



BOOK CLUB
BOOK LIST JULY 15, 2022

“The Tyranny of Merit” by Michael Sande (2021) The author and acclaimed professor, examines the limits of meritocracy as it applies to education and meritocracy’s negative aspect. Equating human worth with educational achievement devalues others and can lead to more partisanship and polarization at the expense of community. Two thirds of Americans don’t go to college. High achievers often forget/neglect role of luck and birth.

“Rationality: What It Is, Why It Seems Scarce, Why It Matters” (2021) by Steven Pinker This is a comprehensive book about thinking rationally and logically, pitfalls and blind spots.

“This is Happiness” by Niall Williams (2021) Fiction This Irish author pens an enchanting book about a fictional town in Ireland and a 17- year- old boy. Highly recommended!

“Brief Answers to the Big Questions” by Stephen Hawking (2020) Our reviewer says this nonfiction book is very readable. It addresses ten big questions about God, the universe, and cosmology.

“There Are Places in the World Where Rules Are Less Important Than Kindness: And Other Thoughts on Physics, Philosophy and the World” by Carlo Rovelli (2022) Highly recommended book of short essays by a brilliant physicist. The author reflects on his time in Africa, religion, and various other topics.

“Love Songs of W.E.B. Dubois” by Honoree Jeffers (2021) A fictional story about a black southern family in rural GA and their northern cousins narrated by a daughter who becomes an historian. It also includes a history of their roots starting with Indians who were displaced, colonial America including white ancestors, slavery, and a college founded by former slaves. Much is written about discrimination including blacks favoring light complected or biracial people, black churches, racism, misogyny, family ties, friendship and soul food. There is sexual abuse in colonial times and a nearly white grandfather, an M.D., who molested 3 granddaughters. Well written but perhaps too much details about their cooking and produce.

“His Truth is Marching On: John Lewis and the power of hope” by Jon Meacham (2020) It’s a well written bio of John Lewis (1940–2020), Georgia congressman and civil rights leader. The focus is on Lewis’s experiences during the late 1950s and ’60s as chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNC) and a leader in crucial civil rights actions. He was committed to non-violence and integration, but sidelined by the SNC when the group altered its goals. The book begins with Lewis’ humble rural beginnings, preaching to the chickens as a child, theological education and early involvement in civil rights. He served as a congressman from GA until his death. He was arrested and beaten many times, and had his skull fractured during the Bloody Sunday march in Selma, where, “trapped between asphalt and his uniformed attackers, inhaling tear gas and reeling from the billyclub blow to his head, [he] felt everything dimming.”

“Acts of Resistance: A freedom rider looks back at the civil rights movement” by Judith Frieze Wright (2019) Short and interesting autobiography of a naïve young idealist who volunteers for the freedom riders, the people she met from courageous blacks to violent racists. She spent time in prison which was harmful to her health but continued to be an activist. Great descriptions of the travels of the buses in the south. <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/wright-judy>

“When the Emperor Was Divine” by Julie Otsuka (2003) Fiction A short moving book about Japanese Internment in 1942 through the eyes of a child.

“Freezing Order: A True Story of Money Laundering, Murder, and Surviving Vladimir Putin's Wrath” by Bill Browder (2022) The nonfictional account by the man behind the Magnitsky Act as he follows the Russian oligarchs up the money chain to Putin, and the dangers he confronts. A true thriller, like his last book “Red Notice”.

“Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin” by Timothy Snyder (2022) Bloodlands chronicles the pre-WWII experience of the people who live in the lands lying between Germany and western Russia (Poland, Belarus, the Baltic States and Ukraine), i.e. mass murder on a huge scale. To understand Ukraine today, and their determination to fight Russia, read this book! The maps included are essential to trace the changing borders. How did we not know this history?