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## Book Marks

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# BOOK MARKS

Featuring summaries of books written by Furman faculty and alumni, as well as reviews of books recommended by faculty and staff as “good reads.”

## RECOMMENDED

Leonardo Padura Fuentes, *Adiós Hemingway* (Canongate, 2005). The first book by celebrated Cuban writer Padura Fuentes to be translated into English, this work is at once a police procedural, an ambiguous homage to Hemingway and a critique of United States-Cuban relations. The protagonist is Mario Conde, a drinker, ex-cop and would-be writer, who is asked to investigate a 45-year-old crime when skeletal remains are discovered at Finca Vigía, Hemingway's estate (now preserved as a museum to the writer's many years in Cuba). As Conde investigates the crime, he unintentionally finds himself examining Cuba's present condition, the cultural divide between the Caribbean and the United States, and the art of writing. He discovers, of course, that each of these questions resists easy answers.

— Sean Patrick O'Rourke,  
*Communication Studies*

John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (Viking, 2004). More humans have died from disease than from any other cause, as the author reminds us in his analysis of the 1918 influenza pandemic. Possibly originating in Kansas when a mutating virus jumped from a pig to a human, this strain of influenza was particularly vicious. Ironically, people with the strongest immune systems (young adults) accounted for the highest percentage of deaths because of the massive immunological response their bodies mounted to fight the disease. Barry insightfully notes how wartime conditions fueled the pandemic; troops lived in tight quarters, accelerating the spread of disease, and military exigencies meant

that civilian medical facilities had a shortage of trained nurses. And his conclusion is not upbeat: We shouldn't ask if, but when, the next pandemic will strike.

— A. Scott Henderson,  
*Education*

## FROM ALUMNI

George Singleton '80, *Drowning in Gruel* (Harvest Books, 2006). *Publishers Weekly* says that Singleton, best known for his off-beat short stories, “returns to the small South Carolina town where he set his acclaimed first novel, *Novel*, for this delightfully obsessive collection of stories, which reads like a group celebration of the excess and eccentricities found in the tiny Southern hamlet of Gruel. The only common element: a shared preoccupation with staying put in, getting out of, coming home to and passing through Gruel.” As Singleton's characters deal with the vagaries of life, the publisher says that they “try to overcome their limitations as best they can” while dealing with such issues as difficult neighbors, overly enthusiastic dermatologists and “children who mix their mother's ashes with housepaint.” It all adds up to another winner from one of Furman's and the South's most acclaimed authors.

Monte Dutton '80, *Haul A\*\* and Turn Left: The Wit and Wisdom of NASCAR* (Warner Books/Time Warner, 2006). The publisher invites you to enjoy this “collection of asphalt-tearing quotes, anecdotes and aphorisms straight from the mouths of the world's most famous drivers, racing personalities and amateur philosophers who live life at 130 miles per hour. Featuring undercarriage-baring reflections on everything

that goes through your head as you're zooming into victory lane, this fully illustrated book captures the checkered flag.” It's the fifth NASCAR-themed book by Dutton, a veteran auto racing reporter for the *Gaston Gazette* in North Carolina.

Merrie Koester Southgate '78, *Pond Scum and Agnes Pflumm* (Showboard Publications, 2006). This environmental science mystery is the third in the Agnes Pflumm series, which the author has also illustrated. Like the previous books, it is designed primarily for the middle school set, with the idea of encouraging students to “ask significant questions about the nature of science” while also improving their reading, thinking and reflective writing skills. As in the other two novels, Agnes and her fellow students lead the way in effecting change; this time, they battle watershed pollution. Earlier this spring Southgate, a resident of Charleston, S.C., who is nationally recognized for her innovative approach to the teaching of science, led an institute at Furman on incorporating the arts into the science curriculum.

R. Scott Walker '73, *Hell's Broke Loose in Georgia: Survival in a Civil War Regiment* (University of Georgia Press, 2005). This is a history of the 57th Georgia Infantry, in which the author's great-great grandfather served, and uses previously unpublished letters and diaries to follow the regiment from Vicksburg to Andersonville and on to the defense of Atlanta from Sherman's March. William C. Davis, director of programs at the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, says the book provides “a penetrating look at the inner world and lives of men who marched, ate, slept, fought, and died together” while offering “a glimpse of the personality and inner world of almost all Civil War units, North and South alike.” The author is pastor of First Baptist Church in Waco, Texas.

Aubrey C. Daniels '57 and James E. Daniels, *The Measure of a Leader* (Performance Management Publications, 2005). According to the publisher, the book breaks “new ground by applying behavioral science to the study of leadership.” The authors, described by the publisher as “the world's foremost authorities on human behavior in the workplace,” use their knowledge to “reveal how anyone can develop effective leadership skills by observing and understanding the behavior of their followers.” They also offer practical techniques to help leaders improve their effectiveness through critical observation of how others react to their management style. Aubrey Daniels, a Furman trustee, has written three books on management techniques and was a 2005 Fellow of the International Association for Behavior Analysis. James Daniels is a senior vice president with Aubrey Daniels International, their Atlanta consulting firm.

## FROM FACULTY

Diane C. Vecchio, *Merchants, Midwives, And Laboring Women: Italian Migrants in Urban America* (University of Illinois Press, 2006). The Furman history professor has, according to the publisher, penned a “unique study [about] the work experiences of Italian immigrant women and their daughters in the previously unexamined regions of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Endicott, New York, during the turn of the twentieth century.” With help from Italian and American sources and oral histories, the book challenges “long-held patriarchal assumptions about Italian women's work in the United States.” Vecchio, who has taught at Furman since 1996, recently completed a term as national head of the reading and scoring of the annual Advanced Placement U.S. History exam. Her book is part of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Centennial Series.