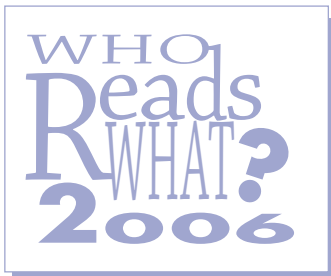




WHO
Reads
WHAT?
2006

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DEAR READERS:

This 18th annual **“Who Reads What?”** list reflects the swift age of technology. It is wonderful to reach out to people and instantly receive replies. While the media is now faster, the need for communication is even greater. Here are the answers from noted people who share the love of books.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg selects *John Marshall, Definer of a Nation*. She claims it is, “the best U.S. Supreme Court biography I have read.” Writer Barbara Delinsky chooses *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving. Delinsky says, “To this day I hear Owen’s voice.” Archer Mayor recommends eight books, including the Pulitzer Prize selection *An Army at Dawn* by Rick Atkinson.

We have two governors on the list. New York Governor George Pataki praises the benefits of reading and makes a case for literacy and, “a lifetime love of books.” He says at the moment he is, “engrossed in Doris Kearns Goodwin’s

Team of Rivals.” Governor Vilsack recommends *The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman. Margaret Geller is the first astrophysicist on our list. Geller says she has, “explored the universe of ideas by reading.” Kate White is reading *All the Kings Men*. She says she is, “just loving it.”

Gardiner, Maine is a tiny community of 6,198 residents. Thanks to the Associated Press and other wonderful news sources, we are happy to share our list with the world.

Sincerely,
Glenna Nowell
Creator and Editor, **“Who Reads What?”**
Nowell@adelphia.net



GREGG ALLMAN

MUSICIAN

The Five People You Meet in Heaven

by Mitch Albom

I don't read nearly as much as I should as it's given me headaches after two or three chapters...causing me to have to put the book down and rest my eyes for an hour or so. I've been to many eye doctors but as yet....no luck.

However, a lifetime friend of mine gave it to me and I cannot put it down. I've had three days and am almost finished, at which time I plan to read it again.



PIERS ANTHONY

WRITER

Choosing favorite books is a problem for me, because my tastes can vary with my mood, and different things occur at different times. It may also be that your library will not appreciate my choice. But for what it's worth, here it is.

My favorite book is *Rationale of the Dirty Joke* by G. Legman, published in 1968, and its continuation, *No Laughing Matter*, published in 1975. This is an extended compilation of dirty jokes, with an accompanying discussion of what they reveal about mankind. The author's thesis is that a person's real interests are revealed by

his/her favorite dirty joke, and it is persuasive. I do not always agree with the author's conclusions, but taken as a whole, this is about as insightful an exploration of base human nature as I have seen.



ROSALYNN CARTER

FORMER FIRST LADY

The Bible



BARBARA DELINSKY

WRITER

A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving. This book is a long-time favorite of mine. I reread it regularly. True to its New England setting, it is the story of a unique young boy who considers himself to be an instrument of God, born to be martyred. It is at times comic, at times tragic, but always deeply thought-provoking. Nothing is wasted here; every scene has a purpose. To this day, I hear Owen's voice.

Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks. This historical novel blew me away. I was prepared to be depressed reading about the Bubonic Plague in 17th century England, but from the very first page, Brooks had me hooked on the sheer beauty of her prose. She has humanized a dark time, infusing it with

light through unforgettable characters and a breathtaking description of setting.



RUTH BADER GINSBURG

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE

John Marshall: Definer of a Nation

by Jean Edward Smith

Best U.S. Supreme Court biography I have read.

Also recommended: *The Lazy B*

by Sandra Day O'Connor and Alan Day

Beautifully told story of the growing-up years of a cowgirl who became a U.S. Supreme Court justice.



NADINE GORDIMER

WRITER

In Search of Lost Time by Marcel Proust
(translated from French by D.J. Enright)

First read an earlier translation by Scott Moncrieff. I was fifteen; this novel has been a revelation of human relationships and literary genius all my life.



NEWT GINGRICH

POLITICIAN

The Effective Executive by Peter Drucker

The best book ever written about being effective and should be read by every citizen.



MARGARET GELLER

ASTROPHYSICIST

I am an astrophysicist who explores the universe to understand what it looks like and how it came to have the rich structure we observe around us today. Of course, all my life (and long before I became an astrophysicist), I have explored the universe of ideas by reading.

I found two recent books captivating. Jeffrey Sachs' book *The End of Poverty* is remarkable in its incisive explanations of the causes of extreme poverty. Sachs' experiences and role in advising governments are an inspiring demonstration that creative, knowledgeable individuals can still make a difference in our complex, frightening world. Perhaps the most wonderful aspect of the book is that it offers hope that with some wisdom, the rich world can eradicate extreme poverty throughout the world. With that success could come solutions or partial solutions to other deep problems in the world.

Another moving book is *A Bed of Red Flowers: In Search of My Afghanistan* by the journalist and filmmaker Nelofer Pazira. The book is the eloquent autobiography describing a young life

in a country torn by war. The writing is so clear and the prose pictures so vivid that you feel as though you are living the experiences with Pazira and her family. Everyone should read this book to begin to understand the inhumanity of protracted modern wars and occupations.



SUE GRAFTON

WRITER

SNOBS by Julian Fellowes

I picked up this book when I was starting the “S” IS FOR SILENCE tour, making sure I had plenty to read while I was on the road. I’d heard about *SNOBS* but I couldn’t quite remember what it was about.

I found it to be a most amusing account of a woman who ‘marries up’ and then sabotages her own successful climb up the social ladder by falling in love.

Wonderful dry and sly British observations.



MICHAEL JECKS

WRITER

I only starting writing because I was a keen reader all my life, and for many of those years my books had to come from the small local

libraries dotting the English landscape. Sadly many are being closed now, but I am delighted to be able to help you with your own. Libraries are essential havens of learning and relaxation.

After voraciously reading for so many years, it is extraordinarily hard to think of the books that represent the best I’ve read. However, there are some which do stand out.

When I was a kid, Richman Crompton’s *Just William* books were a continuing pleasure. They showed the best periods of English life, when all was more simple and comprehensible. Good behaviour was rewarded, bad was punished. However, William was usually in trouble – whether for fighting or trespassing or for indulging in one of his many guaranteed-to-fail money-making ventures – and the stories catalogue his indomitable spirit and his relentless optimism. I still turn to William occasionally even now, almost forty years later, because they are perfect examples of the human spirit.

When I grew older, I had to read Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* and then *The Lord of the Rings*. The stories are all taken from Saxon and Scandinavian folk lore, and the melding of the Ring of power together with elves, dwarfs and men I found thrilling. They are tales of the power of good over evil, and I must have read these books scores of times.

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-continued from front-

At school a genius of an English teacher introduced me to *Night Runners of Bengal* by John Masters, and I still think this is one of his best books. It tells of the history of the British Raj by taking one example, the battle of the British imperial forces against the Indian Thugs, who were outlaws who preyed on travellers, killing them and robbing them of everything they had. It is a harsh story, but excellently told by a master novelist. And like James Clavell writing about Hong Kong and Japan, Masters was deeply in love with the country, India, where he set his novel. He wrote many other superb stories (*The Ravi Lancers* springs to mind) but this, the first of his I read, still strikes a chord with me.

It was also at school that I learned to love PG Wodehouse. His characters are charming, their lives and loves perfect examples of the English middle classes through the years, and the golfing, the Drones' Club, and the Mr. Mulliner short stories display an economy and perfection of writing that I would love to be able to emulate. Then there are the Ukridge and Uncle Fred stories, too . . . Perhaps my favourite would have to be *A Pelican at Blandings*. The Blandings stories are well known, but the main characters, Galahad, his brother Lord Emsworth, and of course his pig, the Empress of Blandings, are so beautifully drawn that I defy anyone not to love the story. Silly, yes, but thoroughly engaging.

And then I began to grow up. *Pickwick Papers* by Dickens has been a favourite of mine for many years now. I prefer it to many of Dickens' more tortured stories, much though I love *Great Expectations* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, for example, but *Pickwick* has a more pleasant, uplifting quality that I love.

For thrillers I still turn to the writers I started reading in my twenties. *The Day of the Jackal* is surely the very best tale of an assassin. Superbly well-researched, meticulously plotted, and with a marvellous central enigma as the killer himself, this book is page-turning at its best, and is still unequalled in my opinion.

When younger, I used to read Agatha Christie and Dorothy L Sayers, but for me there is only one real detective, and he is the one who inspired me to create my own sleuth: the incomparable Sherlock Holmes. I still have a facsimile edition of all his stories beside me here. I love the period, the concept of the educated man with no time for immaterial facts outside his specialism (who cares that the earth passes around the sun rather than vice versa?) and his splendid detachment is a marvellous example to other more modern crime writers.

As the last Chairman of the Crime Writers' Association, I suppose I also have to declare an interest in the modern writers.

For my money, there are no better writers of crime fiction than Jeffrey Deaver and Michael Connelly. Both create wonderful characters in believable situations, and manage to weave plots that leave me breathless. Harry Bosch in particular I think is as near perfect as any modern investigator could be, and I find Connelly's work inspiring, especially *The Concrete Blonde*.

More recently I have been forced to read a great deal of dry, dusty historical material for research into my own books. Some are truly excellent – HPR Finberg's *Tavistock Abbey* is a masterpiece of archeological investigation, while my personal favourite for my era is Ian Mortimer's *The Greatest Traitor*, which reads like a modern thriller. It is hard to put it down. And one last research book: for those who have any interest in medieval life and times, Terry Jones' *Chaucer's Knight* is simply fantastic. Jones is one of the world's foremost historians and experts in medieval life, and his enthusiasm for his subject is here made very plain.

But when I switch off from medieval work, it is nice to regress and slip into a different world still, and when nothing else will do, I have to read Terry Pratchett's wonderful *Discworld* series. If you have never read any of these brilliant stories, you are in for a delight. All are very good – but for me one of the best is still *Wyrd Sisters*, a tale about three witches of varying degrees of competence.

And now I sit back and look along my shelves and think, "But I never mentioned Gerald Durrell, or Waugh, or Somerset Maugham, or Saki, or Wilbur Smith, or, or . . ." Yes, sadly there are so many good books that picking one or two is almost criminally short-sighted. I only hope that this start-point will help introduce some readers to new writers at whom they would not otherwise have looked.

Good Reading!



KITTY KELLEY

BIOGRAPHER

My chances for developing a social conscience were somewhat limited growing up rich, white, Republican and Roman Catholic in Spokane, Washington during the 1950's. But I discovered three books which challenged what Huckleberry Finn called my "bringin' up." The first was Laura Z. Hobson's novel, *Gentlemen's Agreement*. I was not prepared for her searing indictment of anti-Semitism. Reading that book made me physically uncomfortable because I recognized the hushed bigotry of the oh-so-nice people whose clubs were as restricted as their minds.

Then I read *Strange Fruit* by Lillian Smith, a Southern writer whose indelible images of racism were the lynchings that left human beings

dangling lifelessly by the neck from ropes strung up in trees — segregation's strange fruit.

My most profound revelation came from rascals — a white outcast boy and a black outlaw slave. Their rafting trip down the Mississippi against the prevailing winds of society taught me more about courage and honor than all I had learned from my childhood saints. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain opened my mind and my heart, while showing me the terrible craving for social approval that motivates the behavior in most people. Its creator, Mark Twain, rightfully called “the Lincoln of literature,” also taught me a bit about the punishing profession of truth-telling, especially from people who don't want to hear it.



ARCHER MAYOR

WRITER

Here's a hickly-pickly list given in no particular order. They are books that I've recently read, although several of them are hardly recent:

An Army at Dawn by Rick Atkinson

The Bounty by Caroline Alexander

The Siege by Helen Dunmore

Night Soldiers by Alan Furst

Sacred Hunger by Barry Unsworth

The Good German by Joseph Kanon

MICHAEL MCGARRITY

WRITER

Any Horatio Hornblower novel by C.S. Forester, who captured my imagination as a young boy; *The Alexandria Quartet*, four novels by Lawrence Durrell (*Justine*, *Balthazar*, *Mountolive* and *Clea*) that inspired me as a young man to consider that I might someday turn to writing as a career; and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the preeminent storyteller of a generation who has never failed to amaze and delight me.



GEORGE PATAKI

GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK

Reading is a necessary and essential aspect of our lives and we gratefully recognize those initiatives that foster a lifelong love of books among our nation of readers. The Empire State and New York City, the cultural capital of the world, are fortunate to be the home of many wonderful and worthy organizations that advance literary achievements. We honor the significant contributions of many gifted authors who are old friends, encouraging the young and promising new talent of the future, thus promoting the activity of reading.

Your project “*Who Reads What?*” is a very interesting booklist of great titles, powerful writers and devoted readers. At the end of my day, I greatly enjoy sitting down with a moving biography or a historical volume or a current events bestseller. At the moment I am engrossed in Doris Kearns Goodwin’s *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. As Charles Scribner, Jr. said, “Reading is a means of thinking with another person’s mind; it forces you to stretch your own.” As a mental exercise, a learning tool or a treasured family pastime, reading is indeed one of life’s most excellent adventures.

Best of luck on this exceptional program which has become a wonderful literary tradition.



PAUL TAYLOR

DANCER, CHOREOGRAPHER

A recent book I’ve read is *Private Domain* (my wonderful autobio). Unfortunately, Melville’s *Moby Dick* is still my all-time favorite.



JANE RUSSELL

ACTOR

Hearing God by Lory Basham Jones.

1. On each page, first there is a scripture she’s been reading (at 5:30 each a.m.)

2. Next her prayer.
3. Then what the Lord says to her. His answers are fabulous.
4. A scripture she’s to look up letting her know it’s from the Lord and the Bible.



EVA MARIE SAINT

ACTOR

The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion
Elia Kazan: A Biography by Richard Schickel



GOVERNOR TOM VILSAK

GOVERNOR OF IOWA

The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman



KATE WHITE

EDITOR AND WRITER

Right now I am in the middle of rereading *All the King’s Men* (Robert Penn Warren) and I am just loving it. I decided to do it in part because of the movie coming out but also because there is a new edition that restores some of Warren’s original text. What a truly awesome book.

WHO
Reads
RW^{HAT?}
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