

NFPL Afternoon Book Club 2021-22

Tuesday, September 14th @ 1:00 PM

The Cellist of Sarajevo by Steven Galloway

In a city under siege, four people whose lives have been upended are ultimately reminded of what it is to be human. From his window, a musician sees twenty-two of his friends and neighbors waiting in a breadline. Then, in a flash, they are killed by a mortar attack. In an act of defiance, the man picks up his cello and decides to play at the site of the shelling for twenty-two days, honoring their memory. Elsewhere, a young man leaves home to collect drinking water for his family and, in the face of danger, must weigh the value of generosity against selfish survivalism. A third man, older, sets off in search of bread and distraction and instead runs into a long-ago friend who reminds him of the city he thought he had lost, and the man he once was. As both men are drawn into the orbit of cello music, a fourth character—a young woman, a sniper—holds the fate of the cellist in her hands. As she protects him with her life, her own army prepares to challenge the kind of person she has become.

Tuesday, October 12th @ 1:00 PM

***If the Creek Don't Rise* by Leah Wise**

In a North Carolina mountain town filled with moonshine and rotten husbands, Sadie Blue is only the latest girl to face a dead-end future at the mercy of a dangerous drunk. She's been married to Roy Tupkin for fifteen days, and she knows now that she should have listened to the folks who said he was trouble. But when a stranger sweeps in and knocks the world off-kilter for everyone in town, Sadie begins to think there might be more to life than being Roy's wife.

*As stark and magnificent as Appalachia itself, *If the Creek Don't Rise* is a bold and beautifully layered debut about a dusty, desperate town finding the inner strength it needs to outrun its demons. The folks of Baines Creek will take you deep into the mountains with heart, honesty, and homegrown grit.*

Tuesday, November 9th @ 1:00 PM

***Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse**

It is the story of the quest of Siddhartha, a wealthy Indian Brahmin who casts off a life of privilege and comfort to seek spiritual fulfillment and wisdom. On his journey, Siddhartha encounters wandering ascetics, Buddhist monks, and successful merchants, as well as a courtesan named Kamala and a simple ferryman who has attained enlightenment. Traveling among these people and experiencing life's vital passages—love, work, friendship, and fatherhood—Siddhartha discovers that true knowledge is guided from within.

Tuesday, December 14th @ 1:00 PM

***The Sense of an Ending* by Julian Barnes**

Tony Webster and his clique first met Adrian Finn at school. Sex-hungry and book-hungry, they navigated the girl drought of gawky adolescence together, trading in affectations, in-jokes, rumour and wit. Maybe Adrian was a little more serious than the others, certainly more intelligent, but they swore to stay friends forever. Until Adrian's life took a turn into tragedy, and all of them, especially Tony, moved on and did their best to forget.

Now Tony is in middle age. He's had a career and a marriage, a calm divorce. He gets along nicely, he thinks, with his one child, a daughter, and even with his ex-wife. He's certainly never tried to hurt anybody. Memory, though, is imperfect. It can always throw up surprises, as a lawyer's letter is about to prove. The unexpected bequest conveyed by that letter leads Tony on a dogged search through a past suddenly turned murky. And how do you carry on, contentedly, when events conspire to upset all your vaunted truths?

2022

Tuesday, January 11th @ 1:00 PM

***The Paris Library* by Janet Skeslien Charles**

PARIS, 1939

Odile Souchet is obsessed with books, and her new job at the American Library in Paris - with its thriving community of students, writers and book lovers - is a dream come true. When war is declared, the Library is determined to remain open. But then the Nazis invade Paris, and everything changes.

In Occupied Paris, choices as black and white as the words on a page become a murky shade of grey - choices that will put many on the wrong side of history, and the consequences of which will echo for decades to come.

MONTANA, 1983

Lily is a lonely teenager desperate to escape small-town Montana. She grows close to her neighbour Odile, discovering they share the same love of language, the same longings. But as Lily uncovers more about Odile's mysterious past, she discovers a dark secret, closely guarded and long hidden.

Based on the true Second World War story of the heroic librarians at the American Library in Paris, this is an unforgettable novel of romance, friendship, family, and of heroism found in the quietest of places.

Book titles are decided by the group a few months ahead – watch this list for more titles.