

July 2017

"Great Lives" Biography Book Group Brookfield Public Library 2017-18

Books are available at the Circulation Desk about a month before the meeting. Anyone interested in reading and discussing biographies is welcome!

Monday, August 28, 2017

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***The Catcher Was a Spy: The Mysterious Life of Moe Berg* by Nicholas Dawidoff**

Moe Berg is the only major-league baseball player whose baseball card is on display at the headquarters of the CIA. For Berg was much more than a third-string catcher who played on several major league teams between 1923 and 1939. Educated at Princeton and the Sorbonne, he was reputed to speak a dozen languages (although it was also said he couldn't hit in any of them) and went on to become an OSS spy in Europe during World War II. As Nicholas Dawidoff follows Berg from his claustrophobic childhood through his glamorous (though equivocal) careers in sports and espionage and into the long, nomadic years during which he lived on the hospitality of such scattered acquaintances as Joe DiMaggio and Albert Einstein, he succeeds not only in establishing where Berg went, but who he was beneath his layers of carefully constructed cover. (Amazon.com)

Monday, September 25, 2017

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***Kick Kennedy: The Charmed Life and Tragic Death of the Favorite Kennedy Daughter* by Barbara**

Leaming

Kathleen "Kick" Kennedy was the incandescent life-force of the fabled Kennedy family, her father's acknowledged "favorite of all the children" and her brother Jack's "psychological twin." She was the Kennedy of Kennedys, sure of her privilege, magnetically charming and somehow not quite like anyone else on whatever stage she happened to grace. In a decaying world where everything was based on stultifying sameness and similarity, she was gloriously, exhilaratingly different. To Kick, everything about this life was fun and amusing--until suddenly it was not. For this is also a story of how a girl like Kick, a girl who had everything, confronted crushing sadness. Willing to pay the price for choosing the love she wanted, she would have to face the consequences of forsaking much that was dear to her. (publisher)

Monday, October 23, 2017

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***Fierce Patriot: The Tangled Lives of William Tecumseh Sherman* by Robert L. O'Connell**

A profile of the iconic Civil War general explores the paradoxes attributed to his character to discuss such topics as his achievements as a military strategist, his contributions to the Transcontinental Railroad, and his tempestuous family relationships. (Polaris)

Monday, November 27, 2017

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***The Six: The Lives of the Mitford Sisters* by Laura Thompson**

They were the Mitford sisters: Nancy, Pamela, Diana, Unity, Jessica, and Deborah. Born into country-house privilege in the early years of the 20th century, they became prominent as "bright young things" in the high society of interwar London. Then, as the shadows crept over 1930s Europe, the stark -- and very public -- differences in their outlooks came to symbolize the political polarities of a dangerous decade. The intertwined stories of their stylish and scandalous lives hold up a revelatory mirror to upper-class English life before and after WWII. (publisher)

December NO MEETING

Monday, January 22, 2018

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America's Shining Women* by Kate Moore**

As World War I raged across the globe, hundreds of young women toiled away at the radium-dial factories, where they painted clock faces with a mysterious new substance called radium. Assured by their bosses that the luminous material was safe, the women themselves shone brightly in the dark, covered from head to toe with the glowing dust. With such a coveted job, these "shining girls" were considered the luckiest alive--until they began to fall mysteriously ill. As the fatal poison of the radium took hold, they found themselves embroiled in one of America's biggest scandals and a groundbreaking battle for workers' rights. (Polaris)

July 2017

Monday, February 26, 2018

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***Secret Service Dogs: the Heroes Who Protect the President of the United States* by Maria Goodavage**

In an age fraught with terrorism, United States Secret Service canine teams risk their lives to safeguard the president, vice president, their families, visiting heads of state, and a host of others. Unprecedented access to these heroic dog teams has allowed a fascinating first-time-ever look at a very special breed of heroes. Wherever the president goes, there will be dogs. They'll be there no matter what the country or state. They'll be there regardless of the political climate, the danger level, the weather, or the hour. (Amazon.com)

Monday, March 26, 2018

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***His Excellency George Washington* by Joseph J. Ellis**

From the French and Indian War to Mount Vernon, from the American Revolution to the presidency, Ellis delivers what will stand the test of time as the definitive biography of the greatest American icon. (Polaris)

Monday, April 23, 2018

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***Alfred Hitchcock: a Brief Life* by Peter Ackroyd**

Alfred Hitchcock was a strange child. Fat, lonely, burning with fear and ambition, his childhood was an isolated one, scented with fish from his father's shop. Afraid to leave his bedroom, he would plan great voyages, using railway timetables to plot an exact imaginary route across Europe. So how did this fearful figure become the one of the most respected film directors of the twentieth century? As an adult, Hitch rigorously controlled the press's portrait of him, drawing certain carefully selected childhood anecdotes into full focus and blurring all others out. In this quick-witted portrait, Ackroyd wrests the director's chair back from the master of control and discovers what lurks just out of sight, in the corner of the shot. (Amazon.com)

*****Date change because of Memorial Day*****

Monday, June 4, 2018

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***Grant: a Biography* by William S. McFeely**

The seminal biography of one of America's towering, enigmatic figures. From his boyhood in Ohio to the battlefields of the Civil War and his presidency during the crucial years of Reconstruction, this Pulitzer Prize-winning biography traces the entire arc of Grant's life (1822-1885). (Polaris)

Monday, June 25, 2018

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

Selection Meeting for the 2018-2019 season. Cast your votes!

Monday, July 23, 2018

1:00pm

Harnischfeger Room

***The Girl from the Metropol Hotel: Growing Up in Communist Russia* by Ludmilla Petrushevskaya**

Like a young Edith Piaf, wandering the streets singing for alms, and like Oliver Twist, living by his wits, Ludmilla Petrushevskaya grew up watchful and hungry, a diminutive figure far removed from the heights she would attain as an internationally celebrated writer. In her prizewinning memoir, she recounts her childhood of extreme deprivation, made more acute by the awareness that her family of Bolshevik intellectuals, now reduced to waiting in bread lines, once lived large across the street from the Kremlin in the opulent Metropol Hotel. As she unravels the threads of her itinerant upbringing--of feigned orphanhood, of sleeping in freight cars and beneath the kitchen tables of communal apartments, of the fugitive pleasures of scraps of food--we see, both in her remarkable lack of self-pity and in the more than two dozen photographs throughout the text, her feral instinct and the crucible in which her gift for giving voice to a nation of survivors was forged. (publisher)