Making Room for New Stories

How to say so long, see you next year, or, how I wrapped up a weekly column in two paragraphs, or, to all the books I’ve loved before, or, how I met a lot of great Georgian staff who love to read as much as I do, or even, how I learned to love all the people who crept into the library to get a book this summer.

That is not a title. Well, I couldn’t decide on one. (I was, apparently, quite determined to begin the title with the word ‘how’.) This summer, all of these statements have been true. In the grand scheme of things, this column is not a very important one, especially not in the context of higher education in an Ontario college or the pressing needs of ensuring young adults acquire skills, knowledge, and information along with the literacy and confidence to use them well within their communities. In fact, Summer Reads is merely a collected list of the written stories that have slayed, saddened, amused, gently gladdened, breathed upon or whistled past us.

I have loved sharing my thoughts about some very good reads, and I have simply loved your disparate, delicious and decisive responses to my thoughts. I have loved those of you who came to see us in the library and most of all, I love that most of the books I have recommended are out of the library and checked out on lots of staff accounts. Maybe, just maybe, if we are all rather fortunate, we will meet up again on here on “Staff News” in the future.

However, the column must end since we all have pressing responsibilities that we gladly assume towards our myriad, incoming students, and it is coming up fast on the backs of our heels. Our students are going to become the stories we focus on for the next few months. As they should.

PostScript: But, there is a week and a bit to read yet... or to mentally file a title away as one we want to have handy on a gentle, rainy autumn weekend. Here are my last few suggestions for anyone who would like them.

A Gentleman in Moscow

A Russian aristocrat sentenced by a Bolshevik tribunal, to lifelong house arrest within the renowned hotel in the heart of the empire. Not once may his foot step outside the hotel. For his lifetime, designated as a “non-person”, it is what he does, that makes up what this book is about.

Moreover, while everything is changing and his whole life lays in ruins, he remains what he is at his core: interested, adaptable, curious, open minded and hearted. He keeps thinking, reacting, being, living.

This book is for readers.

Nominated for awards all around our world -- and lifted from my desk before the book had time to get a day’s dust upon its cover.
Nod

One morning, it is discovered that no one has slept the night before. Except for the golden few who must watch the world and the billions of people around them fragment into panic, psychosis … … and the new world begins to swallow up the old.

A dystopian story, both allegorical and bald.

And, people, that last sentence though … I shivered.

Shortlisted for the prestigious Arthur C. Clark award.

Gods Behaving Badly

All the gods.
The whole Greek pantheon.
The Homeric era is over.
Time has moved on without them.

Artemis dog walks for a living; Aphrodite is a telephone sex operator and Apollo a TV physic. Or a psycho.
And they just can’t get no respect.

Spiteful, petty, narcissistic gods.
Amusing froth, like whipped cream on your pie, but a bit smuttier.

No awards. It’s not that kind of a book.
Medicine Walk

Richard Wagamese’s important novel of an Ojibway journey towards both death and redemption undertaken by a broken father with the son to whom he had never before revealed himself.

Sorrow, bitterness, poignancy, compassion, sparsity, fullness, connections, immersion, and truths.

This novel is all of this.

An award winner.
It is exactly THAT kind of a book.

Post-PostScript: With or without a column, if you want a book to read, come and ask us. Drop in, email us, phone us, and shout out to us as we pass by you in the cafeteria.

Any day, any time, any request.
We are happily, gratefully yours.
We are your library.

Sentimentally yours, waving from the library
Cyndi Smith

Cyndi Smith is a library technician at the Barrie campus and OCULA President (Ontario College and University Library Association).

Thank you for sharing her joy in reading.

You will find all of the books mentioned in Cyndi’s Summer Reads at campus libraries.
https://library.georgiancollege.ca/about/library_news#s-lg-box-15910628