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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

Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* (Random House, 2003). The author, an Iranian exile now teaching at Johns Hopkins University, tells of her life as an English professor in the years following the Iranian revolution (late 1970s through the 1990s). She describes how the forces of Islamic fundamentalism took hold of intellectual life at the University of Tehran, despite resistance from professors and students. A popular teacher who persisted in teaching the “decadent” authors of modern Western literature, she was expelled from the university for refusing to wear the veil. Eventually, her class consisted of a group of young women who gathered weekly at her home to read forbidden novels such as *Lolita*, *The Great Gatsby* and *Pride and Prejudice*. In Nafisi’s world, literature becomes an antidote for the rhetoric of an oppressive regime, a window onto other possibilities and, almost literally, the breath of life. Her memoir inspires while breathing new significance into familiar novels.

— Robin Visel, *English*

Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (Basic Books, 2004). The author, a sociologist at Princeton University, won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (1984). This book touches on the relationship between free media and government intervention. Its theme — that citizens in Western democracies, and particularly the United States, have been

well served by the mass media — may surprise some. And according to Starr, Americans of past generations could thank a wise mix of free enterprise and government policy. In the 19th century, for example, special postal rates combined with widespread literacy meant that even Americans in remote corners of the republic were receiving newspapers. At a time when giant media companies span the world and government is reluctant to set policies for the mass media, this book shows how past governments encouraged the free flow of information — and sometimes got it right.

— John Armstrong,
Communication Studies

Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Brassey’s, 2004). Why? Because our leaders prefer to see the world as they imagine it to be. The author, a senior CIA official with nearly 20 years of experience analyzing Afghanistan and South Asia, says that our foes are not terrorists or extremists who hate what we are or think, but insurgents against what we do in the Muslim world. He says the time has come to acknowledge and discuss the long-term consequences of our indifference to the Palestinians, our ties to oil-producing tyrannies, our collusion with states oppressing Muslim minorities, and our attempts to bestow friendly democracies upon divided peoples with long memories. Maintaining current policies commits us to an endless and increasingly desperate struggle.

— Brian Siegel,
Sociology

Carlos Ruiz Zafón, *The Shadow of the Wind* (Penguin Press, 2004). Eleven-year-old Daniel Sempere awakes one day to find that he has forgotten his dead mother’s face. His father, a rare book dealer, consoles his son by initiating him into the Barcelona book guild’s greatest secret: the Cemetery of Lost Books. There he must pick a volume, one that will be his responsibility. After choosing *The Shadow of the Wind*, by Julián Carax, he quickly discovers that Carax has mysteriously disappeared and that someone is hunting down all the copies of his books — and burning them. For 20 years Daniel tries to solve the mystery. Hunted by Franco’s police, haunted by lost love and humbled by his mission, Daniel’s journey is one of discovery and of the enduring power of words . . . and of love.

— Sean Patrick O’Rourke,
Communication Studies

FROM ALUMNI

Sandy Freeman Jones ’65 and Marcie Jones, *Great Expectations: Your All-in-One Resource for Pregnancy & Childbirth* (Barnes & Noble, 2004). This mother-daughter team provides a week-by-week guide to baby growth and managing pregnancy; a research-based chapter on giving birth; a guide to buying the best baby gear; guides for recovering from childbirth and caring for a new baby; and a comprehensive Web directory and dictionary. Sandy Jones, recipient of a National Media Award “Distinguished Contributor Citation” from the American Psychological Association, is the author of six parenting books and more than 150 articles. Her daughter is a writer, editor and professor of writing at the University of Baltimore.

Hannah Jenkins Keeley ’90, *Hannah’s Art of Home* (Capital Books, 2005). *Publishers Weekly* says that this book, subtitled *Managing Your Home Around Your Personality*, “shows how to de-clutter, clean, decorate and organize a home according to one’s habits.” It also helps readers determine their personality type so that they’ll know how to manage their home in tune with their spirit. The author, a resident of Richmond, Va, and a mother of six, has written for a number of periodicals and has appeared on nationally televised talk shows. Visit her Web site, www.hannahkeeley.com.

R.M. Trammell ’58, *Star Walker* (Xlibris, 2004). According to the publisher, “*Star Walker* is a commentary on life . . . through the merging of word and art. [the author] expresses to the reader a sense of the vastness and majesty of the creation, and the struggle of each of us to find a place of significance in it. *Star Walker* is one man’s journey through life, his attempt to make sense of it, and in the process find his own place in the cosmos.” The author, an Atlanta resident, is also an artist whose work illustrates the book. Visit his Web site, www.trammellart.com.

Jean and Gene Phillips ’52, *Gleanings from God’s Word* (Hannibal Books, 2004). The authors, a husband-wife team who spent almost 50 years as Southern Baptist missionaries in Africa, draw from their experiences to provide a devotional guide to daily Bible study. The publisher describes the devotionals as “succinct and highly practical — ideal for today’s busy lives.” The Phillipses live in Camden, S.C.