austen Book Club by Karen Joy Fowler**  
11 Copies  
Fowler's fifth novel (after PEN/Faulkner award finalist Sister Noon) features her trademark sly wit, quirky characters and digressive storytelling, but with a difference: this one is book clubâ€”ready, complete with mock-serious "questions for discussion" posed by the characters themselves. The plot here is deceptively slim: five women and one enigmatic man meet on a
monthly basis to discuss the novels of Jane Austen, one at a time. As they debate Marianne's marriage to Brandon and whether or not Charlotte Lucas is gay, they reveal nothing so much as their own "private Austen(s)"; to Jocelyn, an unmarried "control freak," the author is the consummate matchmaker; to solitary Prudie, she's the supreme ironist; to the lesbian Allegra, she's the disingenuous defender of the social caste system, etc. *From Publishers Weekly*

**The Jew Store by Stella Suberman**  
6 copies

In 1920, two years before the author was born, her family became the first Jews to live in the small town of Concordia, Tenn. Against the objections of his wife, Aaron Bronson, a Russian Jewish immigrant who had worked in dry goods stores in Savannah, Ga., and Nashville, started his own business by opening Bronson's Low-Priced Store in Concordia, which the locals called "the Jew store." In this richly detailed memoir, in which her father's optimism contrasts sharply with her mother's anxiety about their ability to provide their children with a Jewish education in their new surroundings, Suberman evokes early-20th-century life in the rural South and depicts her family's struggles to find a place in a town where African Americans suffered discrimination and poverty, the Ku Klux Klan was on the march and townspeople viewed Jews with suspicion. Suberman provides vivid characterizations of Concordia's residents, especially Brookie Simmons, who not only gave the Bronsons a home but fought to end child labor in the town's factory. In 1933, Aaron finally yielded to his wife's entreaties and moved with her and their three children back to New York City, even though they had come to regard Concordia as home.  
*Author tour. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc (Publishers Weekly)*

**The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan**  
21 Copies/1 Large Print/1 Sparknotes

The book opens with the story of a Chinese woman who bought a swan because she believed it was born a duck then stretched its neck to become more. The woman wished to do the same. When she arrived in America, however, they took her swan away and she was left with nothing but a feather, and a few broken dreams. Amy Tan's "The Joy Luck Club" is the story of four women and their daughters. In a series of flashbacks we see how each woman came to America, fleeing their Chinese past of oppression and fear to build a better life for their children. Their stories are of war and ancestral pride, marriage and never losing hope. Theirs is the story of the women of China and how they rose above their place in the world, teaching their daughters to do likewise. *(Compliments of Amazon.com)*

**Kiti on Ice by Phyl Manning**  
5 copies

Kiti is nineteen when her mother dies, giving birth to a son, and leaves Kiti responsible for the infant's safety. By placing the baby outdoors to die, the shaman father consigns his only daughter to rescuing her brother and transporting him to the frozen high islands of their mother's people. Life for no one in the family can ever be the same. The terrified young woman churns with resentment over duty thrust upon her, and sets out upon a black and lonely winter
We travel. Here, she finds fierce animals . . . predatory people . . . friendship . . . and perhaps love as she learns to accept triumph and defeat with equal dignity and growing confidence. In this quest adventure painted on a palette authentic in culture and environment, we enter the world of traditional Inupiat and the little-known High Arctic filled with danger, darkness, stark beauty—and harsh demands which permit no second chance. *(Compliments of Amazon.com)*

**Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini.**

In his debut novel, The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini accomplishes what very few contemporary novelists are able to do. He manages to provide an educational and eye-opening account of a country's political turmoil—in this case, Afghanistan—while also developing characters whose heartbreaking struggles and emotional triumphs resonate with readers long after the last page has been turned over. Two motherless boys, Amir and Hassan, grow up together in Kabul, Afghanistan. A crime of violence changes their friendship. Later, as an adult, the cowardly Amir tries to learn the fate of Hassan’s son. *(Compliments of Amazon.com)*

**Krakatoa by Simon Winchester**

An erudite, fascinating account by one of the foremost purveyors of contemporary nonfiction, this book chronicles the underlying causes, utter devastation and lasting effects of the cataclysmic 1883 eruption of the volcano island Krakatoa in what is now Indonesia. Winchester *(The Professor and the Madman; The Map That Changed the World)* once again demonstrates a keen knack for balancing rich and often rigorous historical detail with dramatic tension and storytelling. Rather than start with brimstone images of the fateful event itself, Winchester takes a broader approach, beginning with his own viewing of the now peaceful remains of the mountain for a second time in a span of 25 years—and being awed by how much it had grown in that time. This nod to the earth's ceaseless rejuvenation informs the entire project, and Winchester uses the first half of the text to carefully explain the discovery and methods of such geological theories as continental drift and plate tectonics. In this way, the vivid descriptions of Krakatoa’s destruction that follow will resonate more completely with readers, who will come to appreciate the awesome powers that were churning beneath the surface before it gave way. And while Winchester graphically illustrates, through eyewitness reports and extant data, the human tragedy and captivating scientific aftershocks of the explosion, he is also clearly intrigued with how it was "a demonstration of the utterly confident way that the world, however badly it has been wounded, picks itself up, continues to unfold its magic and its marvels, and sets itself back on its endless trail of evolutionary progress yet again." His investigations have produced a work that is relevant to scholars and intriguing to others, who will relish it footnotes and all. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. *(Publishers Weekly)*

**A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest J. Gaines**

Oprah Book Club® Selection, September 1997: In a small Cajun community in 1940s Louisiana, a young black man is about to go to the electric chair for murder. A white shopkeeper had died
during a robbery gone bad; though the young man on trial had not been armed and had not pulled the trigger, in that time and place, there could be no doubt of the verdict or the penalty.

"I was not there, yet I was there. No, I did not go to the trial, I did not hear the verdict, because I knew all the time what it would be..." So begins Grant Wiggins, the narrator of Ernest J. Gaines's powerful exploration of race, injustice, and resistance, A Lesson Before Dying. If young Jefferson, the accused, is confined by the law to an iron-barred cell, Grant Wiggins is no less a prisoner of social convention. University educated, Grant has returned to the tiny plantation town of his youth, where the only job available to him is teaching in the small plantation church school. More than 75 years after the close of the Civil War, antebellum attitudes still prevail: African Americans go to the kitchen door when visiting whites and the two races are rigidly separated by custom and by law. Grant, trapped in a career he doesn't enjoy, eaten up by resentment at his station in life, and angered by the injustice he sees all around him, dreams of taking his girlfriend Vivian and leaving Louisiana forever. But when Jefferson is convicted and sentenced to die, his grandmother, Miss Emma, begs Grant for one last favor: to teach her grandson to die like a man.

As Grant struggles to impart a sense of pride to Jefferson before he must face his death, he learns an important lesson as well: heroism is not always expressed through action—sometimes the simple act of resisting the inevitable is enough. Populated by strong, unforgettable characters, Ernest J. Gaines's A Lesson Before Dying offers a lesson for a lifetime.

The Lexus and the Olive Tree- by Thomas L. Friedman 18 Copies
Friedman, the well-traveled New York Times foreign-affairs columnist, peppers The Lexus and the Olive Tree with stories that illustrate his central theme: that globalization—the Lexus—is the central organizing principle of the post-cold war world, even though many individuals and nations resist by holding onto what has traditionally mattered to them—the olive tree. Problem is, few of us understand what exactly globalization means. As Friedman sees it, the concept, at first glance, is all about American hegemony, about Disneyfication of all corners of the earth. But the reality, thank goodness, is far more complex than that, involving international relations, global markets, and the rise of the power of individuals (Bill Gates, Osama Bin Laden) relative to the power of nations. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Life of Pi by Yann Martel 26 Copies/2 Book on CD
The peripatetic Pi Patel spends a beguiling boyhood in Pondicherry, India, as the son of a zookeeper. Growing up beside the wild beasts, Pi gathers an encyclopedic knowledge of the animal world. His curious mind also makes the leap from his native Hinduism to Christianity and Islam, all three of which he practices with joyous abandon. In his 16th year, Pi sets sail with his family and some of their menagerie to start a new life in Canada. Halfway to Midway Island, the ship sinks into the Pacific, leaving Pi stranded on a life raft with a hyena, an orangutan, an injured zebra and a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. After the beast dispatches the others, Pi is left to survive for 227 days with his large feline companion on the 26-foot-long raft, using all his knowledge, wits and faith to keep himself alive. (Compliments of Amazon.com)
Living to Tell the Tale by Gabriel Garcia Marquez 18 Copies
Clearly, Garcia Marquez was born to write, and what a volatile and compelling world he was given to write about. Invaluable in its personal and cultural history, and triumphant in its compassion and artistry, Garcia Marquez’s portrait of himself as a young writer is as revelatory and powerful as his fiction. Time is porous in Márquez's Colombia, flowing back and forth among the mythic moments of his personal history to accommodate his fascination for place. Similarly, Márquez toys with the boundaries of truth and fiction throughout his book. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

The Looming Tower by Lawrence Wright 14 Copies/1 Book on CD
The Looming Tower may be the most riveting, informative, and "heart-stopping account" yet of the men who shaped 9/11 (New York Times Book Review). The focus on individuals gives the book its emotional punch, but it is also a narrative bold in conception and historical sweep. Lawrence Wright conducted more than 500 interviews, from bin Laden's best friend in college to Richard A. Clarke, Saudi royalty, Afghan mujahideen, and reporters for Al Jazeera. The result, while evenhanded in its analysis of the complex motives, ideals, and power plays that led to 9/11, leaves few nefarious details uncovered. An abrupt ending did little to sway critics that Looming Tower is nothing less than "indispensable" reading (Compliments of Bookmarks Magazine)

Lost City Radio – Daniel Alarcon 41 copies
Set in a fictional South American nation where guerrillas have long clashed with the government, Alarcón's ambitious first novel (after the story collection War by Candlelight) follows a trio of characters upended by civil strife. Norma, whose husband, Rey, disappeared 10 years ago after the end of a civil war, hosts popular radio show Lost City Radio, which reconnects callers with their missing loved ones. (She quietly entertains the notion that the job will also reunite her with her missing husband.) So when an 11-year-old orphan, Victor, shows up at the radio station with a list of his distant village's "lost people," the station plans a special show dedicated to his case and cranks up its promotional machine. Norma, meanwhile, notices a name on the list that's an alias her husband used to use, prompting her to resume her quest to find him. She and Victor travel to Victor's home village, where local teacher Manau reveals to Norma what she's long feared—and more. Though the mystery Alarcón makes of the identity of Victor's father isn't particularly mysterious, this misstep is overshadowed by Alarcón's successful and nimbly handled portrayal of war's lingering consequences. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. (Publishers Weekly)

Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel Garcia Marquez 13 Copies/1 Large Print
While delivering a message to her father, Florentino Ariza spots the barely pubescent Fermina Daza and immediately falls in love. What follows is the story of a passion that extends over 50 years, as Fermina is courted solely by letter, decisively rejects her suitor when he first speaks, and then joins the urbane Dr. Juvenal Urbino, much above her station, in a marriage initially
loveless but ultimately remarkable in its strength. Florentino remains faithful in his fashion; paralleling the tale of the marriage is that of his numerous liaisons, all ultimately without the depth of love he again declares at Urbino's death. In substance and style not as fantastical, as mythologizing, as the previous works, this is a compelling exploration of the myths we make of love. Highly recommended. Barbara Hoffert, LibraryJournal

Lydia Cassatt Reading the Morning Paper- by Harriet Scott Chessman
9 Copies/1 Book on CD
Elegantly conceived and tenderly written, this cameo of a novel ushers readers into a small, warmly lit corner of art history. Inspired by five Mary Cassatt paintings of Cassatt's older sister, Lydia, Chessman paints her own intimate portrait of the admirable Lydia, Chessman's prose can be obvious and overcareful "I think May's sadness, when she heard my diagnosis, was increased by her memory of earlier sorrows" but her instinctive understanding of the sisters' relationship and her thoughtful description of their studio collaborations elevate this understated effort. The five paintings, beautifully reproduced, appear at intervals and acquire new depth even as they enrich Chessman's story. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

The Mango Season by Amulya Malladi
All the commonplaces of culture clash are on display in this second novel by Malladi (A Breath of Fresh Air), about an Indian woman who hides her engagement to an American man from her traditional Brahmin family. "I had escaped arranged marriage," begins Priya Rao, "by coming to the United States to do a master's in Computer Sciences at Texas A&M, by conveniently finding a job in Silicon Valley, and then by inventing several excuses to not go to India." At 27, having run out of excuses, she returns to her home city of Hyderabad and runs headlong into a dizzying array of parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Tormenting Priya is a secret: Nick, her American fiance. She is afraid to tell anyone about him, fearing she will be disowned, and even agrees to meet an Indian man her parents would like her to marry. Malladi succeeds in giving a vivid sensory impression of the south of India, its foods and climate and customs, but Priya's family falls neatly into stock types: the overbearing mother who wants Priya to marry within her caste; the hip younger brother who represents the next, Westernized generation of Indians; the catty aunt who constantly criticizes her niece. Awkward prose ("lethargy swirling around her like an irritating mosquito") is a distraction, and melodrama takes the place of nuanced plotting-a final twist is particularly egregious. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc (Publishers Weekly)

March by Geraldine Brooks
15 Copies/1 Book on CD
In Brooks's well-researched interpretation of Louisa May Alcott's Little Women, Mr. March also remains a shadowy figure for the girls who wait patiently for his letters. They keep a stiff upper lip, answering his stiff, evasive, flowery letters with cheering accounts of the plays they perform and the charity they provide, hiding their own civilian privations. Readers, however, are treated to the real March, based loosely upon the character of Alcott's own father. His high-minded
ideals are continually thwarted not only by the culture of the times, but by his own incompetence as well. When it appears that he has committed a sexual indiscretion with a nurse, a former slave and an old acquaintance, March is sent to a plantation where the recently freed slaves earn wages but continue to experience cruelty and indignities. Here his faith in himself and in his religious and political convictions are tested. Sick and discouraged, he returns to his little women, who have grown strong in his absence. March, on the other hand, has experienced the horrors of war, serious illness, guilt, regret, and utter disillusionment. -Jackie Gropman, Chantilly Regional Library, VA

Marrying Mom – Olivia Goldsmith 6 copies
You can't expect authors to come up with a hit every time. You also wouldn't expect utter nonsense after such a well-researched, full-bodied novel as The Bestseller. It seems that HarperCollins pushed Goldsmith to complete her next novel so that its release would coincide with the release of the movie First Wives Club, adapted from her 1992 novel. Marrying Mom features saucy Phyllis, a retired New Yorker living in Miami, bored out of her wits now that her husband Ira has passed on—not that he was any barrel of laughs, as Phyllis continually points out. When she announces that she's moving back to New York to be with her three children, she purposely does not tell them because she knows how little she is missed. She wants to make up for the lack of attention she gave them when they were young. Poor mothering skills should not be blamed for creating these three whiny brats, though. Sig is lonely and living extravagantly on dwindling resources, Bruce is a gay man with bad business sense who cannot forgive his mother for anything, and Sharon is fat and miserable with two bratty kids and a lazy husband. There is really no one to like here, except perhaps the old guys the kids continually try to fix up with their mother (Booklist)

The Mermaid Chair by Sue Monk Kidd 8 copies
Every aspect of this audiobook, from the enchanting music that marks the story's dramatic moments to the narrator's intimate delivery, draws listeners into Kidd's mystical world. Set on Egret Island, a fictional barrier island off the coast of South Carolina, the novel focuses on 42-year-old Jessie, a Southern housewife who embarks on a journey of self-discovery after learning that her mother, who's still distraught over her husband's death 33 years earlier, has cut off her own finger. Foss speaks with grace and tenderness, deftly capturing the myriad characters who enter Jessie's life, including her love interest, an introspective attorney turned monk who's about to take his finals vows. Perhaps the book's most important character, however, is the land itself, and Foss wisely gives as much weight to Kidd's detailed depictions of the island's lush flora and fauna as to the characters themselves, never rushing through the descriptions and always reading these passages with an appropriate note of reverence. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. (Publishers Weekly)
A dazzling triumph from the bestselling author of The Virgin Suicides, Middlesex is the astonishing tale of a gene that passes down through three generations of a Greek American family and flowers in the body of Calliope Stephanides. Middlesex is a story about what it means to occupy the complex and unnamed middle ground between male and female, Greek and American, past and present. For Cal, caught between these identities, the journey to adulthood is particularly fraught. Jeffrey Eugenides' epic portrayal of Cal's struggle is classical in its structure and scope and contemporary in its content; a tender and honest examination of a battle that is increasingly relevant to us all. (http://www.readinggroupguides.com)

The Milagro Beanfield War— by John Nichols 10 Copies
Joe Mondragon, a feisty hustler with a talent for trouble, slammed his battered pickup to a stop, tugged on his gumboots, and marched into the arid patch of ground. Carefully (and also illegally), he tapped into the main irrigation channel. And so began — though few knew it at the time — the Milagro beanfield war. Gradually, the small farmers and sheeplemen begin to rally to Joe’s beanfield as the symbol of their lost rights and their lost lands. And downtown in the capital, the Anglo water barons and power brokers huddle in urgent conference, intent on destroying that symbol before it destroys their multimillion-dollar land-development schemes. The tale of Milagro’s rising is a vivid portrayal of a town that, half-stumbling and partly prodded, gropes its way toward its own stubborn salvation. (www.henryholt.com/readingguides/milagro)

Motoring with Mohammed by Eric Hansen 9 copies
In 1978 Eric Hansen found himself shipwrecked on a desert island in the Red Sea. When goat smugglers offered him safe passage to Yemen, he buried seven years' worth of travel journals deep in the sand and took his place alongside the animals on a leaky boat bound for a country that he'd never planned to visit.

As he tells of the turbulent seas that stranded him on the island and of his efforts to retrieve his buried journals when he returned to Yemen ten years later, Hansen thrills us with a portrait - - uncannily sympathetic and wildly offbeat -- of this forgotten corner of the Middle East. With a host of extraordinary characters from his guide, Mohammed, ever on the lookout for one more sheep to squeeze into the back seat of his car, to madcap expatriates and Eritrean gun runners-and with landscapes that include cities of dreamlike architectural splendor, endless sand dunes, and terrifying mountain passes, Hansen reveals the indelible allure of a land steeped in custom, conflicts old and new, and uncommon beauty. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder 20 Copies
In medical school, Paul Farmer found his life’s calling: to cure infectious diseases and to bring the lifesaving tools of modern medicine to those who need them the most. Tracy Kidder’s magnificent account shows how one person can make a difference in solving global health
problems through a clear-eyed understanding of the interaction of politics, wealth, social
systems, and disease. From book cover

**Moviegoer by Walker Percy** 10 Copies/1 Book on CD
This elegantly written account of a young man's search for signs of purpose in the universe is
one of the great existential texts of the postwar era and is really funny besides. Binx Bolling,
inveterate cinemaphile, contemplative rake and man of the periphery, tries hedonism and tries
doing the right thing, but ultimately finds redemption (or at least the prospect of it) by taking a
leap of faith and quite literally embracing what only seems irrational. (Compliments of
Amazon.com)

**My California: journeys by great writers edited by Donna Wares 19 Copies**
Fly-fish the pristine waters of the Owens River. Step up to the microphone in a California honky-
tonk. Surf the biggest waves California has ever seen. Mingle with ducks in an urban oasis.
Roller skate through L.A.'s Union Station. See California through the eyes of 27 of the state's
finest writers in this delicious travel and adventure anthology. All of the contributors to MY
CALIFORNIA donated their work so proceeds of this book can benefit the beleaguered California
Arts Council. Join contributors Pico Iyer, Michael Chabon, Thomas Steinbeck, Dana Gioia, Matt
Warshaw, Patt Morrison, T. Jefferson Parker, Edward Humes, Mark Arax, Deanne Stillman,
Rubén Martínez, Percival Everett, Kathi Kamen Goldmark, Mary Mackey, Gerald Haslam, Aimee
Liu, D.J. Waldie, Héctor Tobar, Firoozeh Dumas, devorah major, Carolyn See, Chryss Yost, Anh
Do, Derek M. Powazek, Daniel Weintraub, David Kipen, and Veronique de Turenne in a good
read for a good deed!! From Publishers Weekly

**My Family and Other Animals by Gerald Durrell** 3 copies
As a self-described "champion of small uglies," English writer Gerald Durrell (1925-1995)
devoted his life to writing and the preservation of wildlife, from the Mauritius pink pigeon to
the Rodrigues fruit bat. My Family and Other Animals was intended to embrace the natural
history of the Greek island of Corfu, but ended up as a delightful account of his family's
experiences that were, according to him, "rather like living in one of the more flamboyant and
slapstick comic operas."

As a 10-year-old boy, Gerry left England for Corfu with "all those items that I thought necessary
to relieve the tedium of a long journey: four books on natural history, a butterfly net, a dog, and
a jam-jar full of caterpillars all in imminent danger of turning into chrysalids." Durrell's
descriptions of his family and its many eccentric hangers-on (he stresses that "all the anecdotes
about the island and the islanders are absolutely true") are highly entertaining, as is the
procession of toads, scorpions, geckos, ladybugs, glowworms, octopuses, the puppies Widdle
and Puke, and the Magenpies. (Compliments of Amazon)
**My Year of Meats by Ruth L. Ozeki**  
15 Copies  
As a writer, Ozeki draws upon her knowledge in documentary filmmaking cleverly to bring the worlds of two women together by utilizing the U.S. meat industry as a central link. Alternating between the voices of Jane (in the United States) and Akiko Ueno, the wife of Jane's boss (in Japan), Ozeki draws parallels in the lives of these two women through beef, love, television, and their desire to have children. Ozeki skillfully tackles hard-pressing issues such as the use and effects of hormones in the beef industry and topics such as cultural differences, gender roles, and sexual exploitation. Her work is unique in presentation yet moving and entertaining. *(Compliments of Library Journal)*

**Mystic River- by Dennis Lehane**  
13 Copies/1 Book on CD  
Mystic River is a story about three friends who confront their past and their choices. When Dave, Sean, and Jimmy were eleven, two men posing as policemen lured Dave into a car. Although he escaped, the terrifying incident causes the three friends to grow apart. Finally, their paths cross again twenty-five years later when Sean Devine, a homicide detective, is assigned to investigate the death of Jimmy Marcus’s daughter. Dave Boyle is a suspect. *(Courtesy Massachusetts Center for the Book)*

**The Namesake - by Jhumpa Lahiri**  
11 Copies  
Ashima and Ashoke Ganguli are recent immigrants to Boston from India in 1968 when they give birth to their first child, a son. Their son ends up with the pet name of Gogol, when his "good name" never arrives from India. Gogol despises his name and grows up as American as he can while his parents cling to their Bengali past while living what appears to be a typical American suburban lifestyle. *(Compliments of Amazon.com)*

**The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency by Alexander McCall Smith**  
7 copies  
The African-born author of more than 50 books, from children's stories (The Perfect Hamburger) to scholarly works (Forensic Aspects of Sleep), turns his talents to detection in this artful, pleasing novel about Mma (aka Precious) Ramotswe, Botswana's one and only lady private detective. A series of vignettes linked to the establishment and growth of Mma Ramotswe's "No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency" serve not only to entertain but to explore conditions in Botswana in a way that is both penetrating and light thanks to Smith's deft touch.  
Mma Ramotswe’s cases come slowly and hesitantly at first: women who suspect their husbands are cheating on them; a father worried that his daughter is sneaking off to see a boy; a missing child who may have been killed by witchdoctors to make medicine; a doctor who sometimes seems highly competent and sometimes seems to know almost nothing about medicine. The desultory pace is fine, since she has only a detective manual, the frequently cited example of Agatha Christie and her instincts to guide her. Mma Ramotswe’s love of Africa, her wisdom and humor, shine through these pages as she shines her own light on the problems that vex her clients. Images of this large woman driving her tiny white van or sharing a cup of bush tea with a friend or client while working a case linger pleasantly. General audiences will welcome this
little gem of a book just as much if not more than mystery readers. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc (Publishers Weekly)

**Nova Swing by M. John Harrison**  14 copies
In this dense quasi-noir tale set in the universe of Light (2004), Harrison introduces Vic Serotonin, a ne'er-do-well who makes his living running illegal tours of the Saudade event site, where hallucinatory and impossible experiences are the norm. When rich tourist Elizabeth Kielar hires him as a guide and then disappears in the area around the site, things get even stranger than usual. Police detective Lens Aschemann, who usually turns a blind eye to the tourism business, threatens dire consequences for Vic's sideline of event site artifact smuggling, while shady club owner Paulie DeRaad buys an artifact that begins to change him in bizarre ways. Harrison privileges atmosphere over plot, using grotesquely beautiful narration and elliptical dialogue to convey the beautifully delineated angst of Saudade's extraordinary inhabitants. Although not for everyone, Harrison's trippy style will appeal to sophisticated readers who treasure the work of China Miéville and Jeff VanderMeer. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. (Publishers Weekly)

**The Ocean at the End of the Lane by Neil Gaiman**  7 Copies
A Globe & Mail 100 Selection  A major new work from "a writer to make readers rejoice" (Minneapolis Star Tribune)—a moving story of memory, magic, and survival  Sussex, England. A middle-aged man returns to his childhood home to attend a funeral. Although the house he lived in is long gone, he is drawn to the farm at the end of the road, where, when he was seven, he encountered a most remarkable girl, Lettie Hempstock, and her mother and grandmother. He hasn't thought of Lettie in decades, and yet as he sits by the pond (a pond that she'd claimed was an ocean) behind the ramshackle old farmhouse, the unremembered past comes flooding back. And it is a past too strange, too frightening, too dangerous to have happened to anyone, let alone a small boy. Forty years earlier, a man committed suicide in a stolen car at this farm at the end of the road. Like a fuse on a firework, his death lit a touchpaper and resonated in unimaginable ways. The darkness was unleashed, something scary and thoroughly incomprehensible to a little boy. And Lettie—magical, comforting, wise beyond her years—promised to protect him, no matter what. A groundbreaking work from a master, The Ocean at the End of the Lane is told with a rare understanding of all that makes us human, and shows the power of stories to reveal and shelter us from the darkness inside and out. It is a stirring, terrifying, and elegiac fable as delicate as a butterfly's wing and as menacing as a knife in the dark. (Compliments of Harper Collins)

**Omnivore’s Dilemma by Michael Pollan**  15 Copies/1 Book on CD
Pollan examines what he calls "our national eating disorder" in this remarkably clearheaded book. It’s a fascinating journey up and down the food chain, one that might change the way you read the label on a frozen dinner, dig into a steak or decide whether to buy organic eggs. Pollan prepares a dinner with items from Whole Foods, investigating the flaws in the world of "big
organic"; cooks a meal with ingredients from a small, utopian Virginia farm; and assembles a feast from things he's foraged and hunted. This may sound earnest, but Pollan isn't preachy. I'm not convinced I'd want to go hunting with Pollan, but I'm sure I'd enjoy having dinner with him. Just as long as we could eat at a table, not in a Toyota. (Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly)

One-Hundred Demons by Lynda Barry 15 Copies

Barry has a pitch-perfect sense of the way kids talk and think. Childhood's cruelties and pleasures, remembered in luminous, unsparing detail, have become the central topic of her work. The semi-autobiographical vignettes of this new work, originally serialized in Salon, follow the same basic format as the strip: blocks of enthusiastic first-person commentary at the top of each panel, squiggly, childlike-but-stylized-drawings and dizzy word-balloon dialogue between the characters. Here, though, Barry gets a chance to stretch out, drawing out her memories and impressions into long, lively, sometimes sweet and sometimes painful narrative sequences on a seemingly endless list of curiously compelling topics. The result is simultaneously poignant and hilarious—never one at the expense of the other—and so are her loopy, sure-lined drawings, which make both the kids and the adults look as awkward and scrunched-up as they feel.

(Compliments of Amazon.com)

Orphan Train by Christina Baker Kline 8 copies

Christina Baker Kline’s Orphan Train is an unforgettable story of friendship and second chances that highlights a little-known but historically significant movement in America’s past—and it includes a special PS section for book clubs featuring insights, interviews, and more.

Penobscot Indian Molly Ayer is close to “aging out” out of the foster care system. A community service position helping an elderly woman clean out her home is the only thing keeping Molly out of juvie and worse...

As she helps Vivian sort through her possessions and memories, Molly learns that she and Vivian aren’t as different as they seem to be. A young Irish immigrant orphaned in New York City, Vivian was put on a train to the Midwest with hundreds of other children whose destinies would be determined by luck and chance.

Molly discovers that she has the power to help Vivian find answers to mysteries that have haunted her for her entire life—answers that will ultimately free them both.

Rich in detail and epic in scope, Orphan Train is a powerful novel of upheaval and resilience, of unexpected friendship, and of the secrets we carry that keep us from finding out who we are.

(Compliments of Amazon.com)
Palace Walk by Nagui Mahfouz  |  6 copies
This first volume in the 1988 Nobel Prize winner's Cairo Trilogy describes the disintegrating family life of a tyrannical, prosperous merchant, his timid wife and their rebellious children in post-WW I Egypt. "Mahfouz is a master at building up dramatic scenes and at portraying complex characters in depth," lauded PW. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. (Publishers Weekly)

Peace Like a River by Leif Enger  |  8 copies/1 BOCD
Young Reuben Land has little doubt that miracles happen all around us, suspecting that his own father is touched by God. When his older brother flees a controversial murder charge, Reuben, along with his older sister and father, set off on a journey that will take them to the Badlands and through a landscape more extraordinary than they could have anticipated. Enger’s novel is at once a heroic quest and a haunting meditation on the possibility of magic in the everyday world. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Persepolis by Mariane Satrapi  |  14 Copies
Descended from the last Emperor of Iran, Satrapi is nine when fundamentalist rebels overthrow the Shah. While Satrapi's radical parents and their community initially welcome the ouster, they soon learn a new brand of totalitarianism is taking over. Satrapi's art is minimal and stark yet often charming and humorous as it depicts the madness around her. Thanks to the Iran-Iraq war, neighbors' homes are bombed, playmates are killed and parties are forbidden. Satrapi's parents, who once lived in luxury despite their politics, struggle to educate their daughter. Skillfully presenting a child's view of war and her own shifting ideals, she also shows quotidian life in Tehran and her family's pride and love for their country despite the tumultuous times. (Compliments of Publisher's Weekly)

The Pianist by Wladyslaw Szpilman  |  12 Copies
Written immediately after the end of World War II, this morally complex Holocaust memoir is notable for its exact depiction of the grim details of life in Warsaw under the Nazi occupation. "Things you hardly noticed before took on enormous significance: a comfortable, solid armchair, the soothing look of a white-tiled stove," writes Wladyslaw Szpilman, a pianist for Polish radio when the Germans invaded. Arbitrarily removed from the transport that took his family to certain death, Szpilman does not deny the "animal fear" that led him to seize this chance for escape. Szpilman found compassion in unlikely people, including a German officer who brought food and warm clothing to his hiding place during the war's last days. Extracts from the officer's wartime diary, with their expressions of outrage at his fellow soldiers' behavior, remind us to be wary of general condemnation of any group. (Compliments of Amazon.com)
Picture Bride by Yoshiko Uchider  20 Copies
After Hana Omija arrives in San Francisco prior to World War II to marry Taro Takida, she betray him with his best friend before realizing his qualities and before they are interned at Topaz.

Praisesong for the Widow by Paule Marshall
Praisesong for the Widow is a novel full of music and dancing; it describes the sickness that occurs when we disconnect from our heritage and the healing power that comes from reclaiming the music and rhythms of the ancestors. Its hero, Avatar Avey Johnson, was a new character in black literature: an affluent middle-aged black woman, a mother, a grandmother, and a widow. Avey and her late husband worked hard to climb from the slums of Harlem to the comforts of suburban White Plains. But that material comfort brought with it a spiritual disease a hard-to-diagnose but impossible-to-ignore malaise that eventually erupted into violent illness during a Caribbean vacation. In this novel, Paule Marshall traces Avey's journey from sickness to strength, from the soulless suburbs to the African roots of her identity. The book won the American Book Award in 1984. (Compliments of BarnesandNoble.com)

Pride and Prejudice- by Jane Austen  13 Copies/2 Book on CD
Elizabeth Bennet is the perfect Austen heroine: intelligent, generous, sensible, incapable of jealousy or any other major sin. That makes her sound like an insufferable goody-goody, but the truth is she's a completely hip character, who if provoked is not above skewering her antagonist with a piece of her exceptionally sharp -- but always polite -- 18th century wit. The point is, you spend the whole book absolutely fixated on the critical question: will Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy hook up? (Compliments of Amazon.com)

The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio: How my Mother raised 10 kids on 25 Words or Less by Terry Ryan  15 Copies
In the 1950s, the Ryan family struggled to make ends meet. Ten kids and a father who spent most of his paycheck on booze drained the family's meager finances. But mom Evelyn Ryan, a former journalist, found an ingenious way to bring in extra income: entering contests on the backs of cereal boxes and the like. The author, Evelyn's daughter, tells the entertaining story of her childhood and her mother's contest career with humor and affection. She is not a professional narrator, but her love and admiration for her mother come through in every sentence. Evelyn won supermarket shopping sprees that put much-needed food on the table, provided washing machines and other appliances the family couldn't afford, and delivered cash to pay the mounting pile of bills. This well-told, suspenseful tale is peppered with examples of Evelyn's winning poems and slogans, taken from the years of notebooks that she saved and passed on to her daughter, and has a fiction-worthy climax that will keep readers laughing even as they're glued to Ryan's tale. (Compliments of Publisher's Weekly)
The Reader by Bernhard Schlink  14 Copies
Oprah Book Club® Selection, February 1999: Originally published in Switzerland, and gracefully translated into English by Carol Brown Janeway, The Reader is a brief tale about sex, love, reading, and shame in postwar Germany. Michael Berg is 15 when he begins a long, obsessive affair with Hanna, an enigmatic older woman. He never learns very much about her, and when she disappears one day, he expects never to see her again. But, to his horror, he does. Hanna is a defendant in a trial related to Germany's Nazi past, and it soon becomes clear that she is guilty of an unspeakable crime. As Michael follows the trial, he struggles with an overwhelming question: What should his generation do with its knowledge of the Holocaust? "We should not believe we can comprehend the incomprehensible, we may not compare the incomparable.... Should we only fall silent in revulsion, shame, and guilt? To what purpose?"

The Reader, which won the Boston Book Review's Fisk Fiction Prize, wrestles with many more demons in its few, remarkably lucid pages. What does it mean to love those people—parents, grandparents, even lovers—who committed the worst atrocities the world has ever known? And is any atonement possible through literature? Schlink's prose is clean and pared down, stripped of unnecessary imagery, dialogue, and excess in any form. What remains is an austerely beautiful narrative of the attempt to breach the gap between Germany's pre- and postwar generations, between the guilty and the innocent, and between words and silence. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Literature professor Nafisi returned to her native Iran after a long education abroad, remained there for some 18 years, and left in 1997 for the United States, where she now teaches at Johns Hopkins. Woven through her story are the books she has taught along the way, among them works by Nabokov, Fitzgerald, James and Austen. Lolita becomes a brilliant metaphor for life in the Islamic republic. The desperate truth of Lolita's story is... the confiscation of one individual's life by another, Nafisi writes. The parallel to women's lives is clear: we had become the figment of someone else's dreams. (Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly)

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant  9 copies
Skillfully interweaving biblical tales with events and characters of her own invention, Diamant's (Living a Jewish Life, HarperCollins, 1991) sweeping first novel re-creates the life of Dinah, daughter of Leah and Jacob, from her birth and happy childhood in Mesopotamia through her years in Canaan and death in Egypt. When Dinah reaches puberty and enters the Red Tent (the place women visit to give birth or have their monthly periods), her mother and Jacob's three other wives initiate her into the religious and sexual practices of the tribe. Diamant sympathetically describes Dinah's doomed relationship with Shalem, son of a ruler of Shechem, and his brutal death at the hands of her brothers. Following the events in Canaan, a pregnant Dinah travels to Egypt, where she becomes a noted midwife. Diamant has written a thoroughly enjoyable and illuminating portrait of a fascinating woman and the life she might have lived. Recommended for all public libraries. Nancy Pearl, Washington Ctr. for the Book, Seattle
River of Doubt by Candice Millard  
13 Copies/1 Book on CD
A year after Roosevelt lost a third-party bid for the White House in 1912, he decided to chase away his blues by accepting an invitation for a South American trip that quickly evolved into an ill-prepared journey down an unexplored tributary of the Amazon known as the River of Doubt. The small group, was hampered by the failure to pack enough supplies and the absence of canoes sturdy enough for the river's rapids. An injury Roosevelt sustained became infected with flesh-eating bacteria and left the ex-president so weak that, at his lowest moment, he told Kermit to leave him to die in the rainforest. Millard, nails the suspense element of this story perfectly, but equally important to her success is the marvelous amount of detail she provides on the wildlife that Roosevelt and his fellow explorers encountered on their journey, as well as the cannibalistic indigenous tribe that stalked them much of the way. (Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly)

River Town by Peter Hessler  
7 copies
In China, the year 1997 was marked by two momentous events: the death of Deng Xiaoping, the country's leader for two decades, and the return of Hong Kong after a century and a half of British rule. A young American who spent two years teaching English literature in a small town on the Yangtze, Hessler observed these events through two sets of eyes: his own and those of his alter ego, Ho Wei. Hessler sees China's politics and ceremony with the detachment of a foreigner, noting how grand political events affect the lives of ordinary people. The passing of Deng, for example, provokes a handful of thoughtful and unexpected essays from Hessler's students. The departure of the British from Hong Kong sparks a conversational "Opium War" between him and his nationalist Chinese tutor. Meanwhile, Ho Wei, as Hessler is known to most of the townspeople, adopts a friendly and unsophisticated persona that allows him to learn the language and culture of his surroundings even as Hessler's Western self remains estranged. The author conceives this memoir of his time in China as the collaborative effort of his double identity. "Ho Wei," he writes, "left his notebooks on the desk of Peter Hessler, who typed everything into his computer. The notebooks were the only thing they truly shared." Yet it's clear that, for Hessler, Ho Wei is more than a literary device: to live in China, he felt compelled to subjugate his real identity to a character role. Hessler has already been assured the approval of a select audience thanks to the New Yorker's recent publication of an excerpt. (Feb.)

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Road to Perdition by Max Allen Collins  
26 copies
Originally published as a single-volume graphic novel in 1998, this is the comics work upon which the Tom Hanks movie is based. It's the story of Michael O'Sullivan, a feared and religiously inclined mob hit man who's brutally betrayed-and the fierce vengeance he wreaks. It's 1930 and O'Sullivan works for the Looneys, an Irish mob family with a stranglehold on the politics and businesses of a small Midwestern city. Curious about his dad's mysterious "job,"
Michael Jr. stows away in his car to see what he does for a living. He inadvertently witnesses his father and one of the Looneys murder a crooked cop and his partners. Fearing what the kid saw, the Looneys set the O'Sullivans up to be killed. They murder O'Sullivan's wife and younger son, leaving him stunned but determined to have his revenge. The Looneys go into hiding, and O'Sullivan and son set out to find them, encountering the celebrities of gangland Chicago along the way. Collins writes a good gangster yarn based on historical personalities and full of crisp dialogue, violent action and brooding overtones of religious redemption. But O'Sullivan is essentially a superhero in a fedora, and his ability to kill an overwhelming number of adversaries with nary a scratch to show for it is a bit ridiculous. Though Rayner's b&w drawings can be static, they are precisely rendered with strikingly delineated faces. Like movie posters, his drawings capture the action with a combination of slick draftsmanship and the bleak and shadowy forms of cinematic noir. (Oct.) Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. (Publishers Weekly)

Running with Scissors by Augusten Burroughs 23 Copies/2 Book on CD
There is a passage early in Augusten Burroughs's harrowing and highly entertaining memoir, Running with Scissors, that speaks volumes about the author. While going to the garbage dump with his father, young Augusten spots a chipped, glass-top coffee table that he longs to bring home. There were certainly numerous chips in the childhood Burroughs describes: an alcoholic father, an unstable mother who gives him up for adoption to her therapist, and an adolescence spent as part of the therapist's eccentric extended family. But just as he dreamed of doing with that old table, Burroughs employs a vigorous program of decoration and fervent polishing to a life that many would have simply thrown in a landfill. Burroughs's perspective achieves a crucial balance for a memoir: emotional but not self-involved, observant but not clinical, funny but not deliberately comic. There's always a sense that Burroughs's survivor mentality will guide him through and that the coffee table will be salvaged after all. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Seabiscuit by Laura Hillenbrand 16 Copies/1 Book on Tape
Gifted sportswriter Hillenbrand unearths the rarefied world of thoroughbred horse racing in this captivating account of one of the sport's legends. Seabiscuit enjoyed great celebrity during the 1930s and 1940s, drawing record crowds to his races around the country. Not an overtly impressive physical specimen, the horse seemed to transcend his physicality as he won race after race. Hillenbrand, a contributor to Equus magazine, profiles the major players in Seabiscuit's fantastic and improbable career. Hillenbrand deftly blends the story with explanations of the sport and its culture, including vivid descriptions of the Tijuana horse-racing scene in all its debauchery. She roots her narrative of the horse's breathtaking career and the wild devotion of his fans in its socioeconomic context: Seabiscuit embodied the underdog myth for a nation recovering from dire economic straits. (Compliments of Publishers Weekly)
Secret Life of Bees by Sue Kidd 24 Copies/2 Book on CD
It's 1964, the year of the Civil Rights Act, in Sylvan, S.C. Fourteen-year-old Lily is on the lam with motherly servant Rosaleen, fleeing both Lily's abusive father T. Ray and the police who battered Rosaleen for defending her new right to vote. Lily is also fleeing memories, particularly her jumbled recollection of how, as a frightened four-year-old, she accidentally shot and killed her mother during a fight with T. Ray. Among her mother's possessions, Lily finds a picture of a black Virgin Mary with "Tiburon, S.C." on the back. It turns out that the town is headquarters of Black Madonna Honey, produced by three middle-aged black sisters, August, June and May Boatwright. The "Calendar sisters" take in the fugitives, putting Lily to work in the honey house, where for the first time in years she's happy. Kidd's success at capturing the moody adolescent girl's voice makes her ambivalence comprehensible and charming. And it's deeply satisfying when August teaches Lily to "find the mother in (herself)" a soothing lesson that should charm female readers of all ages. (Compliments of Publisher's Weekly)

The Shack by Wm. Paul Young 9 copies
Mackenzie Allen Phillips's youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation, and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later, in this midst of his great sadness, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend. Against his better judgment he arrives at the shack on wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change his life forever. (Compliments of Amazon)

The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon 10 copies
Call it the "book book" genre: this international sensation (it has sold in more than 20 countries and been number one on the Spanish best-seller list), newly translated into English, has books and storytelling--and a single, physical book--at its heart. In post-World War II Barcelona, young Daniel is taken by his bookseller father to the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, a massive sanctuary where books are guarded from oblivion. Told to choose one book to protect, he selects The Shadow of the Wind, by Julian Carax. He reads it, loves it, and soon learns it is both very valuable and very much in danger because someone is determinedly burning every copy of every book written by the obscure Carax. To call this book--Zafon's Shadow of the Wind--old-fashioned is to mean it in the best way. It's big, chock-full of unusual characters, and strong in its sense of place. Daniel's initiation into the mysteries of adulthood is given the same weight as the mystery of the book-burner. And the setting--Spain under Franco--injects an air of sobriety into some plot elements that might otherwise seem soap operatic. Part detective story, part boy's adventure, part romance, fantasy, and gothic horror, the intricate plot is urged on by extravagant foreshadowing and nail-nibbling tension. This is rich, lavish storytelling, very much in the tradition of Ross King's Ex Libris (2001). Keir Graff Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved (Booklist)
The Shape of Dread by Marcia Muller  34 Copies
With this extraordinarily complex, gripping novel, Muller surpasses the previous stories of Sharon McCone, San Francisco-based private eye. Sharon relates details in the case that takes her to meet Bobby Fisher in San Quentin where he's doomed to the gas chamber for the murder of Tracy Kostakos, a popular comic. Hoping to save Bobby, the investigator questions everyone who had known Tracy. The consensus is that the witty monologist paradoxically lacked a sense of humor but had created hilarious routines by cruelly parodying people close to her. Digging deeper into the entertainer's past, Sharon unearths evidence that she may pay for with her own life. Evoking the atmosphere of San Francisco's special places, Muller makes one feel particularly the "shape of dread" on death row and provokes thought on the finality of capital punishment. (Compliments of Publishers Weekly)

Ship Fever by Andrea Barrett  6 copies
The quantifiable truths of science intersect with the less easily measured precincts of the heart in these eight seductively stylish tales. In the graphic title novella, a self-doubting, idealistic Canadian doctor's faith in science is sorely tested in 1847 when he takes a hospital post at a quarantine station flooded with diseased, dying Irish immigrants fleeing the potato famine. The story, which deftly exposes English and Canadian prejudice against the Irish, turns on the doctor's emotions, oscillating between a quarantined Irish woman and a wealthy Canadian lady, his onetime childhood playmate. In "The English Pupil," Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus, who brought order to the natural world with his system of nomenclature, battles the disorder of his own aging mind as he suffers from paralysis and memory loss at age 70. In "The Behavior of the Hawkweeds," a precious letter drafted by Austrian monk Gregor Mendel, who discovered the laws of heredity, reverberates throughout the narrator's marriage to her husband, an upstate New York geneticist. Barrett (The Forms of Water) uses science as a prism to illuminate, in often unsettling ways, the effects of ambition, intuition and chance on private and professional lives. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc (Publishers Weekly)

The Shipping News by Annie Proulx  14 Copies
In this touching and atmospheric novel set among the fishermen of Newfoundland, Proulx tells the story of Quoyle. From all outward appearances, Quoyle has gone through his first 36 years on earth as a big schlump of a loser. He's not attractive, he's not brilliant or witty or talented, and he's not the kind of person who typically assumes the central position in a novel. But Proulx creates a simple and compelling tale of Quoyle's psychological and spiritual growth. Along the way, we get to look in on the maritime beauty of what is probably a disappearing way of life. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

The Shirley Letters by Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe  3 copies
"Of all the writers drawn to California between 1845 and the mid-1860s, [Clappe] speaks with the most original voice. Her only real competition, in my view, is Mark Twain."--James D. Houston, author, Californians: Searching for the Golden State.
"The Shirley Letters is superb reading!" --The Midwest Book Review (Compliments of Amazon)

Shopgirl – Steve Martin  4 copies
Movie star Martin shone in the comic essays of last year’s Pure Drivel, but can he write serious fiction? His debut novella gives fans a chance to find out. Shy, depressed, young, lonely and usually broke, Vermont-bred Mirabelle Butterfield sells gloves at the Beverly Hills Neiman Marcus (nobody ever buys); at night, she watches TV with her two cats. Martin’s slight plot follows Mirabelle’s search for love or at least romance and companionship with middle-aged Ray Porter, a womanizing Seattle millionaire who may, or may not, have hidden redeeming qualities. Also in and out of Mirabelle’s life are a handful of supporting characters, all of them lonely and alienated, too. There’s her father, a dysfunctional Vietnam vet; the laconic, unambitious Jeremy; and Mirabelle’s promiscuous, body-obsessed co-worker Lisa. Detractors may call Martin’s plot predictable, his characters stereotypes. Admirers may answer that as in Douglas Coupland these aren’t stereotypes but modern archetypes, whose lives must be streamlined if they are to represent ours. Except for its love-hate relations with L.A., little about this book sounds much like Martin; its anxious, sometimes flat prose style can be affecting or disorienting, and belongs somewhere between Coupland and literary chroniclers of depression like Lydia Davis. Martin’s first novel is finally neither a triumph nor a disaster: it’s yet another of this intelligent performer’s attempts to expand his range, and those who will buy it for the name on the cover could do a lot worse. (Oct.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. (Publishers Weekly)

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See  12 Copies/1 Book on CD
See's engrossing novel set in remote 19th-century China details the deeply affecting story of lifelong, intimate friends (laotong, or "old sames") Lily and Snow Flower, their imprisonment by rigid codes of conduct for women and their betrayal by pride and love. Beginning with a detailed and heartbreaking description of Lily and her sisters' foot binding ("Only through pain will you have beauty. Only through suffering will you have peace"), the story widens to a vivid portrait of family and village life. As both a suspenseful and poignant story and an absorbing historical chronicle, this novel has bestseller potential and should become a reading group favorite as well. (Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly)

The Soloist by Steve Lopez  29 Copies/3 Book on CD
*Starred Review* On the streets of the inner city, Los Angeles Times columnist and novelist Lopez (In the Clear, 2003) stumbled upon the story that changed his life. Nathaniel Ayers, a homeless African American man, was standing on a corner coaxing memorable music from a two-stringed violin. Turns out, 30 years earlier, Ayers had been at Juilliard studying classical bass when he experienced the first in a series of schizophrenic episodes that turned his musical dreams into a nightmare. Now, worlds away from the concert halls he imagined gracing, Ayers spends his days on Los Angeles’ Skid Row, fighting off rats and drug-frenzied fellow homeless—
and serenading passersby. The spot where Ayers has chosen to play is no accident; it’s near the city’s statue of Beethoven and just down the hill from Walt Disney Concert Hall. Lopez quickly becomes an integral part of Ayers’ life, bringing him new instruments and even facilitating arrangements at a homeless shelter. But as he navigates the complex world of mental illness, Lopez discovers that good intentions (and good connections) are often powerless in the face of schizophrenia, a potent, prickly, unpredictable disease. --Allison Block -- Booklist.

**Speckled Monster by Jennifer Carrell**

Long before vaccination for smallpox was developed in Europe in the 1790s, people in the Middle East, the Caucasus and Africa knew that small amounts of live smallpox virus injected under the skin would induce a mild form of the disease that rendered a person immune from full-blown smallpox. In her intriguing book, Carrell switches between the stories of two courageous people in early 18th-century England and America who believed passionately in this procedure, called variolation. Most people who underwent the procedure didn’t get full-blown cases of smallpox, and variolation was finally accepted as the only way to protect against the disease before vaccination was developed in the 1790s. Carrell’s novelistic treatment of this story, is engaging in spite of an overabundance of fabricated conversations and scenes that slow the action. *(Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly)*

**The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Ann Fadiman**

Award-winning reporter Fadiman has turned what began as a magazine assignment into a riveting, cross-cultural medicine classic in this anthropological exploration of the Hmong population in Merced County, California. Following the case of Lia (a Hmong child with a progressive and unpredictable form of epilepsy), Fadiman maps out the controversies raised by the collision between Western medicine and holistic healing traditions of Hmong immigrants. Unable to enter the Laotian forest to find herbs for Lia that will "fix her spirit," her family becomes resigned to the Merced County emergency system, which has little understanding of Hmong animist traditions. *(Compliments of Amazon.com)*

**Still Alice by Lisa Genova**

In Lisa Genova’s extraordinary New York Times bestselling novel, an accomplished professor diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease learns that her worth is comprised of more than her ability to remember. Now a major motion picture from Sony Pictures Classics starring Julianne Moore, Alec Baldwin, Kate Bosworth, and Kristen Stewart! Look for Lisa Genova’s next novel Inside the O’Briens. Alice Howland is proud of the life she worked so hard to build. At fifty years old, she’s a cognitive psychology professor at Harvard and a world-renowned expert in linguistics with a successful husband and three grown children. When she becomes increasingly disoriented and forgetful, a tragic diagnosis changes her life—and her relationship with her family and the world—forever. At once beautiful and terrifying, Still Alice is a moving and vivid depiction of life with early-onset Alzheimer’s disease that is as compelling as A Beautiful Mind and as unforgettable as Ordinary People. *(Compliments of Simon and Schuster)*

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The Story of Edgar Sawtelle – David Wroblewski  4 copies
A literary thriller with commercial legs, this stunning debut is bound to be a bestseller. In the backwoods of Wisconsin, the Sawtelle family—Gar, Trudy and their young son, Edgar—carry on the family business of breeding and training dogs. Edgar, born mute, has developed a special relationship and a unique means of communicating with Almondine, one of the Sawtelle dogs, a fictional breed distinguished by personality, temperament and the dogs' ability to intuit commands and to make decisions. Raising them is an arduous life, but a satisfying one for the family until Gar's brother, Claude, a mystifying mixture of charm and menace, arrives. When Gar unexpectedly dies, mute Edgar cannot summon help via the telephone. His guilt and grief give way to the realization that his father was murdered; here, the resemblance to Hamlet resonates. After another gut-wrenching tragedy, Edgar goes on the run, accompanied by three loyal dogs. His quest for safety and succor provides a classic coming-of-age story with an ironic twist. Sustained by a momentum that has the crushing inevitability of fate, the propulsive narrative will have readers sucked in all the way through the breathtaking final scenes. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. (Publishers Weekly)

The Street by Ann Petry  10 Copies
THE STREET tells the poignant, often heartbreaking story of Lutie Johnson, a young black woman, and her spirited struggle to raise her son amid the violence, poverty, and racial dissonance of Harlem in the late 1940s. Originally published in 1946 and hailed by critics as a masterwork, The Street was Ann Petry's first novel, a beloved bestseller with more than a million copies in print. Its haunting tale still resonates today. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

Sweet and Low by Rich Cohen  12 Copies
Disinherited from the family fortune built by his maternal grandfather, Ben Eisenstadt, who invented the artificial sweetener Sweet'N Low, Cohen mines a wealth of family history in this funny, angry, digressive memoir. This story of the family-owned, Brooklyn-based company is, at its heart, a tale of immigrant strife and Cohen's fractious Jewish clan, including his grandmother Betty, and his hypochondriac, housebound Aunt Gladys, who connived to eliminate her sister (Cohen's mother) from Betty's will. The history of artificial sweeteners, the post-WWII weight-watching craze, etc.—the real grace of his writing lies in the merciless, comic characterizations of his relatives. (Compliments of Publisher's Weekly)

Sweet Hereafter by Russell Banks  19 Copies
With the cool logic of accreting snowflakes, Banks prose builds a world—a small U.S. town near Canada—and peoples it with four vivid, sensitive souls linked by a school-bus tragedy: the bus driver; the widowed Vietnam vet who was driving behind the bus, waving at his kids, when it went off the road; the perpetually peeved negligence lawyer who tries to shape the victims' heartaches into a winning case; and the beauty-queen cheerleader crippled by the crash, whose testimony will determine everyone's fate. We experience the story from inside the heads of the
four characters in turn--each knowing things the others don't, each misunderstanding the facts in his or her own way. Banks's book is haunting, and precise, making every revelation count. Banks's wit is pitiless--it's painful when we discover that the bus driver, who prides herself on interpreting for her stroke-impaired husband, is translating his wise but garbled observations all wrong. The crash turns out not to be the ultimate tragedy: in the cold northern light of its aftermath, we discover that we're all in this alone. *(Compliments of Amazon.com)*

**Sweetest Dreams by Doris Lessing**

In lieu of writing volume three of her autobiography, the grand dame of English letters delves into the 1960s and beyond. Frances Lennox and her two adolescent sons, and their motley friends have taken over the bottom floors of a rambling house in Hampstead, London. Lessing clearly relishes the recalcitrant '60s, yet she follows her characters through the women's movement of the '70s and a lengthy final digression in '90s Africa. While the last section lacks the intimate presence of long-suffering Frances, the novel is weightily molded by Lessing's rich life experience and comes to a momentous conclusion. *(Compliments of Publishers Weekly)*

**Tahoe Trap – Todd Borg**

Todd Borg is the author of 10 mystery thrillers set at Lake Tahoe. Borg's mysteries have received a starred review in Library Journal along with many other raves. His books have won the Ben Franklin Award for Best Mystery of the Year, been chosen for Library Journal's Top 5 Mysteries of the Year list, made multiple Top 5 lists from Mystery News, and won Best Mystery of the Year from the Bay Area Independent Publishers Association. They've also made Amazon's Mystery/Thriller Bestseller list multiple times. *(Compliments of Amazon)*

**The Talented Mr. Ripley by Patricia Highsmith**

One of the great crime novels of the 20th century, Patricia Highsmith's The Talented Mr. Ripley is a blend of the narrative subtlety of Henry James and the self-reflexive irony of Vladimir Nabokov. Like the best modernist fiction, Ripley works on two levels. First, it is the story of a young man, Tom Ripley, whose nihilistic tendencies lead him on a deadly passage across Europe. On another level, the novel is a commentary on fictionmaking and techniques of narrative persuasion. Tom Ripley seduces readers into empathizing with him even as his actions defy all moral standards.

The novel begins with a play on James's The Ambassadors. Tom Ripley is chosen by the wealthy Herbert Greenleaf to retrieve Greenleaf's son, Dickie, from his overlong sojourn in Italy. Dickie, it seems, is held captive both by the Mediterranean climate and the attractions of his female companion, but Mr. Greenleaf needs him back in New York to help with the family business. With an allowance and a new purpose, Tom leaves behind his dismal city apartment to begin his career as a return escort. But Tom, too, is captivated by Italy. He is also taken with the life and looks of Dickie Greenleaf. He insinuates himself into Dickie's world and soon finds that his passion for a lifestyle of wealth and sophistication transcends moral compunction. Tom will
become Dickie Greenleaf—at all costs. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

**Tender at the Bone by Ruth Reichl**  17 Copies  
At an early age, Ruth Reichl discovered that "food could be a way of making sense of the world. . . . If you watched people as they ate, you could find out who they were." Her deliciously crafted memoir, Tender at the Bone, is the story of a life determined, enhanced, and defined in equal measure by a passion for food, unforgettable people, and the love of tales well told. Beginning with Reichl's mother, the notorious food-poisoner known as the Queen of Mold, Reichl introduces us to the fascinating characters that shaped her world and her tastes, from the gourmand Monsieur du Croix, who served Reichl her first soufflé, to those at her politically correct table in Berkeley who championed the organic food revolution in the 1970s. Spiced with Reichl's infectious humor and sprinkled with her favorite recipes, Tender at the Bone is a witty and compelling chronicle of a culinary sensualist's coming-of-age. (Courtesy Random House)

**A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini**  7 copies  
It's difficult to imagine a harder first act to follow than The Kite Runner: a debut novel by an unknown writer about a country many readers knew little about that has gone on to have over four million copies in print worldwide. But when preview copies of Khaled Hosseini's second novel, A Thousand Splendid Suns, started circulating at Amazon.com, readers reacted with a unanimous enthusiasm that few of us could remember seeing before. As special as The Kite Runner was, those readers said, A Thousand Splendid Suns is more so, bringing Hosseini's compassionate storytelling and his sense of personal and national tragedy to a tale of two women that is weighted equally with despair and grave hope.

We wanted to spread the word on the book as widely, and as soon, as we could. See below for an exclusive excerpt from A Thousand Splendid Suns and early reviews of the book from some of our top customer reviewers. (Compliments of Amazon)

**Those Who Save Us by Jenna Blum**  11 Copies  
Blum, who worked for Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation, takes a direct, unsentimental look at the Holocaust in her first novel. The narrative alternates between the present-day story of Trudy, a history professor at a Minneapolis university collecting oral histories of WWII survivors (both German and Jewish), and that of her aged but once beautiful German mother, Anna, who left her country when she married an American soldier. Interspersed with Trudy's interviews with German immigrants, many of whom reveal unabashed anti-Semitism, Anna's story flashes back to her hometown of Weimar. As Nazi anti-Jewish edicts intensify in the 1930s, Anna hides her love affair with a Jewish doctor, Max Stern. When Max is interned at nearby Buchenwald and Anna's father dies, Anna, carrying Max's child, goes to live with a baker who smuggles bread to prisoners at the camp. Anna assists with the smuggling after Trudy's birth until the baker is caught and executed. Then Anna catches the eye of the Obersturmführer, a high-ranking Nazi officer at Buchenwald, who suspects her of also supplying the inmates with bread. He coerces
her into a torrid, abusive affair, in which she remains complicit to ensure her survival and that of her baby daughter. Blum paints a subtle, nuanced portrait of the Obersturmführer, complicating his sordid cruelty with more delicate facets of his personality. Ultimately, present and past overlap with a shocking yet believable coincidence. Blum’s spare imagery is nightmarish and intimate, imbuing familiar panoramas of Nazi atrocity with stark new power. *(Compliments of Publisher’s Weekley)*

**Thread of Grace- By Mary Doria Russell** 13 Copies
Busy, noisy and heartfelt, this sprawling novel by Russell chronicles the Italian resistance to the Germans during the last two years of WWII. Russell pursues numerous narrative threads, including the Blums’ perilous flight over the mountains; Italian Jew Renzo Leoni’s personal coming to terms with his participation in the Dolo hospital bombing during the Abyssinian campaign in 1935; the dangerous frenzy of the Italian partisans; and the bloody-mindedness of German officers resolved to carry out Hitler’s murderous racial policy despite mounting evidence of its futility. The intensity and intimacy of Russell’s storytelling, her sharp character writing and fierce sense of humor bring fresh immediacy to this riveting WWII saga. *(Compliments of Amazon.com)*

**Three Cups of Tea: One Man’s Mission to promote Peace...One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin** 12 Copies/10 Large Print/3 Book on CD
Some failures lead to phenomenal successes, and this American nurse’s unsuccessful attempt to climb K2, the world’s second tallest mountain, is one of them. Dangerously ill when he finished the climb in 1993, Mortenson was sheltered for seven weeks by the small Pakistani village of Korphe; in return, he promised to build the impoverished town’s first school, a project that grew into the Central Asia Institute, which since constructed more than 50 schools across rural Pakistan and Afghanistan. Captivating and suspenseful, with engrossing accounts of both hostilities and unlikely friendships, this book will win many readers’ hearts. *(Publishers Weekly)*

**Too Close to the Falls by Catherine Gildiner** 13 Copies
Clinical psychologist Gildiner's well-crafted memoir describes her 1950s childhood in Lewiston, "a small town in western New York, a few miles north of Niagara Falls." Hers was no ordinary childhood but that of a precocious, headstrong, and intelligent girl whose parents provided a uniquely unconventional upbringing. Because of her lively temperament, her pediatrician recommended to her older and devoutly Catholic parents that she work in her father's pharmacy to channel her energies. Thus, at the age of four, she was teamed with a black male employee to deliver prescription drugs when not in school. She had a wide range of experiences with her co-worker, stopping in bars and making deliveries to both the wealthiest and the poorest members of the community. In each eventful chapter, Gildiner focuses on a particular adult who strongly influenced her understanding of the world. Often dangerous, her experiences, as related here, are also amusing, charming, and relevant. *(Compliments of Library Journal)*
Tortilla Curtain by T. C. Boyle  8 Copies
In Southern California's Topanga Canyon, two couples live in close proximity and yet are worlds apart. Nature writer Delaney Mossbacher and his wife, real estate agent Kyra Menaker-Mossbacher, reside in an exclusive, secluded housing development with their son, Jordan. The Mossbachers are agnostic liberals with a passion for recycling and fitness. Camped out in a ravine at the bottom of the canyon are Cándido and América Rincón, a Mexican couple who have crossed the border illegally. On the edge of starvation, they search desperately for work in the hope of moving into an apartment before their baby is born. They cling to their vision of the American dream, which, no matter how hard they try to achieve it, manages to elude their grasp at every turn. A chance, violent encounter brings together Delaney and Cándido, instigating a chain of events that eventually culminates in a harrowing confrontation.  (Compliments of Amazon.com)

The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy: an economist examines the markets, power, and politics of world trade by Pietra Rivoli  11 Copies
During a 1999 protest of the World Trade Organization, Rivoli, an economics professor at Georgetown, looked on as an activist seized the microphone and demanded, "Who made your T-shirt?" Rivoli determined to find out. She interviewed cotton farmers in Texas, factory workers in China, labor champions in the American South and used-clothing vendors in Tanzania. Problems, Rivoli concludes, arise not with the market, but with the suppression of the market. Subsidized farmers, and manufacturers and importers with tax breaks, she argues, succeed because they avoid the risks and competition of unprotected global trade, which in turn forces poorer countries to lower their prices to below subsistence levels in order to compete. Her writing is at its best when it considers the social dimensions of a global economy, as in chapters on the social networks of African used-clothing entrepreneurs.  From Publishers weekly

Tunnel Vision by Sara Paretsky  35 Copies
The return of the incomparable V.I. Warshawski. Sara Paretsky follows up her New York Times bestseller Guardian Angel with a thrilling, crime-solving adventure that stretches from the bank vaults of Chicago to the halls of Congress. V.I. investigates when a board member of an insensitive homeless advocates' group is murdered—in V.I.'s own office (Compliments of BarnesandNoble.com)

Ultimate Spider-Man. Power and Responsibility by Bill Jemas and Brian Bendis  16 Copies
Spider-Man has been a perpetual favorite of comics fans since his introduction in 1962, and judging by the recent blockbuster film, he's still hot. This excellent series re-boots the character from the beginning, reenacting Spider-Man's origin in the present day. The scenario by Marvel president Jemas and Brian Michael Bendis makes some intelligent revisions to the original, and the artwork is realistic, detailed, colorful, and dynamic. Bendis's excellent dialog is true to life—his teenagers sound like teenagers-and his scripting for this and other series won him the 2002
Ultimate X-Men. The Tomorrow People by Mark Millar  17 Copies
Everything looks normal, but a secret war is brewing between humans and mutants. Can Charles Xavier and his cadre of X-Men battle the terrorist known only as Magneto? Only time -- and this resplendent graphic novel -- will tell. (Compliments of BarnesandNoble.com)

Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand  10 Copies
In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will. (Compliments of Penguin Random House)

Undaunted Courage by Stephen Ambrose  21 Copies/2 Book on CD
Ambrose has written prolifically about men who were larger than life: Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, Colonel Custer. Here he takes on half of the two-headed hero of American exploration: Meriwether Lewis. Meriwether Lewis, as secretary to Thomas Jefferson and living in the White House for two years, got his education by being apprenticed to a great man. Their friendship is at the center of this account. Jefferson hand-picked Lewis for the great cross-country trek, and Lewis in turn picked William Clark to accompany him. The journals of the expedition, most written by Clark, are one of the treasures of American history. Without adding a great deal to existing accounts, Ambrose uses his skill with detail and atmosphere to dust off an icon and put him back on the trail west. (Compliments of Publisher’s Weekly)

Undertow by Elizabeth Bear  10 copies
Novo Haven, a floating city on Greene’s World, is a place people go to to escape. Andre Deschênes is a very good assassin but wants to branch out into conjuring, manipulating probability, and changing odds, if he can find someone willing to teach him. The world is controlled by the ruthless Charter Trade Company, which knows of more undercurrents flowing in this backwater than it wants to acknowledge: mining is eroding the native population, the ranids; the material being mined is no ordinary substance; and mining operations are destroying the planet. No one in the company wants to admit that the ranids constitute a civilization, though there are those who want the ranids freed of their servitude to the Company. One such is Lucienne Spivak. When Andre kills her to fulfill a contract, the gears of revolution start turning.
Bear's perfectly paced story features fascinating characters, complex plotting, and brilliantly imagined aliens. Thought-provoking as well as entertaining, it further demonstrates the strength of Bear's storytelling. Schroeder, Regina (Booklist)

**Unquenchable by Robert Glennon** 13 copies
America faces a water-supply crisis. Profligate consumption of water for agriculture, power generation, industry, and homes has led to reduction of groundwater, threats to rivers, and mortal danger to many of the nation's lakes. Much of the blame for this state of affairs lies with uncontrolled growth in the nation's South and Southwest. Desert cities such as Las Vegas use fountains as decorations. Phoenix households draw down the finite resources of ever-shrinking Lake Mead. In great detail, Glennon documents present and future water crises in Georgia, California, and even seemingly water-rich Michigan, noting that states generally end up competing with one another over water allocation and that international conflict follows in short order. Desalination offers little immediate hope because of economic and ecological barriers. Glennon submits a list of possible reforms to decrease water consumption. Some, such as waterless toilets, are technological innovations. Others, such as restructuring sewer systems, require governmental intervention. --Mark Knoblauch (Booklist)

**An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness by Kay Redfield Jamison** 14 copies
In her bestselling classic, An Unquiet Mind, Kay Redfield Jamison changed the way we think about moods and madness.

Dr. Jamison is one of the foremost authorities on manic-depressive (bipolar) illness; she has also experienced it firsthand. For even while she was pursuing her career in academic medicine, Jamison found herself succumbing to the same exhilarating highs and catastrophic depressions that afflicted many of her patients, as her disorder launched her into ruinous spending sprees, episodes of violence, and an attempted suicide.

Here Jamison examines bipolar illness from the dual perspectives of the healer and the healed, revealing both its terrors and the cruel allure that at times prompted her to resist taking medication. An Unquiet Mind is a memoir of enormous candor, vividness, and wisdom—a deeply powerful book that has both transformed and saved lives. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

**Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen.** 15 Copies/1 Large Print/1 Book on CD
As a young man, Jacob Jankowski was tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. A veterinary student just shy of a degree, he was put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It was there that he met Marlena, the beautiful equestrian star married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. And he met Rosie, an untrainable elephant who was the great gray hope for this third-rate traveling show. The bond that grew among this unlikely trio was one of love and trust, and, ultimately, it was their only hope for survival. (Compliments of Amazon.com)
What It Is Like To Go To War by Karl Marlantes  37 Copies
In What It Is Like to Go to War, Marlantes takes a deeply personal and candid look at the experience and ordeal of combat, critically examining how we might better prepare our young soldiers for war. War is as old as humankind, but in the past, warriors were prepared for battle by ritual, religion, and literature—which also helped bring them home. In a compelling narrative, Marlantes weaves riveting accounts of his combat experiences with thoughtful analysis, self-examination, and his readings—from Homer to the Mahabharata to Jung. He makes it clear just how poorly prepared our nineteen-year-old warriors—mainly men but increasingly women—are for the psychological and spiritual aspects of their journey. (Compliments of Amazon.com)

What We Keep by Elizabeth Berg  12 Copies/2 Book on CD
Berg excels at writing novels about the close personal relationships between women. As this new work opens, Ginny is flying to California to join her sister in a meeting with their mother, whom neither daughter has seen for 35 years. Ginny uses her travel time to reflect upon her memories of the summer when her mother withdrew from the family and became an outsider in her daughters’ lives. Berg’s precise, evocative descriptions create vivid images of Ginny’s physical world, while Berg's understanding and perception are an eloquent testimony to Ginny's emotional turmoil. Berg cleverly examines the roles and relationships of mothers and daughters and reveals how truth, forgiveness, and understanding are possible in healing intergenerational rifts between women. (From Library Journal)

When the Emperor Was Divine – by Julie Otsuka  8 Copies/1 Book on CD
This heartbreaking, bracingly unsentimental debut describes in poetic detail the travails of a Japanese family living in an internment camp during World War II, raising the specter of wartime injustice in bone-chilling fashion. The novel never strays into melodrama – Otsuka describes the family’s everyday life in Berkeley and the pitiful objects that define their world in the camp with admirable restraint and modesty. Events are viewed from numerous characters’ points of view, and the different perspectives are defined by distinctive, lyrically simple observations. The novel’s honesty and matter-of-fact tone in the face of inconceivable injustice are the source of its power.

The Worst Hard Time- by Timothy Egan  7 Copies
Egan tells an extraordinary tale in this visceral account of how America's great, grassy plains turned to dust, and how the ferocious plains winds stirred up an endless series of "black blizzards" that were like a biblical plague: "Dust clouds boiled up, ten thousand feet or more in the sky, and rolled like moving mountains" in what became known as the Dust Bowl. But the plague was man-made, as Egan shows: the plains weren't suited to farming, and plowing up the grass to plant wheat, along with a confluence of economic disaster—the Depression—and natural disaster—eight years of drought—resulted in an ecological and human catastrophe that Egan details with stunning specificity. He grounds his tale in portraits of the people who settled
the plains: hardy Americans and immigrants desperate for a piece of land to call their own and lured by the lies of promoters who said the ground was arable. Egan's interviews with survivors produce tales of courage and suffering: Hazel Lucas, for instance, dared to give birth in the midst of the blight only to see her baby die of "dust pneumonia" when her lungs clogged with the airborne dirt. With characters who seem to have sprung from a novel by Sinclair Lewis or Steinbeck, and Egan's powerful writing, this account will long remain in readers' minds. (Compliments of Publisher's Weekly)

The Yellow Birds by Kevin Powers  9 copies/1 large type
"The war tried to kill us in the spring." So begins this powerful account of friendship and loss. In Al Tafar, Iraq, twenty-one-year old Private Bartle and eighteen-year-old Private Murphy cling to life as their platoon launches a bloody battle for the city. Bound together since basic training when Bartle makes a promise to bring Murphy safely home, the two have been dropped into a war neither is prepared for. In the endless days that follow, the two young soldiers do everything to protect each other from the forces that press in on every side: the insurgents, physical fatigue, and the mental stress that comes from constant danger. As reality begins to blur into a hazy nightmare, Murphy becomes increasingly unmoored from the world around him and Bartle takes actions he could never have imagined. With profound emotional insight, especially into the effects of a hidden war on mothers and families at home, The Yellow Birds is a groundbreaking novel that is destined to become a classic. (Compliments of Amazon)

Yesteryear's Child by Phoebe Louise Westwood  3 copies
"Yesteryear's Child" brings to life a time and place in our collective American past. This is much more than one woman's story. Outdoor privies became indoor plumbing; horse-drawn carriages shared the dusty roads with the first automobiles; and the earliest telephone numbers were single digits. In the tradition of such personal memoirs as "Cheaper by the Dozen" and "I Remember Mama" this delightful tale will evoke memories in the old and wonder in the young. (Compliments of Amazon)

Zeitoun by Dave Eggers  24 copies
Through the story of one man's experience after Hurricane Katrina, Eggers draws an indelible picture of Bush-era crisis management. Abdulrahman Zeitoun, a successful Syrian-born painting contractor, decides to stay in New Orleans and protect his property while his family flees. After the levees break, he uses a small canoe to rescue people, before being arrested by an armed squad and swept powerless into a vortex of bureaucratic brutality. When a guard accuses him of being a member of Al Qaeda, he sees that race and culture may explain his predicament. Eggers, compiling his account from interviews, sensibly resists rhetorical grandstanding, letting injustices speak for themselves. His skill is most evident in how closely he involves the reader in Zeitoun's thoughts. Thrown into one of a series of wire cages, Zeitoun speculates, with a contractor’s practicality, that construction of his prison must have begun within a day or so of the hurricane. (The New Yorker)
OTHER RESOURCES:

**Book Club Cookbook, The – by Judy Gelman and Vicki Levy Krupp**  
4 Copies  
Featuring recipes and discussion ideas for one hundred popular book club selections, The Book Club Cookbook will guide you in selecting and preparing culinary masterpieces that blend perfectly with the literary masterpieces your club is reading. With contributions from many of the authors of these favorite books themselves, as well as profiles of book clubs all across the country that are creatively integrating food into their meetings, this singular cookbook includes such scrumptious pairings as Tandoori Shrimp with Life of Pi by Yann Martel and Spicy Pork with Orange Hoisin Sauce in Wonton Cups with Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sijie."

**Book Lust – by Nancy Pearl**  
3 Copies  
"Pearl, a longtime reader, book reviewer and public librarian, presents a hundred or so of her favorites in this novel guide to finding the right book for the right mood. Presented in eclectic categories of people, places and themes (e.g. "Prose by Poets," "Dinosaur Hunting," "In Big Sky Country" and "Academia: The Joke"), each of her suggestions is accompanied by a few of her thoughts on it, a succinct plot summary and often information about the volume's prizes and print status. There's more than just novels, of course: she recommends, for instance, good "Techno-thrillers" ("nonfiction about science and technology") such as The Thread Across the Ocean: The Heroic Story of the Transatlantic Cable and One Good Turn: A Natural History of the Screwdriver and the Screw. Interestingly, Pearl urges readers to abandon books they dislike after 50 pages, though she does point out that frame of mind often determines one's opinion of a book. "When I begin reading a new book, I am embarking on a new, uncharted journey," Pearl declares in her brief introduction; with this guidebook in hand, readers can benefit from her experience as they travel their own ways."  
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**More Book Lust – by Nancy Pearl**  
3 Copies  
"In this sequel to the popular Book Lust (2003), Pearl, former Seattle librarian and a continuing national book-talk host, dips further into her repertoire of have-read books (both fiction and nonfiction) and offers up another batch she is only too happy to talk about. As in the previous volume, she creatively arranges her titles into unexpected but certainly tantalizing and even provocative categories, this time presenting a whole new set of categories. From "Adapting to Adoption" to "Your Tax Dollars at Work: Good Reading from the Government (Really!)," and including "Nagging Mothers, Crying Children," "Science 101," and "Gender-Bending," Pearl suggests titles relevant to each category and gives a brief annotation for each. A self-confessed "readaholic," Pearl lets us benefit from her addiction. May she never seek recovery."  
Brad Hopper, From Booklist, Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved