



BOOKS

WHAT ARE THEY READING?



The Daily Astorian invites people to submit titles of books they are reading and share a few thoughts about the work. This week, Esther Moberg, the library director at the Seaside Public Library, and her staff share their observations. To submit, send to news@dailyastorian.com

Staff picks
Esther Moberg — library director
“Dorothy Must Die,” by Danielle Paige

What happens in Oz after Dorothy melts the wicked witch and goes back to Kansas? In this cleverly imagined teen series, Dorothy ends up going back to Oz, but the magic and the lure of power prove too strong for her and she ends up going over to the dark side of magic. Suddenly Oz isn’t quite so wonderful, when you get everything you always wanted and more. A lighthearted look at a darker, more powerful Oz than ever before, with all of your favorite characters as well as some new ones that just might change how you view Oz.

Connie Word — librarian
“The Pacific and Other Stories,” by Mark Helprin
The book opened new worlds for me. The author seems to have an insider’s knowledge of building and construction, the duties of a World War II paratrooper caught behind enemy lines, the highs and lows of opera, and the aspirations of a New York Yankee. The details are sharp; the joy and pain are real. Life — experience it.

Jon Burke — librarian
“The Dead Lands,” by Benjamin Percy
Hold on tight for this post-apocalyptic reimagining of the Lewis and Clark saga. Giant spiders and Vampire bats! Oh My!

THE SHIP REPORT

Wind, tide and waves

By JOANNE RIDEOUT
Special to The Daily Astorian

If you live near the seashore or the riverside in these parts, you know that it’s been pretty windy this past month. In the afternoon the wind has tended to kick up, and by suppertime it’s been blowing 18 knots or higher some days.

The other day when I was watching the river, as I often do, it reminded me of an interesting river phenomenon that happens a great deal, though you might not guess the cause unless you’re really watching the weather and the tides.

On this particular day, on the Columbia River off Astoria, I saw whitecaps sloshing around out there. It’s not hard to understand that boats working their way through that stuff would have a bouncy time of it. But on other days, the water looks flat.

You might have sensed that how the water looks is somehow connected to how windy it is, and if you thought that, you’d be right. But it’s not an immediate connection, because some-



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Esther Moberg, library director.

Marian Rose — youth services librarian
“Ms. Marvel Volume 1: No Normal,” by G. Willow Wilson

After a mysterious fog rolls through Jersey City 16-year-old Kamala Khan is bestowed with unexpected inhuman powers. Fitting in at school and friends for a Muslim teenager with traditional family rules and expectations is complicated enough, now she is also figuring out why she has these strange powers and what she is supposed to do with them. It’s a journey Kamala will take to discover her true self — while saving lives and fighting evils on the way.

This is the first of a new Ms. Marvel graphic novel series with an unexpected heroine dealing with everyday teenage issues while discovering who she really is. Very well written by Wilson and illustrated by Adrian Alphona.

Michelle Lenox — library technology assistant
“Dear Committee Members,” by Julie Schumacher
The novel is composed of letters of recommendation written by a disgruntled English professor at a small Midwestern

college. He writes at the request of his students, colleagues, ex-wives, and enemies, but each highly unprofessional letter is permeated by his own institutional grievances and personal ruminations. As the school year passes, the story of Jason Fitger, his department, and his correspondents, emerges in this highly readable, dark academic comedy.

Dan Cawley — librarian
“Dreamland: The True Tale of America’s Opiate Epidemic,” by Sam Quinones

Why is it as easy to find heroin in Astoria as it is in New York City? The answer lies in the direct connection between Big Pharma and Mexican entrepreneurs. The over-prescription of a drug called Oxycontin has transformed pain patients into opiate addicts. A sophisticated network of poppy farmers south of the border capitalized on this situation by creating and distributing an extremely powerful painkiller. “Black Tar,” as it is known, can now be found everywhere, from small towns to big cities. With heroin being cheaper and stronger than Oxycontin, people have turned to illicit drugs in droves.



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Jon Burke, librarian.

The problem has become nothing short of an epidemic. Quinones masterfully weaves the unfortunate path that has turned America into a nation of dependency.

What’s hot
“The Girl on the Train,” by Paula Hawkins

Heralded by many as “The Best Book of 2015,” the book is the type of spine-curdling thriller that you want to read with your eyes closed. Main character, Rachel Watson, loses her husband to a younger woman because of her drinking. She has blackouts. Someone gets murdered. Or, did they? Due to her fragile mental state, Rachel becomes an extremely unreliable narrator. The line between fact and fiction in Rachel’s wandering mind becomes blurry. Nothing is as it appears. Nothing except the incessant, foreboding, sense of terror.

“Finders Keepers,” by Stephen King

James Brown may be the “hardest working man in show business” but King takes the mantle when it comes to writing fiction. In this book, King revis-



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian
Marian Rose, youth services librarian.

its the literary territory that was covered in “Misery.” The story opens with the line, “Wake up, genius.” In one single phrase, the reader is gut-hooked like a fish. It’s 1978 and writer John Rothstein is murdered by a disgruntled fan because the 80-year-old stopped publishing novels. The tightly knit story unfolds with the reintroduction of characters from King’s previous novel, “Mr. Mercedes.” Like most of King’s work, it is non-stop, accelerated-heartbeat, scary.

What’s new
“14th Deadly Sin,” by James Patterson

It’s doubtful anyone recalls “The Women’s Murder Club,” a 2007 police procedural television series. The program was a dud, but the novels on which it was based are stunning. This is Patterson’s 14th installment involving four whip-smart women: a homicide detective, an assistant district attorney, a medical examiner, and a newspaper reporter. Multiple plotlines intertwine — a gang dressed as cops is ransacking the city; a developmentally disabled man is charged with a crime he didn’t commit; dead

bodies appear on every street corner. As in previous novels, the entire city of San Francisco is under siege. The Women’s Murder Club join forces to make the city streets safe once again.

“This is What You Just Put in Your Mouth?” by Patrick Di Justo

Gum chewers are actually masticating “fake sugar, boiled pine, and NASCAR tires.” That is Di Justo’s tongue-in-cheek summation of Orbital White Gum. The actual ingredients are Maltitol, Sorbitol, Glycerol, Aspartame, Acesulfame K, and Sodium Bicarbonate. Mmm, mmm, good. In this delightful paperback, name-brand supermarket items are meticulously deconstructed in a language that resonates with style and verve. Red Bull, Cool Whip, Slim Jims, and Enfamil Baby Formula are but a few of the products analyzed. The condiment known as A.I. Steak Sauce, in reality, consists of “sulphur-based compounds, a saliva prompter, and gooey bacterial excretions.” After reading this book, the grocery store shelves will never look the same way again.



ALEX PAJUNAS — The Daily Astorian
KMUN General Manager Joanne Rideout is the voice of The Ship Report.

local winds, they were probably, at least in part, created initially some hundreds, or even thousands of miles away from here. The energy from ocean swells can travel for long periods across the ocean. So those waves you’re playing in on the beach at Seaside could be arriving here from Japan. That was a problem when the earthquake and tsunami happened in Japan in 2011. Within a matter of hours, tsunami waves were touching Oregon’s shores.

There are other factors at play that affect conditions on the river and ocean, but these are a few of the basics. Something to

think about next time you are dabbling at the seashore on a sunny day, or watching the river from the shore in Astoria. A big world, with great power in it, where we are all connected.

Joanne Rideout is general manager of Coast Community Radio (KMUN-FM) in Astoria. She’s also the creator and producer of The Ship Report, a radio show and podcast about All Things Maritime. You can hear The Ship Report on Coast Community Radio at 8:48 a.m. weekdays at 91.9FM, streaming at www.coastradio.org. Podcast available on The Ship Report website at www.shipreport.net.



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