



BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

September 2011

'Iron House' is John Hart's latest blockbuster. Frankly it's a bit of an overwrought disappointment, and somewhat predictable. Michael and Julian are orphans. Michael is a "reformed" mob hit man; Julian is emotionally fragile and needs his help. This means going back to the hated orphanage where they grew up and facing down people and events that Michael had hoped were behind him. Hart knows how to tell a suspenseful story; his fans won't be disappointed.

Micheal Ridpath's mystery called 'Where the Shadows Lie' features Marcus Jonsoon, seconded to the Icelandic police from Boston. It's very atmospheric, with lots of great details on Icelandic sagas, history and current life. 'The Gap Year' by Sarah Bird is told in alternating mother/daughter voices and reflects a really good understanding of teenagers, and the anxiety of wanting the best for your child in the face of pushback. It is also hysterically funny at times. Highly recommended for readers with live or work with teenagers.

'A Year and Six Seconds' is Isabel Gillies' warm follow up to her memoir 'It Happens Every Day'. Newly divorced and living with her parents and two young boys in a "not big enough" Manhattan apartment, she struggles to redefine her life and maintain her sense of humor. Miraculously she does – even through bouts of flu, bad dates and economic hardship. A happy ending is the icing on the cake.

'The Greater Journey' is David McCollough's fascinating history of Americans in Paris from 1830 to 1900. There to study everything from medicine to painting they gloried in French culture and the opportunities to reinvent themselves. McCollough makes good use of original source material, especially letters, to bring history alive. This is a well deserved favorite among our patrons.

'Baking Style' by Lisa Yockelson is both a primer for the less experienced baker and a source of new recipes for a skilled one. It's a beautiful book with lavish photographs guaranteed to make your mouth water. Every recipe has very specific instructions that give you the confidence to spread your wings and try some of the more exotic offerings. My only quibble is a slightly odd organizational format that relies on texture and flavor more than type of baked good, but that is a minor distraction. More importantly, the two cakes I tried were perfect!

'The Food of Spain' by Claudia Roden is both beautiful and informative. Prodigiously researched, this is a fascinating history of Spanish culture and a cookbook all in one. Part encyclopedia and part recipe compendium, it is arranged by type of food. I was really interested in all the background information on the various regions and the flavorful dishes that are overall less familiar to us than Italian and French cuisine. This book is a wonderful introduction to Spanish cooking and the recipes are easy to follow and delicious.



BiblioFiles

By Ruth Freeman

Readers' Advisor @ the Rowayton Library

'The Cut' by George Pelecanos introduces a new hero for our times. Taciturn Iraq war vet Speros Lucas makes a living doing investigative work for an attorney. The novel is steeped in Washington DC lore and hip hop references – fans of Pelecanos' work on 'The Wire' will recognize the style and those that aren't will be swept up. Speros tangles with some tough customers as he tries to find a drug dealer's stolen stash. Is his 'cut' worth the danger to himself and his family? Read and find out; it's hard to put down.

'The Burning' by Jane Casey is DC Maeve Kerrigan's debut and what a great book – suspenseful, well written, good dialogue and lots of interesting procedural details. There is a complex plot that will keep you guessing. A serial killer is on the loose in London and the murder squad is under relentless pressure to find the murderer after four deaths. Several narrators keep you guessing on the direction of the next twist.

'The Submission' by Amy Waldman is timely and well written. A blind jury panel for a 9/11 memorial design chooses a Muslim American architect, much to their chagrin. Wary of political fallout if Mohammed Khan is publicly announced, various jury members pursue their agendas in the shadow of politics, family members' feelings and the media. Told via multiple points of view allowing for a variety of reactions, the book manages to combine the deeply personal feelings of the grief stricken with the larger questions of how society responds to tragic memories.

###