

price for his hard-won prize.

Valerie Martin portrays these actors well and creates an interesting story set against the early days of both the Roundabout and Public Theaters, acting coaches Sanford Meisner and Stella Adler, and plays by Shakespeare, Pinter, and Chekov. The interplay between the actors and the roles they play on-stage creates a psychological counterpoint of the real vs. the imagined and encourages the reader to wonder about the nature of the actors' "real-life" experiences. In fact questions of reality resonate in this tale given the events that occur and a point that is made many times, the similarity in appearance between Edward and Guy.

I won't spoil your fun by giving more away, but I will say that I will go back and re-read this novel to make sure I picked up any hints or revelations that will clarify the truth... but as the main character points out, "actors are too narcissistic to make good narrators."

Both Ways is the Only Way I Want it by Maile Meloy

I have to confess to being a big fan of Maile Meloy's novels **Liars and Saints** and **A Family Daughter**. In each of those books, the same story is skillfully told but from different perspectives within a family. It serves as a great reminder of how differently each of us sees life's unfolding.

In this collection of short stories, Meloy brings a bit of an O.Henry twist into her telling, as first impressions lead to subsequent surprises. Each story has a unique setting and a new cast of characters, effectively portrayed. She sets a series of diverse scenes: a Montana ranch hand finding himself attracted to a woman attorney teaching an adult education course; two competitive brothers on a ski trip with their families; and a middle-aged man contemplating leaving his wife, to focus on just a few.

Meloy portrays loneliness and vulnerability with a skill that makes her characters come alive and stay fresh in your mind.

...and an old favorite...

Love, Loss and What I Wore By Ilene Beckerman

I recently took this back off the shelf for a re-read since I continue to procrastinate buying tickets for the show of the same name.

This biography-through-clothing probably resonates more with women than with men. Which of us does not remember what we wore on an significant first date or to an important job interview, or on the day a parent died? The author evokes a sense of time and tells her story without emotion as she reveals in brief entries what happened as she wore the item that she has also skillfully illustrated.



Director's Faves

*Books worth
reading,
Spring
2010*

Geraldine S. Mahoney, Director
Briarcliff Manor Public Library
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This Book is Overdue! How Librarians and Cybrarians Can Save Us All.

by Marilyn Johnson

While writing **Dead Beat**, her book about obituaries, Marilyn Johnson says she discovered that some of the most interesting obits had been about career librarians; thus the genesis of her latest nonfiction title.

As a librarian, I was bound to find this book of interest, but I have to credit the author with presenting an interesting overview of the varying work of librarians, and doing it with humor and warmth. She covers “traditional” librarians who are immersed in research for authors or who are dedicated to serving readers in public library settings. She reports on the “new” generation of cybrarians who are involved in social networking, have avatars in virtual reality settings, collect zines, and introduce students of online universities to using databases and the Internet for research.

She covers the impact of the Patriot Act on libraries, rediscovering the great importance librarians place on the rights of users, and discovers the depth of understanding librarians have of the Web as it continues to influence all of our lives. The common thread she finds is that Librarianship is a helping profession and that modern librarians continue to be educators, archivists, and keepers of community heritage.

In concluding her book, Ms.

Johnsons says:

I was under the librarians’ protection. Civil servants and servants of civility, they had my back. They would be whatever they needed to be that day: information professionals, teachers, police, community organizers, computer technicians, historians, confidantes, clerks, social workers, storyteller, or in this case, guardians of my peace...” Having worked in the field for some 43 years, I have to say that I **have** been all of the above!

Lit; a Memoir

by Mary Karr

If you have read and appreciated **The Liars’ Club and Cherry**, then you will probably want to continue following Mary Karr’s story in **Lit**. Her latest memoir reveals the circumstances of her life while she was writing her first book. Not unexpectedly, she was starting down the same road of alcoholism and insanity that she saw her parents travel. In **Lit**, she reveals her descent as well as her escape. She reveals a life out of control as she attempted to keep her bohemian life style intact while raising a young son and being married to an emotionally contained husband from a wealthy family.

Karr brings the same great prose, imagery and honesty to this story as she has to her earlier works, revealing how she found



herself at the threshold of suicide and managed to get back from the brink with the help of a 12-step program and religion. She describes her reluctance to surrender to the help of others and the comfort of religion and is unsparing in her self-deprecation at her entrenched attitudes.

However much one is able or not able to identify with her personal hell, there is no doubt that she has told an authentic story.

The Confessions of Edward Day

by Valerie Martin

This fast moving and somewhat nostalgia-laden book takes us back to the gritty New York City of the 1970’s when struggling actors could live in cheap apartments while working to get their Actors’ Equity cards so they might make a living at their art.

The story revolves primarily around Edward, his doppelganger-like nemesis, Guy, and the woman they both desire, Madeleine. At a weekend trip to the shore, Guy saves Edward from drowning, and thus begins the interweaving of two lives that are at once similar but at odds. Both men are actors, but Edward has more success in the theater while Guy’s career falters. Guy marries the much desired Madeleine but there are indications that he pays a high