

Check It Out!

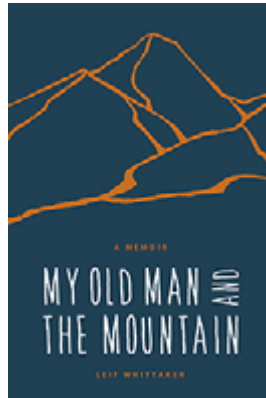
Shared Reading Is Sublime Community Read 2018: *My Old Man and the Mountain*

by Melody Sky Eisler, Library Director

The experience of reading the same book with your community is magical. Books connect strangers: someone in a coffee shop reading your favorite book is suddenly kin, both of you belonging to the same literary world. This human connection struck me last year during the library's solar eclipse viewing party, when more than 200 attendees shared glasses and watched together. Eclipse viewing stories now create an immediate sense of camaraderie for me.

Similarly, as I finalized the choice for this year's Community Read—the sublime *My Old Man and the Mountain* by Port Townsend's own Leif Whittaker (right), about one young man's coming of age on the world's tallest mountain—I had a shared-experience déjà vu: Community Read is like an astronomical phenomenon. As astronomer Carl Sagan observed, "Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time . . ."

The *Pocket Oxford English Dictionary* defines *sublime* to mean of such excellence, grandeur,



or beauty as to inspire great admiration or awe. What could be more sublime than Everest? Growing up with a father who happened to be the first American to summit Mount Everest?

Maybe. But Leif Whittaker's memoir is not his father's story. The son's chronicle brings a fresh perspective to a famous father and a legacy forged on the icy slopes of the world's highest peak. It is a unique coming-of-age tale and climbing adventure that, publisher Mountaineers Books wrote, "lights the imagination and fills an emotional human endeavor with universal meaning." In it we find a delightful mix of the regional and the global. Early we see Whittaker bedecked in scuba mask and flippers for his high school graduation in Port Townsend; later, we find him atop Mount Everest wearing Eddie Bauer mountaineering gear.

Whittaker's memoir brings courage, humor, adventure, and celebration of some of our hometown heroes to our monthlong reading festivities. I hope you will join us in building community through the sublime act of shared reading. ∞

Community Read Events

Programs during **March** will include live readings of the book with **PT Shorts**; a **Northwind Arts Center** juried show, "Courage to Climb," with selected artwork inspired by *My Old Man and the Mountain*; a discussion on **International Women's Day** about the historical sloop *Felicity Ann*; adventure photography with Olympic Peninsula

photographer **Christian Coxen**; and community book discussions taking place around town. Find details (and books) at the library and on the library's website, ptpubliclibrary.org.

Leif Whittaker will conclude the month with an author talk at **6:30 PM, Thursday, March 29**, at the Port Townsend High School Auditorium. A

book signing will follow, with books available from Imprint Books.

Community Read 2018 is made possible through generous support from the Friends of the Port Townsend Library, the Port Townsend Public Library Foundation, Kris Nelson's Family of Restaurants, and many community supporters.

Books Are for Babies

BY LYNN NOWAK

*Read to me and watch me grow.
Tell me all the tales you know.
For in this life, I'll need a map.
Let it begin upon your lap.*

—Judi Moreillon

Cuddling together with a good book is one of the best ways for a child and a parent—or grandparent or guardian—to connect and foster lasting bonds with each other, not to mention a lifelong love of reading. The Port Townsend Library's Books for Babies program, which began in 2001 and is still going strong, helps introduce reading early, thereby getting children started on a pathway to books.

"When I first heard about the program, it brought a smile to my face and created a warm spot in my heart imagining new moms and dads with a book and a baby in their lap," said Friends' President Ellen Dustman.



Librarian Jeanne Simmons (above left) and mom Kai Wallin show baby Kingston Sanderson one of the books in the Friends' Books for Babies bag (left).

Books for Babies offers books to all families of babies born at Jefferson Healthcare hospital in Port Townsend. Bags are prepared at the library and contain a board book, a brochure with suggestions for aiding early literacy, and a list of current storytime offerings for children and their families at the Port Townsend Library. The Friends of the Port Townsend Library furnishes and fills the bags.

A generous recent grant from the Port Townsend Kiwanis Club, which supports various children's programs, has given Books for Babies a real boost, enabling it to continue.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends reading aloud to children from birth. A critical part of the brain develops within the first year of a child's life, so reading aloud can be a regular family activity—from infancy. Reading aloud teaches babies about communication; introduces concepts such as colors, letters, numbers, and shapes; builds listening and memory skills; and informs youngsters about their world. And just last year, new research presented to the American Academy of Pediatrics showed that reading books with a child beginning in early infancy can raise vocabulary and reading skills four years later, before the start of elementary school. Carolyn Cates, a research assistant professor of pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine, called the results exciting because they suggest that reading has a lasting effect on language, literacy, and early reading skills.

"The importance of reading begins at birth, but sadly there are homes that do not have any books," said Hilary Verheggen, youth services manager at the Port Townsend Library.

"One of the benefits of this program is connecting the library to families in the community," Verheggen continued. "By including a flyer for our storytimes, we are able to make parents and caregivers aware of our early literacy programs geared toward newborns through preschool. It is our hope that families who begin to attend these programs see the library as a place they can come to learn, grow, play, and meet others."

Families are delighted with the book bags handed out at the hospital, according to Tanya Foldager, a registered nurse and certified childbirth educator at Jefferson Healthcare. The hospital distributes gift bags to the parents of

all babies born at the hospital. Tucked inside are the library bags. "Parents usually say, 'Wonderful!' when they discover the board book in the bag," she said. "They love it." She suggested that new moms and dads seem to appreciate the head start they're able to give their newborns.

Foldager said she herself is a huge proponent of reading and libraries. "And as nurses, we're big on education. We know that the earlier you read to a child, the better."

"The Friends of the Port Townsend Library is very happy to be a long-standing supporter of the Books for Babies program," Dustman said. Library Director Melody Eisler added, "Early literacy is a core service of public libraries, as is inspiring a lifelong love of reading in all our patrons."



A FEW PICTURE BOOKS ABOUT READING

On Mother's Lap by Ann Herbert Scott

It's a Book by Lane Smith

Library Lion by Michelle Knudsen

The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore
by William Joyce

AND A REFERENCE BOOK ABOUT CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Read to Me NOW, Grandpa: A Guide for Sharing Books with Grandchildren by Larry Welch



BOOK SALE

Saturday + March 17

9 AM to 3 PM

Open to Friends members at 8 AM

Port Townsend Community Center

Corner of Lawrence & Tyler

1 to 3 PM

Big bag of books \$4 (\$3 for members)

What Friends Are Reading

◆ *Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*

Debby Irving (2014)

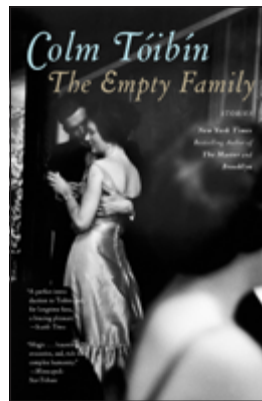
I never considered myself prejudiced and certainly not racist, but reading Irving's book opened my eyes to the subtle and unconscious ways the vast majority of us see through a different lens others who don't look like us. Irving's courage, in discovering and exposing her own "cringe-worthy" prejudices from growing up in a privileged white family, is admirable. But I recommend this book mainly because I think many readers will see some aspect of themselves in her story.

Starting from an "aha!" moment—"As a fish unable to recognize its surrounding waters, I'd never noticed the culture of white superiority in which I now understood I'd been soaking"—Irving learns that race is more of a social construct than biological certainty. She muses, "In the midst of getting my understanding of racial categories shaken up, I started thinking, What if, instead of categorizing people by skin color, hair color was the guiding attribute? To compare it to the way race works in America, I loaded up categories with narrowly defined assumptions. I imagined a world where redheads were perceived as smart and powerful, black-haired people as artistic, brunettes as able to work long grueling hours, and blonds as lazy. . . . In March 1960, America's four-hundred-year-old skin color sorting and ranking system landed me in the redhead equivalent, the white skin category—the dominant, top-of-the-heap group."

And so goes her thought-provoking examination of the continuing nuances of white superiority—despite years of attempts to foster racial equality. Irving poses questions in each chapter to help us rethink our own concepts about racism. What hit home for me was, "Have you ever benefited from family connections and/or family funds to further your career? Get into a school? Attain housing? From which racial group were those family connections?" Not only is this book compelling, but such questions make it a great choice for book groups.

Bottom line: This is a great book!

—Ellen Dustman



◆ *The Empty Family and Mothers and Sons*

Colm Tóibín (2010 and 2006)

Colm Tóibín wrote *Brooklyn* (2009), on which the movie of the same name is based, but he is also the author of numerous other novels, nonfiction books, a play, poetry, and short stories. Tóibín is a quiet observer, whose craft as a writer is at its best in his short stories. He conveys his characters' innermost thoughts and feelings with uncanny insight, exploring the realms of love, longing, isolation, secrecy, and the need for escape. I am particularly amazed by his ability to convincingly relate stories from a female perspective.

When I picked up *The Empty Family* and started the first story, "Silence," I was hooked. Lady Gregory, mourning the end of a love affair with a fellow poet, is able to keep the affair secret, while at the same time ensuring that it will be forever commemorated. This story takes place in nineteenth-century England, with James Joyce making an appearance; other stories are set in present-day Ireland and in Spain.

"The Name of the Game" in *Mothers and Sons* is another remarkable story. Nancy, a widow, is struggling to bring her family out of debt. She opens a chip shop, at great risk, but is successful despite opposition from townspeople. Both she and her son work hard at the shop, even while nurturing conflicting dreams of escape. Although the storylines in "The Name of the Game" and *Brooklyn* are very different, we see in both the competing gravitational forces of place, family, and freedom that feature so prominently in Tóibín's writing.

—Christine Heycke



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Every Christmas Story
Ever Told

◆ *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*

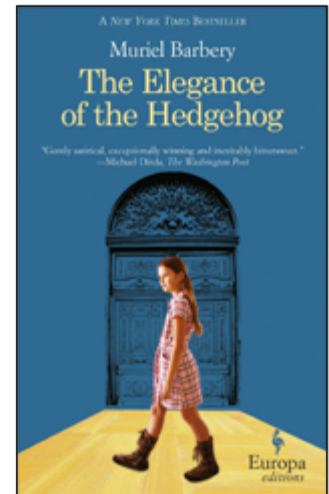
Muriel Barbery (2006)

The Elegance of the Hedgehog is a quiet, philosophical novel, filled not with action but with the thoughts of its two main protagonists. Paloma is the super-intelligent twelve-year-old daughter of a wealthy French politician. Renée is the super-intelligent self-educated fifty-four-year-old concierge of the luxurious eight-unit hotel where Paloma lives with her family in the center of Paris. Though separated by age and class, Paloma and Renée share much in their perspectives on life: a need to hide intelligence; the pleasure in a cup of tea; an appreciation of art; an abhorrence of the class system; and, finally, a developing friendship.

I first began this book in the audio version, gradually coming to appreciate the touching and often humorous commentary of the two narrators. Then, about halfway through, I obtained the written version, realizing I wanted to see and savor the language and insights expressed. The *Chicago Sun-Times* warns, “This story, like all great tales, will break your heart, but it will also make you realize—or remember—that sometimes the pain is worth it, that there’s also enough beauty in the world, but only if you see beyond yourself.” I seldom reread books, but, after listening to most of this book, my second time through with a hard copy felt important.

If you can find calm moments and pay attention, even the falling of a rose petal can bring deep peace and satisfaction. Soon I will turn 70, and questions about the meaning of life seem to rise regularly to the surface. *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* is helping me think and act in ways I like, shining light on just why life might be worth living.

—Phyllis Marckworth



◆ *Fire and Fury*

Michael Wolff (2018)

I put myself on the library’s waiting list for this book as soon as I heard about it and got lucky: the book came just days after most of the media frenzy was subsiding.

Fire and Fury describes the major milestones—and players—during the last several months of the 2016 presidential campaign through October 2017. Some of these activities and players are now being investigated by Congress and a Special Counsel. Wolff includes the backgrounds of many of these persons of interest—family members, deep-pocketed donors, hangers-on, yes-men (and women), and foreign influences.

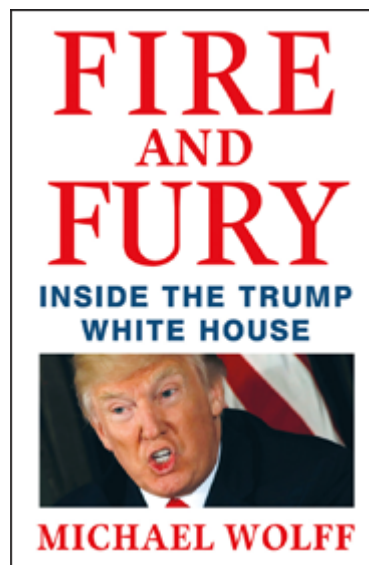
Wolff has said that he derived his material from over 200 interviews with White House staff members—from secretarial assistants to top officials. Many spoke openly (and candidly) to him as he wandered freely throughout the halls with his special pink Press pass, which even allowed him access to the West Wing and Oval Office. He was a first-person observer to outbursts, arguments, and anguish in the Trump White House, recounting a revolving door of hirings, firings, and chaos.

As relayed by Wolff, Trump’s close adviser Steve Bannon was particularly open with his praise and misgivings. Bannon had a front-row seat to the squabbles with “Jarvanka” (Jared and Ivanka) and Trump’s tirades while learning about political maneuvering. *Learning* is the operative word, since Donald Trump and his mismatched cadre of inexperienced politicians had never imagined that their erratic, over-the-top candidate would win the presidency—something that wasn’t supposed to happen. Derailed were Trump’s and his advisors’ plans for capitalizing on a good “show” to further their own business ambitions. Indeed, they were expected to govern.

Wolff is a journalist, and I was pleasantly surprised by his writing style, as well as his use of language (I kept dictionary at hand). I also interpreted his approach as relatively unbiased, as one would hope from a journalist, despite

his politically hot topic. All in all, I found *Fire and Fury* to be interesting, informative, and just plain enjoyable.

—Kathleen Hawn



◆ *The Greatest Knight and The Scarlet Lion*

Elizabeth Chadwick (2005 and 2006)

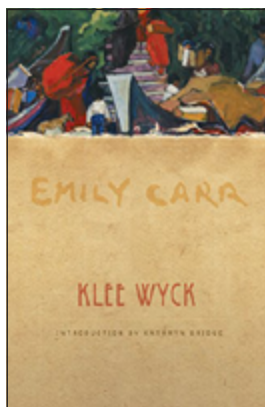
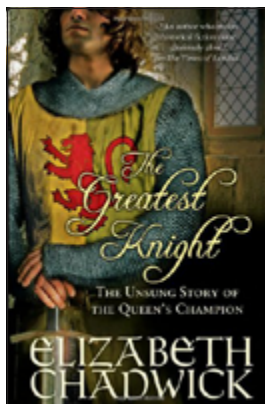
I discovered these novels while trying to satisfy my curiosity about Eleanor of Aquitaine. The books are the first two in a five-volume series based on the life of medieval knight William Marshal and generations of his family.

The story unfolds with a young and raw knight-errant, who in time becomes a famous tournament knight and eventually one of the most powerful men in England. His life, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is one of adventure, deceit, and romance.

A major force throughout, Eleanor of Aquitaine initially ransoms William after he was captured in an ambush. Later she convinces her son King Richard (the Lionheart) to confirm William's marriage to Isabelle de Clare, the seventeen-year-old daughter of Richard de Clare. Because the girl's holdings include estates and claims in England, Wales, Normandy, and Ireland, the affiliation gives William riches as well as power. From a lowly hearth-knight William ultimately serves five monarchs, finally ascending to regent and protector of nine-year-old King Henry III.

The story makes for a rollicking read, made even better by its basis in history and the life of a man who was instrumental in shaping medieval history. Chadwick fleshes out all sorts of historical characters, bringing the reader to really care about them. I knew I had come upon a good read when I found myself thinking about how despicable Henry II was and worrying about the outcome of yet another twist in the story.

—*Fran Post*



◆ *Klee Wyck*

Emily Carr (2003)

Emily Carr (1871–1945) is best known for her paintings of early British Columbia's first peoples, their art, and the primeval forests. To help remember details, she made notes during her sketching and painting visits to abandoned and occupied villages and their surroundings.

Carr was similarly meticulous in her crafting of the twenty-one original *Klee Wyck* vignettes, first published in 1941. According to this book's introduction by archivist Kathryn Bridge—who is responsible for the 2003 publication of this unexpurgated edition by Canadian publisher Douglas & McIntyre—Carr later remarked, “I did not know book rules. I made two for myself. They were about the same as the principles I use in painting—get to the point as directly as you can; never use a big word if a little one will do.”

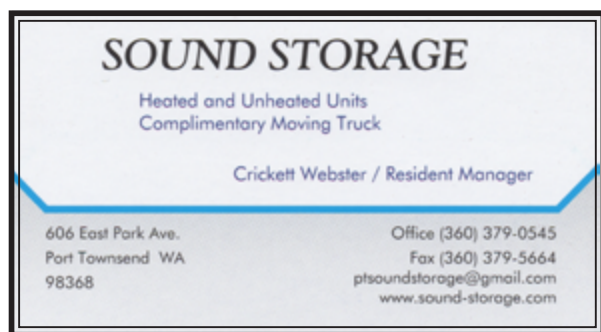
Bridge explains that Carr’s “aim was to bring life and dignity to these people, to give them individuality and voice. She also wanted to show, through her writings, the harm she saw inflicted on First Nations people by the settler society . . . whose racist views not only blinded them to the values of aboriginal culture but reinforced their assumption that these people were a dying race.”

This book of stories gives a moving peek into the life and culture of first peoples, even as they were being destroyed by European settlers and missionaries.

—*Geralynn Rackowski*

Our Library's Top Ten “Bestsellers”

1. *Hillbilly Elegy* by J. D. Vance
2. *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead
3. *Commonwealth* by Ann Patchett
4. *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles
5. *The Wrong Side of Goodbye* by Michael Connelly
6. *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly
7. *Still Life* by Louise Penny
8. *Below the Belt* by Stuart Woods
9. *History of Wolves* by Emily Fridlund
10. *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante



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Friends of the Port Townsend Library qualifies for tax exemption under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code, and your member donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Our membership year runs from June 1 to May 31. Member donations may be paid at the library, by credit card on the Friends' section of the library's website (www.ptpubliclibrary.org/SupportYourLibrary/FriendsoftheLibrary), or by mailing this form with your check, made out to Friends of the Port Townsend Library (FOPTL), to

Friends of the Port Townsend Library
1220 Lawrence St., Port Townsend, WA 98368

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☐ Special events
☐ Other _____

Welcome to Our New Members

All our members are wonderful. We couldn't fund our library's programs without you. We are always excited to introduce new members, including the following, who have joined since our October 2017 newsletter. Welcome!

Suzannah Barbour	James Kelly
Jim Bradley	Christina Lacie
Michele Bruns	Kris Leathers
Jo Chandler	Lucinda Littin
Brad Collier	Dominica Lord-Wood
David Covert	Lila Moses
Donna Du Fresne	Oliver Phillips
Janette Force	Ruth Rossi
Kate Fox	Irene Rubin
Diana Frantz	Amy Ruggles
Kirstin Frederickson	Laura Simpson
Taine Gavin	Laurel Solana
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Maryellen Kelly	Claudia Zysk

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BOOK SALE
Uptown Community Center
March 17, 2018
Welcome to another year!



Who We Are

THE PORT TOWNSEND public library was founded in 1898 by volunteers and, thanks to continuing community support, has remained an active Carnegie Library since the building opened in 1913.

The Friends of the Port Townsend Library, established in 1978, helps fund services and materials beyond what the library's city budget covers. We support reading programs, events, and activities for all ages. Each year, we also hold three book sales and publish three newsletters. Current issues are available in the library, around town, or at ptpubliclibrary.org/SupportYourLibrary/FriendsoftheLibrary.

Our funding comes primarily from memberships, donations, and book sales. Anyone may become a member, attend our monthly board meetings, or join our board. Board meetings take place on the second Wednesday of each month, 3:30 PM, at the Library Learning Center (corner of Lawrence and Harrison). To volunteer or join the board, please e-mail us at friendsofptlibrary@gmail.com.

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