

# BookMarks!

You've got to read this!

Volume 3, Issue 1

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## Quick Picks

### BookMarks Check List

Books I want to read:

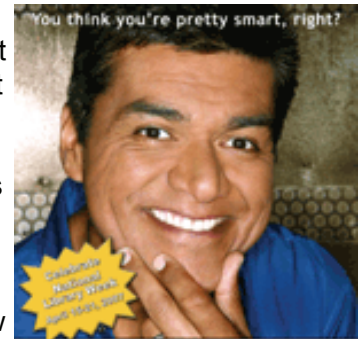
- The Year of Yes* \*
- Water for Elephants* \*\*\*\*
- Academy X* \*\*\*
- Wild Fire* \*\*\*
- Absent Friends* \*\*\*\*
- A Dying Fall* \*\*
- Gone* \*
- The Wal-Mart Effect: How the World's Most Powerful Company Really Works - and How It's Transforming the American Economy* \*\*\*\*

### Ratings Scale

- \* - I would rather research the origins of ridged toothpaste caps
- \*\* - I've read worse. Bring it on!
- \*\*\* - Like having a good vacation and plenty of time to read.
- \*\*\*\* - Like winning a shopping spree to any bookstore you choose!

## Did You Know There Was A National Library Week?

There's a national day or week or month for just about everything. Usually it means you have to fund or plant something. If you guessed that you need to plant a library, you might be wrong, but funding might be a little closer to the truth. What National Library Week is really all about is celebrating your library and its staff. We're actually not seeking a pat on the back. What we really want to do is to remind you of the importance of libraries in our society. Think about how much information is available to you just by walking into a building and asking for it. And nowadays, you don't even have to go to a building! In many cases, you can use the online resources which are paid for and provided by libraries. In addition, you can call, email, IM, or use other types of virtual reference for librarian assistance. It's a new world and the libraries are there to help you through it. So, as the American Library Association encourages, use this week to celebrate the contribution of libraries and their staff and to promote library use and support. Our society will be better because of it. - Gena Craig



Today's library is not what you remember. It's even better. Want to research your next vacation? Get homework help? Write a resume? Find the best? Or maybe you just want to curl up with your favorite book and enjoy some peace and quiet? It's all at your library. Make a visit to your library a regular part of your schedule and bring the family.

A message from George Lopez about America's libraries

A.L.AmericanLibraryAssociation www.ala.org/americanlibraries

**George Lopez thinks you should celebrate your library!**



## BookMarks: The National Library Week Event

Join us to share your love of reading at [CPCCLibraries' BookMarks](#) event from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m., Friday, April 20, in LRC 404.

If you love books and are always in search of the next great read, you will want to attend this gathering. BookMarks isn't a book club, but rather an easy and fun way to get lots of book recommendations from your fellow booklovers.

Enjoy an atmosphere of fun and get some great book reviews. Drinks and desserts will be provided. Sign up for BookMarks in LearnerWeb for professional development credit.

# Academy



Features a  
librarian!!

by Andrew Trees

John Spencer teaches English in a New York private prep school (just as the novel's author does). This first-person narrative reveals a young educator already grown weary of the daily tribulations he must endure: unprepared students, power-hungry administrators, and bullying parents. Though he receives more lucrative job offers, he always stays put. He falls in love--or maybe it's lust--with a manipulative librarian who thinks he's in line for a promotion--but that's not his major problem. A bewitchingly beautiful student--whom John has accused of plagiarism--presents the Head with persuasive proof of John's sexual advances. The subsequent hearings that decide his fate are riveting and realistic stuff. Despite the seriousness of the plot, *Academy X* is a humorous novel: Each chapter is titled after a work of literature (*Romeo and Juliet*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Lolita*, etc.) and contains characters and story lines reflective of those works. John's observations as well as characters' dialogue are often laugh-out-loud funny: "I felt a slight flutter in my digestive organs that afternoon, which was either the result of an ill-advised go at the lunchtime pudding or unease at the upcoming department meeting." What teacher familiar with school cafeterias and department meetings can't relate to his plight? Just beneath the humor, Andrew Trees' first novel hints at current educational issues: the politics of grading, the negative impact of departmental politics, and the view of students as "customers." While educators may often chuckle while reading *Academy X*, much of the laughter may be a nervous laughter--as they recognize themselves in the story line.—Mike Shinn, *Disability Services*

## The Wal-Mart Effect: How the World's Most Powerful Company Really Works - and How It's Transforming the American Economy

by Charles Fishman

Almost everyone has an opinion about Wal-Mart, but Fishman's book makes a more salient point: we're all affected by Wal-Mart, whether we shop there or not. Fishman illustrates how Wal-Mart's buying power has shaped the manufacturing and distribution practices of the companies that sell their products to Wal-Mart, both in positive (increased efficiency) and negative (loss of jobs) ways. As consumers, Fishman argues that Wal-Mart's singular, powerful focus on "always low prices" has shaped our expectations on what things should cost - and lowered prices for us all - even if we choose not to shop at Wal-Mart. He takes an unblinking look at Wal-Mart's practices and provides the reader with substantial facts about one of the world's most private and tightly-controlled companies. His overall point is that Wal-Mart can use its power for both good and evil, so to speak, but that trouble looms ahead if Wal-Mart's corporate culture cannot overcome that singular focus on low prices. As a non-Wal-Mart shopper (my husband is from one of the those apocryphal small towns with nothing but a Wal-Mart), I found Fishman's book a compelling and eye-opening discussion of the meaning of Wal-Mart. As Fishman says, "who knew shopping was so important?" - Jennifer Arnold, *Library Services*

## The Year of Yes

by Maria Dahvana Headley

I hesitate to say, "Don't read" a particular book. After all, someone else may think it's wonderful. But, a positive review led me to read this book-and I was sorry. It purports to be a year in the dating life of the author; a year in which she says "yes" to anyone who asks her out. Maybe that was a tip right there-that's crazy! My biggest complaint is that, as a memoir, it simply didn't seem true; it reads like bad chick lit. I was glad to see that *Library Journal* gave it the following low praise: "the entire zany quest seems hollow and tragic, especially for the reader." Wouldn't you know it's already in the Hollywood mill, slated for release in 2008. - Elaine Kushmaul, *Library Services*

# Absent Friends

by S. J. Rozan

Multiple award winner (Edgar, Shamus, Barry, Anthony, Nero, etc) S.J. Rozan, who has specialized in the private eye genre to this point, steps out of her comfort zone to score big with *Absent Friends*. Set alternately in the early 1970s and in post-9/11 New York City, this riveting mainstream novel follows a convoluted stream of corruption and family secrets laid bare when an immensely popular firefighter dies in the collapse of the North Tower. Spurred on by the apparent suicide of her lover and colleague (whom she believes to have been murdered, a reporter for a major daily NYC newspaper finds evidence that the firefighter might not have been as heroic as everyone thought. Her investigation opens decades-old wounds and pits devoted friends against one another in a story that reflects the confusion and angst following the attacks on the World Trade Center. Rozan writes with an easy fluidity that pulls the reader along like the tidal flows of her beloved Hudson River. A resident of lower Manhattan who had to clean the dust of the disaster off her own windows and doorsteps, Rozan offers both a compelling fiction and a personal memoir based on her own emotions during the worst days of 2001. The result is a masterpiece that clearly marks her transition from outstanding genre writer to serious literary author. Highly, highly recommended. - **Rick Helms, Counseling and Advisement**

## A Dying Fall

By Laura Shea

The eminent Professor Parkinson, medievalist in the Brixton University English Department, has been "dictionaried," as a droll colleague depicts the event. An Oxford English Dictionary took an unscheduled flight from its high place of honor in Parkinson's office and crash landed on the prof's fragile noggin. Erica Duncan, a newly-hired instructor, is shocked no one on campus--save the tyrannical department secretary--sheds nary a tear. Parkinson was despised, and few of the usually somber scholars can conceal their glee at his comical demise. Thus, Erica initiates an amateur murder investigation that includes members of her own department:—a risky endeavor for an untenured first-year instructor. She discovers the motive likely concerns plagiarism, but who copied whom? Laura Shea's first novel is a must-read for fans of the academic mystery. What educator can resist fiction with a plotline that contains satiric jabs at the tenure process, the publish-or-perish mindset, as well as petty faculty conflict and jealousy? In addition, she deftly begins each chapter with an apt quotation from Shakespeare, Eliot, Chekhov, and occasionally Cole Porter. On the other hand, Shea commits some first-novel misdemeanors that may disappoint some mainstream mystery lovers. At 186 pages, Shea comes up a smidgen short on character development. In one 12-page chapter, the reader is introduced to the baker's dozen of suspects and the victim at a department cocktail party. Most readers will want to care more about these characters; but to care more, we need to know more than is provided. Shea also experiments with the tried-and-true detective story formula and concocts an unconventional resolution. While such an ending may take some daring on the part of the author, more than a few readers may feel unsatisfied. Of course the killer is unmasked, but some readers will question if justice triumphs. - **Mike Shinn, Disability Services**

## Water for Elephants

by Sara Gruen

*Water for Elephants* is a remarkable story with richly drawn, fascinating characters that takes place in the world of a traveling, Barnum and Bailey-like circus. Narrated by 90-year old (or 93? He can't quite remember) Jacob Jankowski and told mostly in flashback, "Water" tells the story of how Jacob, nearly graduating with a veterinarian degree, finds himself grief-stricken and aimless after a sudden family tragedy. He stumbles upon a circus and is immediately drawn into the colorful and difficult lives of the unusual performers and their animals, including Rosie, the elephant. Gruen leaves out few details in describing the dirty, grimy, exhausting, but at times exhilarating lives the circus performers lead, and I couldn't stop reading. Who can resist a book with star-crossed lovers, a jealous psychopathic animal trainer, and the scheming, penny-pinching owner, all amidst the backdrop of a circus? You'll be surprised how much you enjoy Gruen's tale. - **Erin Payton, Library Services**

Check out the **BookMarks blog** for a second review of this title by **Sallie Jenkins, Library Services!**



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<http://www1.cpcc.edu/library>

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# Gone

by Jonathan Kellerman

It's the twentieth time around for Jonathan Kellerman's psychologist-cum-private detective Alex Delaware, and the old boy's beginning to look (and sound) a little long in the tooth. Delaware is called in by old friend Milo Sturgis of the LAPD Robbery/Homicide Division when one of Delaware's former clients is found murdered and left naked on a canyon hillside. Delaware is battling his own demons, as his most recent girlfriend, fellow therapist Allison, who was scared off in the previous title (*Rage*), is still stand-offish. Meanwhile, previous girlfriend and guitar-maker Robin has re-entered the scene, and seems to want something like reconciliation. The mystery itself is practically non-existent. As in a great many Alex Delaware tales, the villain is apparent the moment he/she is introduced, and the reader has to trudge through almost three hundred tedious pages to see him/her (no spoilers here, guys) brought to justice. While we wait, we are subjected to Delaware's increasingly irritable musings, Milo Sturgis's tired ramblings, and a general sense of relief when the whole mess is resolved. How sad. It seems that, under the pressure from his publisher to squeeze out a new book every nine months, Kellerman has resorted to phoning them in. One constant in 'Gone' is Kellerman's apparent inability to stop writing when the story is over. Long after the villain is uncovered, he just keeps writing, piling on one irrelevancy after another, seemingly to stretch the book to the magic 400 pages (including front and back matter) so often required by marketing departments. Take it from me. You can stop reading when the story is over. Kellerman has been much more spontaneous and entertaining of late with his spin-off Petra Connor series. Perhaps it's time to send Alex and focus on the Connor series for three or four books. This, of course, won't happen. Ballantine Books knows a marquee author when they see it, and they know that people will buy Alex Delaware novels for as long as Kellerman wishes to keep cranking them out. It's a shame, really. If you are looking for something fresh in the Alex Delaware vein, you might want to check out G.H. Ephron's 'Peter Zak' series (*Delusion*, *Addiction*, *Guilt*, *Obsessed*, and *Amnesia*). - **Rick Helms, Counseling and Advisement**

## Wild Fire

By Nelson DeMille

After a few unsuccessful starts on several New York Times notable books, I reached for my "junk food" pile, and Nelson DeMille's latest book, *Wild Fire*, filled my cravings for a good laugh and some page-turning exciting moments. You know what to expect from DeMille and he delivers: extremely fast paced, witty dialog from beginning to end; a good thriller of a plot; and the assurance that John Corey, the anti-terrorism task force detective, will always come out on top, like James Bond or Harry Callahan. Without fail, DeMille includes just enough trashy macho talk to ensure his book's omission from church group book club reading lists. The topic of *Wild Fire* was nuclear weapons. DeMille appeared to have done a remarkable amount of research in preparation. By coincidence, soon after I finished the book, the news was full of talk about nuclear threat in the hands of fanatics. That certainly put a real chill in me. Still, if you feel like a change of pace after a serious literary tome, this book is it. - **Vicky Tsai, Library Services**