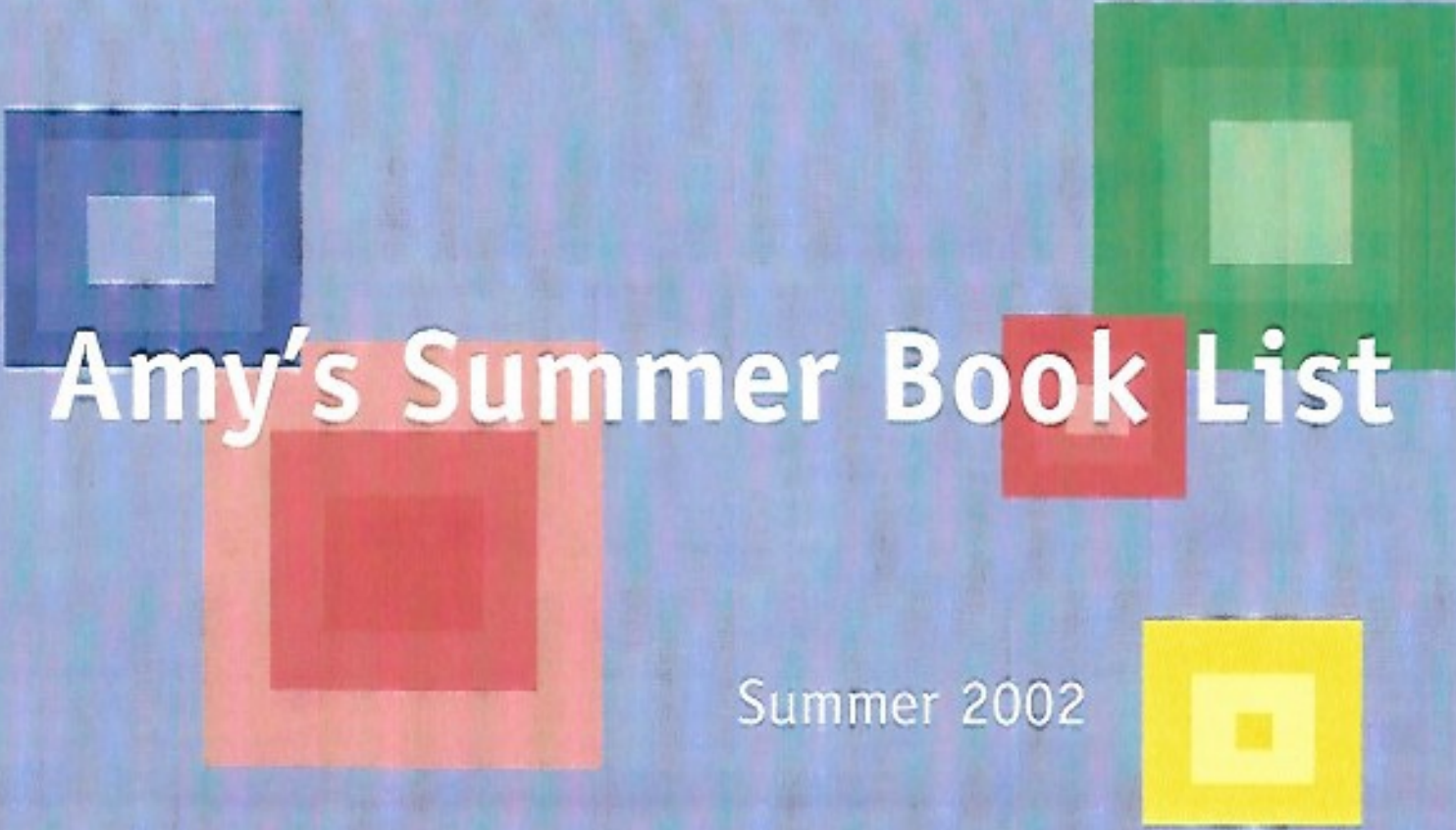




Amy's Summer Book List

Summer 2002

Autobiographies

The Dirt – Motley Crue

Sort of an oral history of “the Crue, the world’s most notorious rock band.” Each member shares his own recollections of the music and mayhem. The most entertaining tales are spun by guitarist Mick Mars who swings wildly between being very zen and very whiny. I found this book immensely enjoyable, and am just sorry that *Run to the Hills*, the *Inside Story of Iron Maiden* is out of print.

A Personal History – Katherine Graham

Katherine Graham died last summer after a long and illustrious life as daughter of, wife of, and finally publisher of the *Washington Post*, and this is her personal story. It’s amazing that such a powerful woman could be so unassuming and likable, as well as such a great and honest writer. If you missed her funeral on CSPAN last summer, you missed an incredibly moving celebration of an important and wonderful life.

Fugitive Days – Bill Ayers

Bill Ayers went from being the privileged son of a Commonwealth Edison exec growing up in the Chicago suburbs to a 60’s radical political activist member of the Weather Underground to a fugitive to a Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Illinois-Chicago. This is his story. It’s fascinating, although it can be occasionally didactic. It does not mention his brother’s 4th grade teacher, who happened to be my mother. If you’re interested in this, also try to find *Diana: The Making of a Terrorist*, by Thomas Powers, which is about Diana Oughton who had a relationship with Ayers, and was also a Weatherman.

Nonfiction

Babies, Babies, Babies

Everyone I know is either pregnant, trying to get pregnant, thinking about being pregnant, or has just had a baby. Here are some books I’ve read recently to try to better understand this madness.

Babycatcher – Peggy Vincent

The tales of a San Francisco-area midwife. Over 40 years she has delivered over 2,000 babies, many at home, many under very strange circumstances. A quick read.

Mothers Who Think: Tales of Real Life Parenthood – Camille Perri, Kate Moses

A culturally diverse group of women writers share personal stories of raising children – everything from childbirth to coping with work and kids – including frosting cupcakes in the car.

Breeder: Real Life Stories from the New Generation of Mothers – Ariel Gore & Bee Lavender

Irreverent and sometimes moving stories from another culturally diverse group of women writers sharing their personal stories of motherhood. These “hip mamas” are a little more adventurous and alternative, but they still deal with the same issues as every other mother.

These “momoirs” seem to be a growing trend, with new books like *The Big Rumpus* by Ayun Halliday, *A Life’s Work* by Rachel Cusk and *Misconceptions* by Naomi Wolf all chronicling their personal journeys to motherhood. And of course there’s Sylvia Ann Hewlett and her book *Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*, which has created such a stir.

Miscellaneous Fiction

Miss Wyoming – Douglas Coupland
I don't remember much about this one, just that I didn't like it as much as *Girlfriend in a Coma*, but I'll read anything Douglas Coupland writes, including his new one, *All Families are Psychotic*.

Then She Found Me – Elinor Lipman
April is a quiet Latin teacher whose adopted parents have died, her life is radically changed when her birth mother, a talk show hostess enters her life. Fun.

MotherKind – Jayne Anne Phillips
Thoughtful. Maybe a little depressing. The protagonist is married to a man with two sons from a previous marriage, she's pregnant, and her mother is dying of cancer.

Dating Big Bird – Laura Zigman
"A year-in-the-life of a single, Manhattan career woman intent on making babies before her ovarian "gum-ball machine" dispenses its last egg: a tale that makes for laughs and touching moments if little insight." *From Kirkus Reviews*

Blue Angel – Francine Prose
I liked this one a lot. A writing professor at a small Eastern liberal arts college finds himself in an inappropriate situation with a student, which changes his life. He's a sympathetic character...for a while.

Retro

They May Not Be New, But Maybe They're New To You!

Valley of the Dolls – Jacqueline Susann
There is nothing better than lying in a raft on a beautiful day in Door County, reading old-fashioned trash. This year I think I'll read *Peyton Place*.

The Hobbit – JRR Tolkien
I had never read this and I'm glad I did. I don't know if I'll be able to make it through the other *Lord of the Rings* books, though.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn – Betty Smith
I had forgotten how much I loved this book. It's right up there with *Harriet the Spy* and *I Capture the Castle*. It's about Francie Nolan, growing up in the slums of turn-of-the-century Brooklyn. She's smart and funny and romantic. *Joy in the Morning*, also by Smith is on my list for this year.

Four Blondes – Candace Bushnell
This could be titled *More Sex and the City*.

Slab Rat – Ted Heller
A hilarious novel about the world of glitzy magazine publishing.

Misadventures – Sylvia Smith
A collection of anecdotes about one woman's life. It's odd, but oddly compelling. You'll either love it or hate it.

Me Times 3 – Alex Wichtel
It's New York, she's single, she works for a magazine. It's good, but you'll feel like you've read it before.

The Nanny Diaries – Emma McLaughlin & Nicola Kraus
This starts out as a very pointed satire of New York City society parents. It's great to read it just for the characterizations and descriptions. The plot gets a little cheesy, though.

Bridget Jones Clones

These are all essentially the same book. Set in London, with a possible trip to the country, each main character is 20-30 something, single and looking for a man. Great for airplanes or the beach. I've ranked them, with #1 being the best of the lot and #5 the worst.

1. *Asking for Trouble* – Elizabeth Young
2. *Olivia's Luck* – Catherine Alliott
3. *Last Chance Saloon* – Marion Keyes
4. *Getting Over It* – Anna Maxted
5. *Bad Hair Day* – Wendy Holden

The Ponder Heart – Eudora Welty
The Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature says it best: "Comic novella by Eudora Welty, published in 1954. Cast as a monologue, it is rich with colloquial speech and descriptive imagery. The narrator of the story is Miss Edna Earle Ponder, one of the last living members of a once-prominent family, who manages the Beulah Hotel in Clay, Miss. She tells a traveling salesman the history of her family and fellow townsfolk."

Gloria – Keith Maillard
This is not actually an old book, but it's written in the narrative style of a novel from the 50's. It's the coming-of-age story of a country-club girl from the south. She's just graduated from college and she's spending the summer at home. She's deeply conflicted about her family, her place in life and her boyfriend. Looking back, I like this more than I thought I did.

Confederacy of Dunces – John Kennedy Toole
I hated this book. Never have I met such a pompous, unsympathetic protagonist. I realize this is supposed to be "tragicomic," it just annoyed me.

Two of my favorite books of all time are "Retro" - *My Favorite Things*, and *The House in My Head* by Dorothy Rodgers, the wife of Richard Rodgers, of Rogers and Hammerstein and Rodgers and Hart fame. Both books are from the 60's and deal with decorating and entertaining. *The House in My Head* is sort of a narrative of the building of the Rodgers' home in Connecticut. They're both all about a lost way of life, of cocktails and midnight breakfasts, playing bridge, having a live-in staff, and making sure the guest room has an ashtray. See if you can find them in a used bookstore. The new Richard Rodgers biography, *Somewhere for Me*, by Meryle Secrest is also on my list.

You Read It, You Liked It

Recommended by Friends and Family

All books on this page recommended by Carol Ulmer

Travel

Strolling Through Istanbul - Hilary Sumner-Boyd, John Freely

Tales of a Female Nomad - Rita Golden Gelman

At the Ends of the Earth - Kieran Mulvaney

Nonfiction

French Lessons: Adventures with Knife, Fork, and Corkscrew - Peter Mayle

The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World - Michael Pollan

The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers - Daniel L. Schacter

The Bureau and the Mole: The Unmasking of Robert Philip Hanssen, the Most Dangerous Double Agent in FBI History - David A. Vise

Dangerous Muse: The Life of Lady Caroline Blackwood - Nancy Schoenberger

Tale of the Rose: The Passion That Inspired the Little Prince - Consuelo De Saint-Exupéry

John Adams - David McCullough

Washington - Meg Greenfield

Next year this page could be full of your recommendations!
Just send an email with a list of your favorite books, old and new, to chamley8@insightbb.com.

Recommended by Kara Scanlon:

Sorcerer's Apprentice - Tahir Shah

an insider's view of the underground economies of India....

Recommended (and summarized) by Joann Kilgus:

Love by the Glass - Dorothy Gaiter and John Brecher

The husband and wife authors of the Wall Street Journal's "Tastings" column wrote this memoir of their life together. They mark all the important events of their life with memorable bottles of wine. It is a great wine guide, but even more it is a wonderful story of two people who love each other very much.

The Measure of Our Days - Jerome Groopman, M.D.

The cover says this is a Spiritual Exploration of Illness, but it is more than that. We first learned about it when the Pastor at Lord of the Mountain Lutheran Church in Silverthorne, CO used one of the stories to illustrate his sermon at their Sunday service of healing. It tells the stories of eight patients and their relationships with Groopman.

Wish You Well - David Baldacci

Lousia Mae Cardinal is a 12-year old girl living in NYC with her family in 1940. When her father dies in a car accident, she, her brother and their mother, who was left nearly comatose in the accident, move to Appalachia to live with her great grandmother. It is a touching story!

Winter Solstice - Rosamunde Pilcher

Fiction

Atonement - Ian McEwan

Charlotte Gray - Sebastian Faulks

A Desert in Bohemia - Jill Paton Walsh

Five Quarters of an Orange - Joanne Harris

Blackberry Wine - Joanne Harris

Run - by Douglas E. Winter

The Center of Things - Jenny McPhee

Recommended by Auntie June Waller:

Kindred Souls: The Friendship of Eleanor Roosevelt and David Gurewitsch - Edna P. Gurewitsch

German Boy - Wolfgang E. Samuel, Stephen E. Ambrose

The Inextinguishable Symphony: A True Story of Music and Love in Nazi Germany - Martin Goldsmith

Recommended by Joseph P. Chamley:

Band of Brothers - Stephen Ambrose

The Good Fight: How World War II Was Won - Stephen E. Ambrose

DK Books' Eyewitness Berlin

Not for Kids Only

If you still haven't read any of the *A Series of Unfortunate Events* books by Lemony Snicket, you really should. They're hysterical. If you've loved them as much as I have, try *The Unauthorized Autobiography of Lemony Snicket*. It doesn't clear up any mysteries, but it's got a genius cover.

Petey - Ben Mikaelson

The story of the friendship between a young boy and a disabled elderly man. It will make you cry.

Click Clack Moo, Cows that Type and *Giggle, Giggle, Quack* by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin are two of the funniest children's picture books I've read in years.

What I'll Be Reading This Summer

Fiction

The Adventures of Kavalier and Clay – Michael Chabon
A Pulitzer Prize-winner, set in 1940's New York, about two Jewish cousins who create comic books. I actually started this several months ago, but then I got distracted.

The Corrections – Jonathan Franzen
I like to think of this as the book that broke Oprah's book club.

Body & Soul – Frank Conroy
I just started this last night. It's about a poor boy in NYC who learns to play the piano. Also, I think his mother is a taxicab-driving Communist sympathizer.

Year of Wonders – Geraldine Brooks
Based on the true story of an English village struck with the plague in the 17th century.

On Green Dolphin Street – Sebastian Faulks
Set in NYC and Washington in 1960, it's the story of a 40ish Englishwoman living in the States with her family, who is drawn into an affair with a journalist.

The Rotters' Club – Jonathan Coe
Apparently this is about a family living in Birmingham, England in 1973. What intrigued me is that it starts in a revolving restaurant in Berlin, where Joe and I had dinner in January.

In a Dark Wood – Amanda Craig
A man seeks the truth about his mother's suicide in the children's books she wrote and illustrated.

Everything Is Illuminated: A Novel – Jonathan Safran Foer
"There are two plots here. The first is the story of Jonathan Safran Foer, who travels to the Ukraine hoping to find the woman who helped save his grandmother from the Nazis. The second story follows the history of one family in Trachimbrod, the shtetl for which Jonathan and Alexi, his translator, are searching." *From Booklist*

Boonville – Robert Milder Anderson
"In this rambunctious novel dedicated to skewering old hippies and the dizzy residents of a small Northern California town, a truant yuppie falls for a relentless artist." *From Salon*

Tepper Isn't Going Out – Calvin Trillin
A novel about parking in New York City.

Gabriel's Gift – Hanif Kureishi
"Growing up is hard to do when you're the ambisexual son of a pair of washed-up bohemian rock 'n' rollers in contemporary London." *From Salon*

Eva Moves the Furniture – Margot Livesey
The story of a woman growing up in Scotland in the 20's and 30's and the spirits who guide her life.

Short Stories

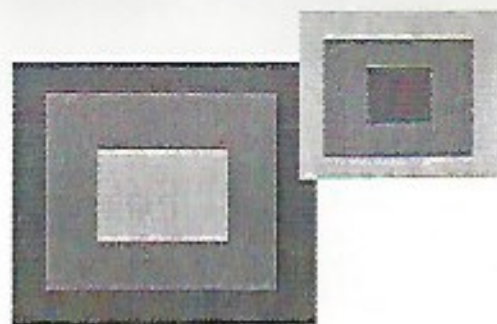
Stranger Things Happen – Kelly Link
A cross between ghost stories and fairy tales, these stories feature a man with a collection of wooden and metal replacement noses, ghost dogs, and many more strange people and occurrences.

A Multitude of Sins – Richard Ford
A collection of short stories that look at marital infidelity from a variety of perspectives.

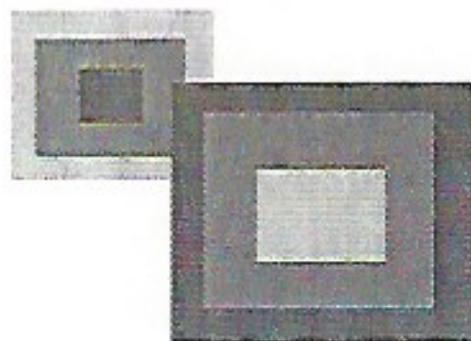
The Woman Who Gave Birth to Rabbits – Emma Donoghue
Short stories based on bits of real-life history.

Nonfiction

The rest of the books in the *Modern Library Food* series.



Have a great summer!



For more information about these books, or to make a recommendation, contact Amy Kilgus Chamley at chamley8@insightbb.com, or 2115 Mayfair, Champaign, IL 61821.

It's that time again!

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You know it's been an interesting year in books when two of my favorites are autobiographies -- one of Katherine Graham, and the other of Motley Crue. I continued my fascination with anything having to do with cooking, added an obsession with Lemony Snicket, and an addiction to Stephanie Plum. I also seem to have gotten into a "Bridget Jones Clone" rut. That trend can't end soon enough.

Once again, I've included many suggestions from friends and family. Send me your favorites and I'll include them in the next version.

I hope you enjoy it, have a great summer and read, read, read!



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