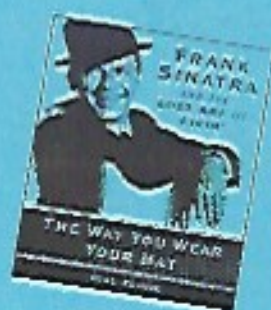




## summer collection 2001

amy kilgus chamley



i read a lot. fiction, nonfiction, mysteries, biographies, children's books, short stories, cookbooks, first novels, last novels, essay collections, even a cheesy romance here and there. some books inspire me, some amuse me, some bore me, some aggravate me, some stay with me, some fade away, and some get recommended to friends.

---

## new york, new york

selections inspired by a trip to New York

### sex & the city - Candace Bushnell

The book upon which the HBO show is based. It's about single, thirtyish women in New York and their sex/dating/relationship habits. I actually like the show better, but I'll probably read **Four Blondes**, her new book, anyway.

### the fundamentals of play - Caitlin Macy

What life might have been like if you'd graduated from an Ivy League school in the mid/late eighties and gone to work with all your friends in Manhattan.

### a certain age: a novel - Tama Janowitz

Florence, a Manhattan socialite, is incredibly vapid and annoying, AND she's careening down a financial and emotional spiral. This is one of the books that aggravated me.

### skip these

i don't care if Oprah loved them, i thought they sucked

**amy & isabelle** - Elizabeth Strout  
depressing

**until the real thing comes along** -  
Elizabeth Berg

**Joy School** by Elizabeth Berg is one of my favorite books, and I really like a lot of her older stuff. This was just bad.



means this is an exceptionally good book

## it's a mystery to me

### an unsuitable job for a woman - P.D. James

If you watch *Mystery!* on PBS regularly, you may have caught this. Cordelia Gray inherits a private detective agency. Her first solo case involves the suicide of a young Cambridge dropout and his family's mysterious affairs.

### the skull beneath the skin - P.D. James

Cordelia accompanies a fading actress to a mysterious island, to protect her from death threats. A page-turner.

### innocent blood - P.D. James

Not a Cordelia Gray, or an Inspector Dalgliesh. The story of a privileged English girl who sets out to find her biological mother.

### cold blood - Lynda La Plante

If you liked the Prime Suspect series (also on *Mystery!*) you might like this series by the same writer. Lorraine Page is a private detective from L.A. who used to be a cop. In the first book of the series, **Cold Shoulder**, she loses her job and then her family. In **Cold Blood** she and her new work "family" follow a case to New Orleans.



## note book club picks

### \*the winshaw legacy - Jonathan Coo

"The Winshaws are a family of eccentrics of the kind we so love in British fiction—with secrets kept in attics and members consigned to mental institutions."

### as I lay dying - William Faulkner

Faulkner's unique narrative style (confusing)... It's Faulkner, it's about a family taking their mother to be buried. I haven't read it, but I probably should.

### a gracious plenty - Sheri Reynolds

The story of a woman with disfiguring scars who hangs out with dead people. It's a lot better than it sounds. Party fairy tale, part southern gothic.



### angle of repose - Wallace Stegner

First of all, if you still haven't read

**Crossing to Safety**, please let me

know and I'll send you a free copy - it's one of my favorite books ever. One of the great things about Wallace Stegner is that he can create these realistic characters you may not like, but you're drawn to. Lyman Ward has lost his leg and his wife and now he's trying to write the biography of his grandmother (a very Stegnerian woman.) It's long, it takes a little bit to get into it, but it's worth it.

### the secret history - Donna Tartt

I first read this in college and loved it. When I read it this time it seemed really self-indulgent. A group of eccentric, intellectual classics students at an exclusive eastern college get in over their heads. I'm surprised this hasn't been made into a movie starring Gwyneth Paltrow.

### \*eleanor roosevelt, vol. I 1894-1933 - Blanche Wiessen Cook

This should be pretty self-explanatory.



### lying awake - Mark Salzman

Sister John is a middle aged nun in Los Angeles who experiences intense visions, which she transcribes into poetry. She finds that the "visions" are caused by epilepsy and has to decide whether to undergo surgery which will certainly affect the visions and her writing. This is an incredibly absorbing story

### einstein's dreams - Alan P. Lightman

Thirty little stories about places where time doesn't move the way we perceive it. Loosely connected to Albert Einstein and the beginning of his work on the theory of relativity. Interesting.

### \*the sparrow - Mary Doria Russell

It's 2019, there's Jesuits and the United Nations and sounds coming from another planet, or something. I didn't read it.

### \*immortality - Milan Kundera

"In Milan Kundera's sixth novel, a gesture by a woman to her swimming teacher sparks an obsession in the writer's mind—one that will be pursued with vigor and imagination."

\* I didn't actually read these. The synopses in quotes are courtesy of amazon.com.

## the kids are all right

books about and for kids (and grown-ups)



a series of unfortunate events - Lemony Snicket

If you like dark, sinister, disturbingly funny children's books, you'll love this series by the mysterious Lemony Snicket. Perhaps the description is best left to Mr. Snicket himself:

Dear Reader,

I'm sorry to say that this book is extremely unpleasant. It tells an unhappy tale about three unlucky children. Even though they are charming and clever, the Baudelaire siblings lead lives filled with misery and woe. From the very first page of this book when the children are at the beach and receive terrible news, continuing on through the entire story, disaster lurks at their heels. One might say they are magnets for misfortune.

In this short book alone, the three youngsters encounter a greedy and repulsive villain, itchy clothing, a disastrous fire, a plot to steal their fortune, and cold porridge for breakfast.

It is my sad duty to write down these unpleasant tales, but there is nothing stopping you from putting this book down at once and reading something happy, if you prefer that sort of thing.

with all due respect,

*Lemony Snicket*

There are currently seven books in the series. My favorite is Book Three, **The Wide Window**, in which the Baudelaire children go to live with their Aunt Josephine who is frightened of the stove, the phone, and especially Realtors. But she has impeccable grammar. (Suggested for ages 9 & up.)

**olivia** - Ian Falconer

Olivia is like the love child of Wilbur and Eloise. She's a pig in the city who can sing, paint and she's also quite a dancer. This is an absolutely darling picture book. Even if you don't buy it, read it the next time you're at the library or book store. (Ages 4 & up.)

**OLIVIA**



### harry potter rules!

Unbelievably, J.K. Rowling's hyperbestselling series gets better with each book.

The fourth installment, **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire** is fantastic. If you haven't read any yet, what are you waiting for? Please, read them before the movie is released this fall.

If you've read them all and need something to tide you over 'til #5 is released in 2002, try: **Quidditch Through the Ages** and **Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them**. Written by J.K. Rowling for the British children's charity Comic Relief U.K., these two tiny reference books take a more focused, in-depth, humorous look at parts of the Harry Potter mythology.



**quidditch through the ages** explains the history, rules, teams and stories behind every wizards' favorite sport.

**fantastic beasts and where to find them** tells you everything you ever needed to know about hippogriffs, kelpies, unicorns, and many other magical creatures.



### i capture the castle - dodie smith

Put down whatever book you're reading now and pick this up. This is one of my favorite books of all time.

It was written in 1948 by the author of **101 Dalmations**, and reissued in 1999. It takes place in the 30's in a crumbling castle in England that Cassandra Mortmain's family has leased. Her father is somewhat unstable, her young stepmother is somewhat airy, her sister is very romantic. Cassandra wants to be a writer and chronicles the unusual events of her life in her diary. Cassandra is such a wonderful character, just writing about her makes me want to read it again. (Ages 12 & up.)

### the phantom tollbooth - norton juster

I haven't actually read this yet. But I keep seeing it on "best books from childhood" lists. Also, Auntie June's sixth graders liked it. Milo is a young boy who's bored with everything -- until he receives a mysterious toy tollbooth. Milo's adventures in Dictionopolis play on language and irony. (Ages 8 & up.)



## nonfiction

### get a job

**kitchen confidential** - Anthony Bourdain

The author, executive chef at Manhattan's Les Halles restaurant, tells what really goes on behind the kitchen doors. A fascinating look at the way the culinary world really works.

**the making of a chef** - Michael Ruhlman

A look at how one learns to cook at the Culinary Institute of America. Mouthwatering.

**waiting** - Debra Ginsberg

One woman's tales of being a professional waitress.

**new jack** - Ted Conover

A reporter goes through training and then spends a year as a guard at Sing Sing prison in New York.



### the chairman of the board

**the way you wear your hat** - Bill Zehme

The subtitle is: Frank Sinatra and the Lost Art of Livin'. It's not a biography, it's more of a compendium of Sinatra's philosophies of how to dress, how to drink, and how to treat women. It's coo-coo!

**the rat pack: neon nights with the kings of cool** -

Lawrence J. Quirk, William Schoell

Did you know that Humphrey Bogart headed the original Rat Pack and that Frank Sinatra greatly admired Bogart (almost as much as he wanted to sleep with Bogart's wife Lauren Bacall.) Learn all this and more than you ever wanted to know about Joey Bishop.

### short stories & essays

**speaking with the angel** - Nick Hornby, editor

A collection of short stories by folks like Melissa Bank, Helen Fielding and Dave Eggers.

**who i was supposed to be** - Susan Perabo

Quirky.

**me talk pretty one day** - David Sedaris

You know I'd read anything by David Sedaris. These are just as funny and just as rude as ever.

### mother knows best

some of Joann's favorites this year

**miss julia speaks her mind** - Ann B. Ross

**saving faith** - David Baldacci

**a town like alice** - Nevil Shute

**ten thousand sorrows** - Elizabeth Kim

**the sweet potato queen's book of love** - Jill Conner Browne

**the girl in hyacinth blue** - Susan Vreeland

**the reader** - Bernhard Schlink

## the english countryside

### **the country life** - Rachel Cusk

A young British woman gives up her job in the city to work in the country as a companion to a disabled boy. Has some hilarious moments.

### **headlong** - Michael Frayn

An art historian discovers and becomes obsessed with a lost Breugel painting in his neighbor's rundown country house. Has some hilarious moments.

### **the old-girl network** - Catherine Alliott

You'll have to order this one from amazon.co.uk. Catherine Alliott writes fairly conventional romance novels, but they have many, many hilarious moments.

## the midwest and plains states

### **midnight champagne** - A. Manette Ansay

A wedding takes place at the Great Lakes Chapel and Hideaway Lodge in Wisconsin, and hilarity ensues.



### **plainsong** - Kent Haruf

A really lovely book about a small town in Colorado and the people who inhabit it. The bachelor farmers who take in the pregnant teen are priceless.

### **welcome to my planet** - Shannon Olson

If Bridget Jones were Minnesotan, slightly more neurotic and had mother issues.

## beyond category

### **city of light** - Lauren Belfer

Set in Buffalo, New York at the turn of the century, this book can't decide whether it's historical fiction, romance or mystery. It starts out promisingly, but kind of fades.

### **the walking tour** - Kathryn Davis

If anyone read and understood this book, please call me and explain it to me. Thanks.

### **the virgin suicides** - Jeffrey Eugenides

Five teenage sisters living in a suburb in the late 70's commit suicide and forever change the lives of the neighborhood boys. The movie's good too.



### **pobby & dingan** - Ben Rice

Pobby & Dingan are the imaginary friends of Ashmol Williamson's little sister. Ashmol thinks his sister is crazy, but when Pobby & Dingan disappear and his sister becomes increasingly depressed and ill, Ashmol sets out to find them. One of my favorites this year.

### **human croquet** - Kate Atkinson

I'm not finished yet, but it reminds me of a combination of **I Capture the Castle**, and **Behind the Scenes at the Museum** (also by Atkinson.) It's good so far.



### **clementine in the kitchen** - Samuel Chamberlain

Part of the Modern Library Food Series, edited by Ruth Reichl. Back in print for the first time since the 40's, this tells the story of an American family's love of their French cook, and her cooking. Includes a lot of recipes.

## books i'll try to read this summer

**dating big bird** - Laura Zigman  
Because Gini said she liked it.

**chasing grace** - Martha Manning  
Because Kara recommended it.

**void moon** - Michael Connelly  
Because I've really liked all his other books.

**our lady of the lost and found** - Diane Schoemperlen  
The Virgin Mary appears wearing a navy trench coat and running shoes and moves in with the narrator.

**my dream of you** - Nuala O'Faolain  
An Irish travel writer takes a trip to Ireland and studies a divorce case from the 19th century. Kara liked this too.

**a confederacy of dunces** - John Kennedy Toole  
I've never read this, and people have raved about it - "The funniest book I've ever read."  
We'll see.

**comfort me with apples** - Ruth Reichl

The second volume of her memoir. She's the editor of Gourmet magazine and a former restaurant critic.

**the soul of a chef** - michael ruhlman

The follow up to **The Making of a Chef**. Ruhlman takes the Master Chef exam and profiles two well known chefs.

**perfection salad: women and cooking at the turn of the century** - Laura Shapiro

**the prize winner of defiance, ohio** - Terry Ryan  
The subtitle is "How My Mother Raised 10 kids on 25 Words or Less." The mother entered contests to pay the bills.

i know that you all read a lot, too. i know that your interests may be different from mine. (actually, i kind of hope they are.)

now it's your turn to share. please email your suggestions to [achamley@ncte.org](mailto:achamley@ncte.org).

last year i distributed about 40 copies of the summer reading list. imagine if you all returned recommendations of great books, so-so books, and books to avoid! if i receive enough, i might do a supplement.

Have a great summer -- and keep reading!



amy kilgus chamley  
2115 mayfair  
champaign, il 61821  
217/239-5370  
[achamley@ncte.org](mailto:achamley@ncte.org)  
1 june 2001