



Spring 2017

Friends of the Falmouth Public Library NEWSLETTER

A Collection of News, Reviews and Essays

President
Yang Conley
Editor
Marilyn Sanborn

Joy of Learning A Gift to the Community

In the early nineties the Friends of the Falmouth Public Library was organized with officers and all the rest that was required. Then we were ready to plan programs for our members and for the public. We had a book sale but we needed more.

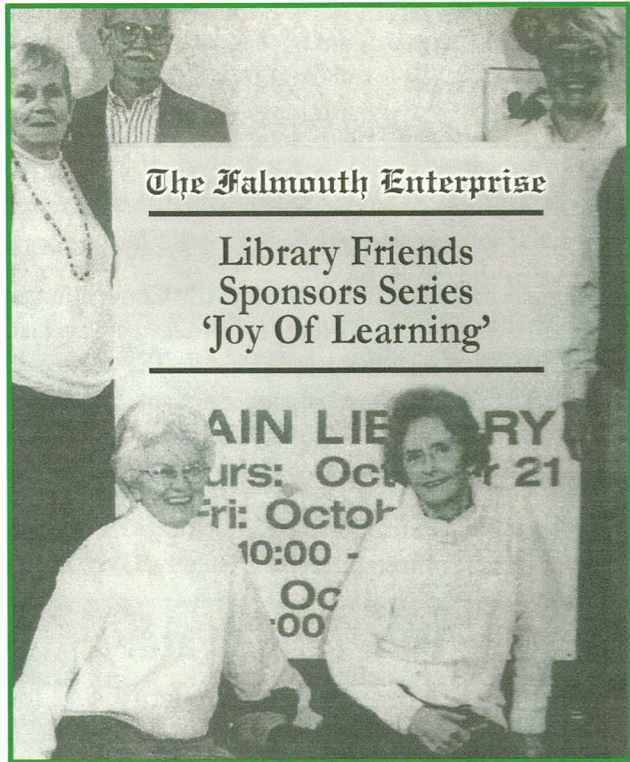
One of our members had heard about a program at the library in Orleans called Lifetime Learning and we liked the sound of it. So we visited the Orleans Library to sample the courses, and we were so impressed that we returned to Falmouth with the idea of setting up a similar program.

A committee was formed to discuss how we would start and where we would get instructors willing to teach academic courses for free. Fortunately, Falmouth has a good supply of talented people who are willing to share their knowledge with the Friends and the public. The first season four courses were established to be offered once a week for four weeks.

An early course was The American Presidency, taught by one of the library trustees who happened to have been a history professor; and a woman with an inexhaustible knowledge of the kings and queens of England as well as Russian history and poetry kept us from ever having to go searching for instructors. And so it went. Two of the courses that had people hanging from the rafters were Bicycling Around Russia and a series of courses on the Middle East.

We decided to call the program Joy of Learning, and, although brief, the courses have been every bit the equal of college courses and have continued to be through the years. In the fall of 2016, we offered the Vikings, Faulkner, Opera and Afghanistan, and our newest courses, which begin in April, are listed in the schedule for Joy of Learning on the next page.

Hope to see you there.



Joy of Learning Spring Schedule 2017



Details Inside



Joy of Learning

Schedule of Courses for Spring 2017

The Friends of the Falmouth Public Library will offer four new courses, which will begin Tuesday, April 5, 2017. These classes are free and open to the public.

ISLAM

Tuesdays 10:00 -11:30am April 11, 18, 25, May 2 ~ Hermann Room

Class 1

(2000 B.C.E -630 C.E.)
Geography and Saracenic
Civilization before Islam

Class 2

(630 C.E. -1300 C.E.)
Muhammad, basic beliefs,
Koran, causes of expansion and
conquest, roots of Islam

Class 3

Islam today, Jihad and
its meaning

Class 4

Arab and Muslem contributions
to western civilization

Betty Lewandowski ~ B.S. New York State Univ. M.A. Trinity College extensive teaching experience
in U.S., Saudi Arabia and Germany

The Portugese in Falmouth

Wednesdays 10:30-11:30am April 5, 12, 19, 26 ~ Hermann Room

Session 1

Portugal, the Azores, and
the First Wave

Session 2

Immigrants and Outcasts.
Second Wave

Session 3

Immigration Restriction
and Assimilation

Session 4

The Third Wave to
present day

Lewis A. White ~ Fourth generation descendant of Azorean immigrants. Northeastern Univ.
Worked at MIT's Synchrotron Lab and NASA's Electronic Research Center. Graduate work at Worcester Polytech.
Taught computer Polytech. Taught computer technology at Hesser College

Law Of the Sea and International Order

Wednesdays 2:00 – 3:00pm April 5, 12, 19, 26 ~ Hermann Room

One of the most widely encompassing international treaties is the 3rd UN Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOSIII). It is the law everywhere and almost everyone has ratified it except countries like Uzbekistan which is double land-locked, Turkey which is miffed at Greece, and the United States which is miffed at the world. When the treaty went into effect, every coastal state gained great wealth, the small states and the newly independent states had a voice in international law-making. New concepts of law and sovereignty were introduced and a race to see who owned the North Pole began. We will look at how this law came about, who were the winners and losers, and why the United States doesn't want to play.

Michael T. Corgan PhD ~ Associate Professor of International Relations, Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston Univ.
Adjunct Faculty, Univ. of Iceland. Assoc. Faculty, Univ. of Lapland

Our Falmouth Water

Thursdays 10:30-11:30am April 13, 20, 27, May 4 ~ Hermann Room

Session 1

Importance of Conservation
and Restoration
Of Falmouth Wetlands

Session 2

History of the Falmouth
water system/supply

Session 3

Water distribution system,
water quality and
conservation/use

Session 4

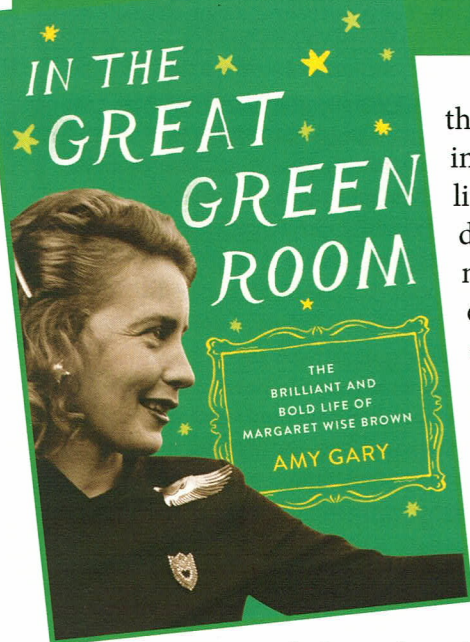
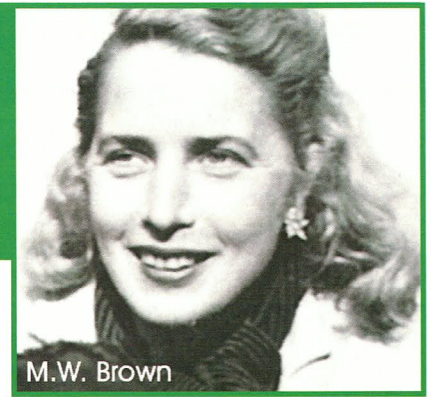
Tour of the new Water
Filtration Plant

Steve Rafferty ~ Town of Falmouth Water Superintendent
Betsy Gladfelter ~ Town of Falmouth Vice Chairman of the Coastal Pond Management Committee

Margaret Wise Brown

Great Green Room

— Amy Gary —



Would you believe that an author researching another author's life and works could discover unpublished manuscripts and poems in a trunk in an attic? This is the kind of thing that someone like Nancy Drew did regularly, but her books were fiction.

Amy Gary actually did find these treasures, which had

once belonged to the greatly revered children's writer, Margaret Wise Brown, and she used them in writing a new biography and memoir about the author of such widely known children's books as *Good Night Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny*, still popular after fifty years.

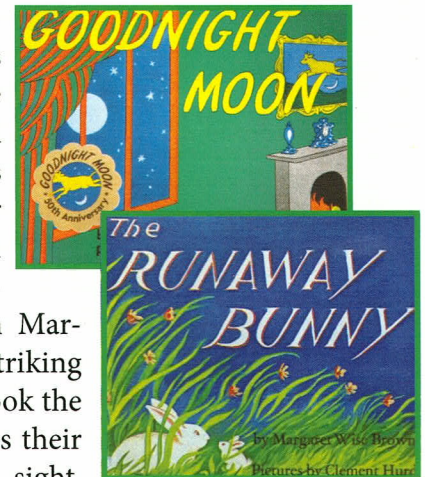
Brown was not only a prolific writer of children's books. She was in the middle of a publishing revolution. She began her career teaching and helping to shape the curriculum at the famous Bank Street School in New York City. She wished to set her sights higher than fairy tales and to give girls a more prominent if not equal place in the curriculum.

In my imagination, I had pictured Brown, when, as a children's librarian, I had read so many of Brown's books

to so many children, as a middle aged lady similar to Beatrix Potter, or what I had thought of as Beatrix Potter. I was wrong on both counts. I forgot that they were real people who fell in love. Brown had two important love affairs during her short life (she died of a blood clot at forty-two). The bisexual Michael Straight, the ex-wife of John Barrymore, was Margaret's first love. It was intense and long lasting until shortly before Straight's death. Brown's final affair was with James Stillman Rockefeller, a man fifteen years younger than Margaret, but no doubt her striking beauty helped him overlook the difference. Gary describes their meeting as love at first sight, which promised to be eternal. Unfortunately, fate had other plans.

There is an air of calmness, almost ethereal, as you read this book so I was not surprised to learn that other readers had felt the same thing. It is interesting that the often tempestuous life of Margaret Wise Brown should evoke the opposite feeling when you read this book. Try it and see what you think.

~ Marilyn Sanborn



Cut Out Here



Joy of Learning

TO REGISTER: Send your selections with your name, address and phone number to:
Joy of Learning, Post Office Box 480, Falmouth, Massachusetts 02541
Please keep course descriptions as your record.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I wish to enroll in the following courses

Islam

Falmouth Water

Portuguese

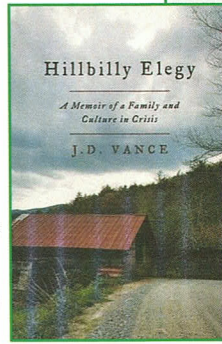
Law of the Sea



A Quartet of Short Reviews

HILLBILLY ELEGY J.D. Vance

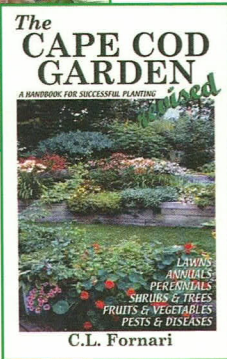
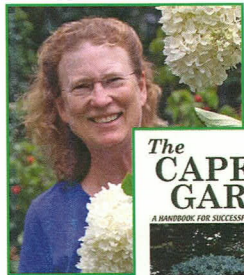
We've all heard and read about hillbillies, usually in a mocking tone. A popular sitcom years ago capitalized on the comic effect and the whole country laughed at their absurd antics. Hillbillies sure are funny. Right? Wrong! There is very little humor in the life of the author and his family living in Kentucky and then Ohio. Yelling, arguing, bad language and throwing things are common in his home with his mother and the endless number of boyfriends who move in. MaMaw, his grandmother, is the strong character who provides the home and the love that



a young boy needs growing up, but nonetheless, it is a sad story of poverty and trying to make do on much too little in a part of the country that is giving nowhere.

When he ultimately graduates from Yale Law School, his entire family sit proudly in the audience basking in his success and he is pleased to have them all there. He has always known how much he was loved.

Vance now lives in San Francisco and is a principal at a leading Silicon Valley investment firm.



THE CAPE COD GARDEN C.L. Fornari

Do you have a garden? Would you like to have a garden? Now? In the future? Well, here is the classic book you will need. The author is a celebrated lady on the Cape and rightfully so. I visited her garden on a tour several years ago, and she sat on her porch watching us and answering questions if you dared to approach her; and wonder of wonders, she gave out her email address. I tried her one morning and there she was, pleasant and ready to answer my questions. I continued to email her during the rest of that summer when I got into trouble in my garden, which was often.

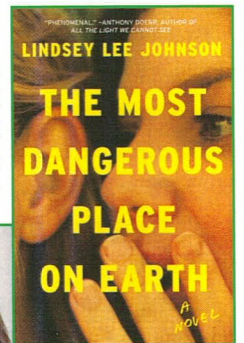
The format of the book works well for the beginner as well as the advanced. It is composed entirely of questions and answers, and covers pretty much all you need to know about gardening on the Cape or at least about planting. My garden is challenging as, according to a nice man from Jamaica, "I can't believe all you have in here." Is that a compliment?

I plan to be part of the Hydrangea Festival this year. I had to drop out last year when, as happened on most of the Cape, my hydrangeas failed to bloom. It will cost you five dollars, but the proceeds go to charity. Hope you will come by. Watch the paper for dates.

THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE ON EARTH Lindsey Lee Johnson

No, this is not one of those books that announces the end of the planet. It is a new novel I happened to see reviewed in Book Page (given out free at the library through the generosity of the Friends), and I decided to review it for the parents and grandparents of the young adults this book may be intended for. I always wondered what went on at the parties my high school daughters attended, but I'm sure there is no way they were as bad as this book describes. Not just the alcohol and drugs, but the total destruction of the interior of the homes where the parties were held. The kids were from fabled Marin County, near San Francisco, all of them wealthy and privileged and soon too drunk to care what they destroyed.

The author, who professes a great interest in the less likable kids, chooses four of them for a new young teacher to try to help with varying results. It is sometimes difficult to cheer very hard for them, but perhaps younger readers will feel differently. They are the product of a society that has evidently lost its bearings in a sea of drugs. Perhaps high schools ought to have a chapter of both AA and NA right on campus. I choose these organizations because they have a proven record of success, not because they alone can solve the problem.



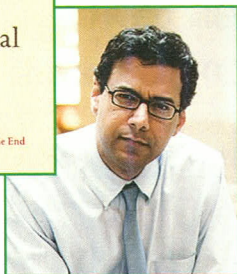
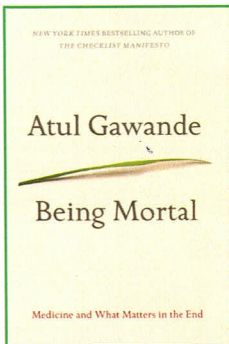
BEING MORTAL Atul Gawande

Gawande, an accomplished surgeon, writes very knowledgeably about the elderly and the problems of growing old and dying. This book particularly interested me because along with all the traditional descriptions of preparing for death, he included having people who lived in nursing homes and who were able to live relatively independently, put together a plan for what an ideal home should include. If you guess that it would be a lot more like your own home, you would be correct. You would give them more independence in their everyday life. Rooms would be arranged around a kitchen and dining room, and meals would be served when you wanted them. It would have far fewer people to socialize with, which would make it easier to make friends.

Of course, it would work only for patients who needed a minimum of help. It would also be more expensive to build and maintain, so few are available now, but it is a move in the right direction.

The woman in Gawande's anecdotes, who manages an apartment building with elderly people of all levels of competence staying in their own homes is beyond belief, but she proves that dedication can accomplish miracles I guess. This is not an idea that will catch on.

~ Marilyn Sanborn



For full information about activities planned to accompany Falmouth Reads Together, including a talk by Atul Gawande, go to falmouthpubliclibrary.org and click on falmouthreadstogether. A second book, *Why Can't We All Be Pleasant*, is also offered for 2017, in addition to a selection of several books for children.



I've been thinking about democracy a lot recently since watching both national conventions. I severely curtailed my beauty sleep all eight nights in order to hear the keynote speakers, and some nights I stayed up even later to rant about them. But I figure it was worth it.

This presidential election is like no other in the history of our country. We have a candidate with no political experience who was nominated for the greatest political position in the world via the democratic process. People all over this large country voted for Trump with record breaking numbers and the republican national party has been going through contortions trying to come to grips with that fact. Some republicans with power tried to prevent him from receiving the party's nomination, despite his having more than the required number of delegates. Later, Trump said in his acceptance speech, that he "alone" can fix things. No matter which candidate you prefer, these things (and more I don't have room to list) can get one thinking about the meaning of democracy and how our processes work.

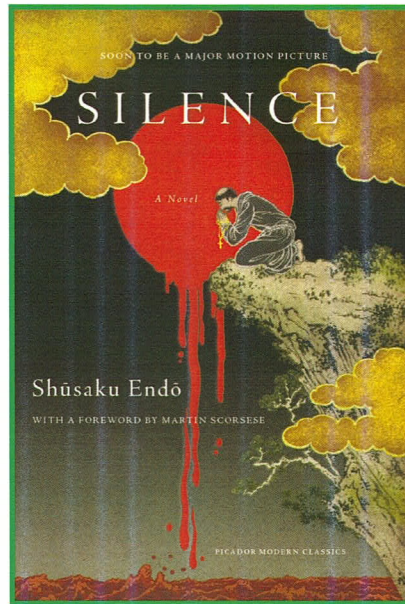
So, with current events in mind, I hold up a masterpiece that will educate and inspire all readers: *Democracy in America* by Alexis De Tocqueville, volume 1 of which was originally published in Paris in 1835 (only 500 copies) and volume 2, in 1840. Tocqueville, a young French lawyer, traveled around the United States for nine months in 1831 to learn about American politics, law and social practice. The result of his reconnaissance and subsequent research is this classic two volume book, still revered today. (A CNN panelist, just mentioned it on air this week, as a matter of fact.)

We have the Library of America edition translated by Arthur Goldhammer on our library shelves for all to read. On the back cover it states, "This volume presents an entirely new translation of what is arguably the most perceptive and influential book ever written about American politics and society. Arthur Goldhammer's translation is the first to capture the precision and grace of Tocqueville's style while providing a rigorous and faithful rendering of his profound ideas and observations. Democracy in America vividly describes the unprecedented 'equality of conditions' Tocqueville found in the United States during his visit in 1831-1832 ...".

Alexis De Tocqueville was born at Verneuil, France on July 29, 1805 and died in Cannes on April 16, 1859. So this "Friday Reads" post for July 29, is written with thoughts of him.

Movie Review SILENCE by Shusaku Endo

The currently featured movie, *Silence*, is based on a novel of the same name by Japanese writer, Shusaku Endo. It was written in 1969, and has undergone twenty-seven printings and numerous translations. Its historical background is of the past five hundred years in Japan. In the year 1549, Francis Xavier, a Spanish priest introduced the Catholic religion to the island kingdom. His proselytizing efforts were tolerated and, though he remained only three years, led to a Catholic membership of one hundred fifty thousand within about fifty years. As the population grew, the rulers weighed the Christian presence suspiciously and then with hostility. By the time of the beginning of the novel, intolerance was total: Christians, whether native or foreign, were being hunted down and compelled to renounce allegiance to their faith. The alternative was torture; ending with a cruel death. Many remained faithful, others defected.



During conversations with his captive, the interrogator, called Inoue, poses comparisons between western and Japanese culture. When he vaunts the Japanese over the European, the priest seems to miss the point. The priest's mind is caught up with spiritual resources from his years of training. He knows he will need them in the travails ahead.

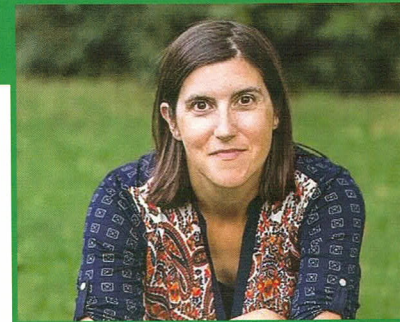
The author was in favor of Japan being Christianized. God is the God of the Japanese as well as of the rest of the world. Endo however wanted the Catholic Church to use the same cultural creativity approach for his country that Rome used toward pagan Europe in the early days. He equated the level of culture of Japan with Europe under Greco-Roman influence. He poses the problem of determining how much of Japanese culture Rome should have absorbed before attempting to Christianize it.

The story begins as two young Portuguese priests, Sebastian Rodriguez and Francisco Garrpe, intent on providing religious services to the fugitives, secretly enter the kingdom and administer the sacraments. Eventually they are captured. One of them, Francisco, achieves the palm of martyrdom. The other, Sebastian, the protagonist of the story, fails. He saves his life by desecrating an image of Christ. Instead of execution, he is imprisoned in a decent domicile for the remainder of his days. Though he is required to spend time each day assisting in the ferreting out of remnants of Christianity, he quietly works to restore his interior bearing as a Catholic priest.

Questions arise. Why was God silent while Sebastian Rodriguez was being mortally tested for his faith? Just what does the silence of God mean? How could he have broken his silence? Should he have rescued the priest or provided some form of immunization? Should he have signaled in some extraordinary way his concern for what was happening to his disciple? Was he really silent? Did the priest fail because of some character defect or because the whole approach to Japan was on the wrong track?

No wonder that this book is considered one of the most significant publications of its kind in the twentieth century. It is available in the CLAMS network.
~ Gregory Gillis

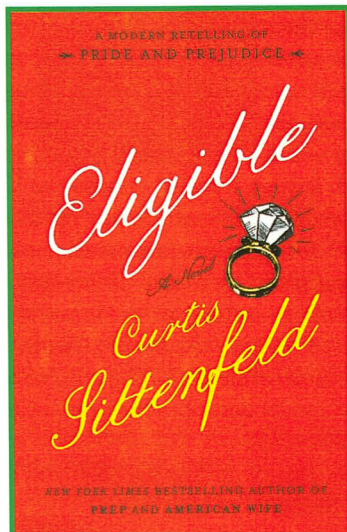
Curtis Sittenfeld and her books



I always become apprehensive when I do not have something good to read, particularly a newly discovered author that I have never heard of. I first saw ads for a new novel called *Prep*, and, because I am part of a large group in the reading public that might be called the Holden Caulfield Club, I made a note of the title for a later time.

That time arrived when the author of *Prep* published a new novel called *Eligible*. When I read that it was a take off on *Pride and Prejudice*, I groaned. I had read Alice Hoffman's take off on *Wuthering Heights* years before with negative results. My opinion did not change after I read *Eligible*, but I thought I might find *Prep* more to my liking. I was right. I was off on a long period of reading Sittenfeld.

Before *Eligible*, there had been four novels, *Prep*, *American Wife*, *Sisterland*, and *The Man of My Dreams*. I read them all and I liked them all (with reservations of course). I began with the first of these.



side. You root for her to come out of her depression but it doesn't happen. Apparently, she will never be able to participate in school life.

She does fall in love with the most desirable boy in the class who ignores her throughout the four years with but one exception. He does come secretly to her bed in the middle of the night, establishes an intimate relationship with her and leaves. These visits go on for several nights, and then he is gone. The reader

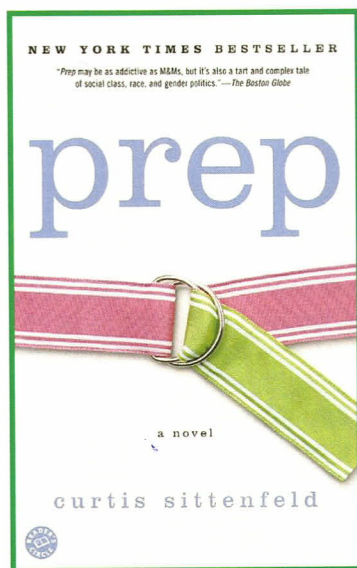
waits in vain throughout the book for some kind of de-nouement. What is offered at the end of the book is annoying rather than satisfying. In fact, a good deal of her actions are annoying. Didn't she know beforehand what kind of school Ault was? Why did she want to go there in the first place? It has to be filled with kids from the elite group and usually rich ones too. Did she think she would belong in that group? Was she too immature to understand?

Having said all that, I am sure that it would be difficult for most anyone to be happy at a school like Ault. It exists to educate the cream of the crop and to weed out those who do not measure up. The measuring up may be more difficult than the academic requirements.

Prep is inevitably compared with *The Catcher in the Rye* but so is every novel about prep school. There is one big difference between these two books. For what it is worth, Holden Caulfield left and Lee Fiori stayed.

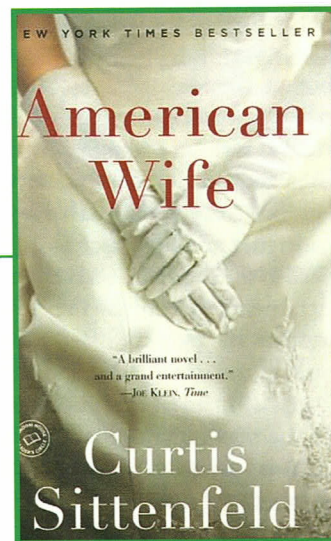
American Wife

The second book has a title designed to catch the eye of many American women. If you neglect to read the information at the beginning of this book, you will not know that the wife is loosely based



Prep

Prep is short for preparatory, usually used in reference to a private school, very often in New England. The school's name in the book is The Ault School, clearly designed to be unhelpful in discovering the school's real name, but there are enough clues as you read to identify the school as Exeter. If you have ever wanted to know what it would be like to be a student at Exeter (or Andover or St. Paul's), here is your chance as the protagonist, Lee Fiori from Indiana, takes the reader through almost a day by day account at least of her Freshman year. It is not a happy account. Her introspection is deep and we hear the sad strains of it continually, day after day, year after year. At one point it seems as though things are improving but that hope is quickly dashed by Lee's insistence on choosing the dark



on Laura Bush, but knowing this, it is all too easy to pair all the other characters with those in real life. The husband could be George Bush and surely the dominating mother-in-law sounds much like Barbara Bush.

However, this is Alice's story. She is seemingly a nondescript character, a bookish, only child, very much out of place within this powerful family. She is an elementary school librarian who enjoys her job, appears to be content living with her parents and her grandmother, and is skeptical when she meets Charlie Blackwell, that he is a man she would consider marrying. She recognizes the gap between his wealthy, prominent, actively political Republican family and her modest middle class background.

Something in Charlie is drawn to the unambitious Alice, and he persists in his courtship. They are married and her life follows quite closely what we the public know of it except for the added introspection in which Alice is continually engaged. The reader gets the impression that she has honest doubts not only before but after they are married. At one point she considers divorce during his drinking years, but things improve after he stops drinking and he continues on with his years of running for office, ultimately to the presidency.

Do many women wish to be First Lady? Perhaps, but this woman was not one of them.

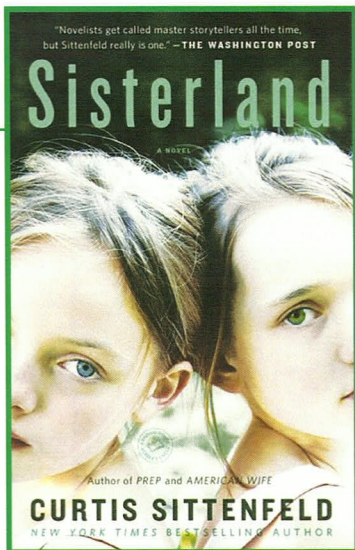
Sisterland

A great wave of protest went up from the Amazon group after they read Curtis Sittenfeld's new novel, *Sisterland*. They all agreed the novel was boring! That is their opinion and perhaps it is. Most novels are unable to avoid being dull in some part or parts, but on the whole I found *Sisterland* intriguing.

This time, Sittenfeld has taken on twins and we brace ourselves for a double amount of her particular prose. Kate and Vi are close growing up together and both are aware that the other has a special gift of seeing what is going to happen in the future. Vi takes advantage of this and predicts there will be an earthquake on a particular date. Kate is annoyed by the gift and appears to wish she did not have it.

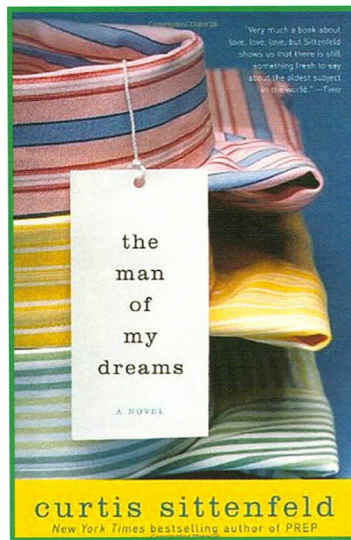
Kate marries Jeremy and has two children, Rosie and Owen. Vi becomes a lesbian and has a relationship with a woman. Kate has a one night stand with a neighbor and becomes pregnant. Jeremy is upset, but after long discussions and introspection, he agrees to accept the child and raise it as his own.

Now we have some suspense. Will the predicted earthquake happen? Will Jeremy really accept the child when it is



born? What did their father mean when he hinted that he too had the gift? Could Vi survive if there were no earthquake?

Apparently so. The baby is born. They name him Gabe. He becomes part of the family although Kate detects at times a less than parental love by Jeremy for Gabe. Other than that, all appears to be going well. Perhaps they had seen the end of the gift until one day Kate is changing Gabe and he looks up at her and says, "Rosie has a father. Owen has a father. I wonder who my father is." Kate knew one of her three children would have the gift, but she thought it would be Rosie.



The Man Of My Dreams

The fourth book in the Quartet is less intense, and although there is the ubiquitous feminine protagonist, she is less compulsively introspective, at least by comparison with the earlier books. Still, as in *Prep*, we do suffer through another case of unrequited love.

Hannah, who, with her mother and sister, is periodically thrown out of the house by a possibly psychotic father, survives these traumatic events and all three go to live with relatives next door. These relatives include her gorgeous cousin nicknamed Fig, who plays a part in getting Hannah through adolescence. Actually, Fig too needs some help.

For most single women, meeting an appropriate man is the main goal in life and Hannah is no exception. She becomes best friends with Henry. She would prefer to be his girlfriend, but he already has one. She meets Mike, whom she likes, but he can't be the one because he embarrasses her with his mispronunciations and her family would not think he was cute. Oliver is sophisticated and fun to be with, but he is a skirt chaser, a fact she becomes aware of early in their relationship.

She still corresponds with Henry who has moved to Albuquerque and suggests she come out to visit. She does, hopeful of a new beginning, but he is now married, although still wanting to be friends.

The finale has Hannah grilling hamburgers and more or less ready to look for the next one.

How much of a fool is Hannah? Would many single girls put up with Henry for that long? I rooted for her until she opted for Albuquerque. That was a bridge too far for me.

Sittenfeld writes so well, that you become involved with her characters and want them to get whatever they want in life. Unfortunately, she seldom cares to oblige.

The acknowledgments in the back of the book tell us that Sittenfeld has a boyfriend "who is dreamy". ~ Marilyn Sanborn

EDITOR'S NOTE

Faith Lee's article about Alexis de Toqueville's great book, *Democracy in America*, could not be more timely. If you decide to give it a try, here are a few pointers. Don't consider reading it straight through. Be selective. It is divided into two books. You will find all his descriptions of the cities and towns he visited in America and what he thought of them in Book 1. The second volume is philosophical and reads almost like a textbook in political science.

Toqueville saw that democracy was beginning to sweep through Europe and he wanted to be able to help when France's turn came. To do that, he had to see democracy in action. On the whole, I felt that he was too much of an aristocrat to be comfortable with democracy. I also realized that America had an easier time because we were starting from scratch, while Europe had to get rid of the Old Regimes first.

We really have been incredibly lucky, but perhaps our luck is running out. Our system of government is now being attacked by people who have no understanding of just how fragile democracy is. ~ Marilyn Sanborn

FROM THE PRESIDENT

WE'VE MADE A CHANGE!

ANNUAL MEETING (no longer on Saturday)

Monday, April 24th. Save the date

In the Hermann Room of the Falmouth Public Library

Brief Business Meeting at 11:00 am

Luncheon at 12:00

Looking forward to seeing you

VOLUNTEERS needed for the **Summer Book Sale**, the library's largest fundraiser, July 1st to July 6th, for three hour shifts.

Call 508-457-2555, extension 2918, and leave a message or drop your name off at the Friends Room on the lower level of the library. You will be contacted in May or June for scheduling.

SORTING in the Friends Room **on a regular basis**

We will train you in our system, to work in a very pleasant atmosphere. Please consider joining us

Call Yang Conley at 508-548-1825

Friends of the Falmouth Public Library

P.O. BOX 480

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Change Service Requested

Joy of Learning

New Courses Starting April 5, 2017

SIGN UP TODAY

