

March 2024 Podcast

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Phil 00:15

Hello and welcome to this CMPL podcast. My name is Phil and I am joined by my fellow nonfiction librarians, Kathy, Uma and Kate. Hello, everybody.

Kate M 00:26

Hello.

Kathy 00:26

Hi.

Uma 00:27

Hi.

Phil 00:28

Today we're going to talk about forthcoming nonfiction books that we are super excited about, or you know, are at least vaguely excited about. Some of these are official nonfiction, hot reads selected and voted on by our librarian team. And some are just books that we are personally looking forward to regardless of what anybody else thinks. Kathy, would you like to start us off with your first pick?

Kathy 00:52

Sure, absolutely. So, I chose a book a forthcoming book by my favorite author or one of my favorite authors, Amy Tan. You know her as the author of such books as the Joy Luck Club, Bone Setters Daughter, Kitchen God's Wife, Saving Fish from Drowning, etc. 100 Secret Senses, they're all wonderful. And The Backyard Bird Chronicles is actually a nonfiction memoir about her birdwatching, and I'm always excited to hear that she has produced another book. The book brings together selections from nine personal journals and filled with sketches and handwritten notes of net observations about birds spotted in Northern California backyard between 2017 and 2022. In four years, Tan has looked out under California, backyard paradise. I'm so jealous when I read about it of there's oaks, periwinkle vines, Birch, Japanese maple, many more observing more than 60 species of birds. And she fashions her findings into a delightful, quote unquote, approachable journal experts accompanied by her gorgeous color sketches, which by the way, she didn't start out as an artist. I mean, she has some, you know, artistic talent, but she was taking lessons at the same time. So, the sketches in the book kind of evolve, according to how good she got. It seems like some people have all the talent.

Kate M 02:25

So she's the author and the illustrator?

Kathy 02:27

Yes.

Kate M 02:27

Oh, cool.

Phil 02:28

That's very cool. I didn't realize

Kathy 02:30

It's, you know, her gorgeous sketches. Her fiction writing talent inspires her imaginings. Of what birds are thinking as she Chronicles food fights, the Battle of the bird bath, bird wooing, parents teaching floods, budgeting, scuze me, fledgling exploring and birds at play. She tries to rescue sick birds and chases cats away. She feels especially close to hummingbirds. Her lively sketches include commentary and bird remarks and graphic novel mode. While her beautifully detailed portraits depict each bird as a distinct personality. She and I can relate to all of this she chronicles food fights the battle at the birdbath, bird wooing parents teaching floods, yearlings. I have a personal experience of that. In birds at play, she tries to rescue sick birds and chases cats away. She feels especially close to hummingbirds, loves finches, and warblers, and is awed by hawks and great horned owls. I wish I saw as many birds as she sees. I don't I see quite a few.

Kate M 03:37

But yeah, she must have a heck of a backyard.

Kathy 03:39

Oh, it sounds says rooftop, but it's in California. And she's surrounded by all this greenery. So, I don't know if it's actually I don't know. It's hard to figure out what that actually means by

Kate M 03:54

I'll have to read the book.

Uma 03:56

No, I am waiting and waiting for it. And because summer is coming spring and summer, perfect title you chose Kathy to watch lot of birds now.

Phil 04:06

Yes. And that comes out. I can't remember when exactly in April, but that's one of our April Hot Reads. Defintiely watch for that.

Kathy 04:13

I mean, it's she the book describes Tan as funny and candid. Day by day she's continued to learn more about the birds, their activities, and how she should relate to them battling pesky squirrels which, of course anybody who watches birds, no squirrels and other pesky birds can take over the so called

pretty birds. Okay, which is not very nice, but that's the way it is with bird watching. Oh, and I'm going to grab this idea. She deterred a crow, which are just scavengers at bird feeders, bird feeders and she hung an upside-down crow on the bird feeder err, to deter the crow

Kate M 05:02

Oh my god, like, threatening.

Kathy 05:04

I know, I've heard of people putting a snake in a vegetable garden now, but a rubber snake of course, but this one I'm going to try in fact, I'm going to go, you know looking for rubber upside down hawk or a hawk. Anyway,

Phil 05:20

I just want a rosin owl for our back yard because otherwise, birds will build a nest, which is adorable, but our dogs don't understand that these are little baby birds trying to live and fly.

Kathy 05:33

Right?

Kate M 05:34

I have a fake owl its eyes turn red. It's like a motion sensor to intend to scare squirrels away. Its eyes turn red and scary. Oh,

Kathy 05:42

Where did you get it?

Kate M 05:44

I think Amazon.

Kathy 05:46

Okay, well, everything's on Amazon. Yeah, you know, probably pretty soon you can buy a baby on Amazon. Oh, well, I was just gonna say though, as Uma knows, and Kate but mostly Uma. I think from you know, our meetings over the last few years how passionate I am about bird watching at my feeders, you know, I didn't go actually out and exercise to see them, Uma actually bought me the cutest mug once distracted by birds, because when we were in COVID season, we had to do remote everything. And so, I'd be sitting there but outside the window would be the bird feeders and I kept looking over at the bird feeder. So, the only other thing I'll say, you know, other than I bet this book is going to be great is that cats, she was always trying to deter cats. They kill something like a billion birds a year. Yeah, 1 billion birds a year. She was constantly battling them. And we have this huge, feral black cat that comes to our porch or their deck. And we sit there and have staring contests. So, I'm sitting on the couch. He's out there. He's probably father too many of the plant cats in the neighborhood, and we just stare at one another. And then he breaks down first. He leaves and if he doesn't, I opened the door and he goes, but I'm sure he's responsible, unfortunately. Anyway, that's about all I have to say about that. I'm sure it's gonna be great.

Phil 07:26

Yeah, that'll be a popular one. And, of course, is a popular author. Well, thank you, Kathy. Uma, what is your first pick?

Uma 07:33

Oh, I chose my favorite topic about how to live a stress-free life. I know it's an interesting topic. I'm sure it will be your favorite too. The title is. It's Okay Not to Look for the Meaning of Life here, here! Yeah, A Zen Monks' Guide to Living Stress-Free One Day at a Time. It's written by Jikisai Minami. Okay, this title will be out on April 2. So, every one of us will be going through some kind of stress, knowingly and unknowingly. How to Be free ourselves from stress with the simple, no nonsense advice from Zen monk. This book has 35 short, thought provoking essays, which are divided into four chapters. One is like our sense of self, our hopes and dreams, our personal relationships and how to face debt. I know summer is coming up spring and summer, we all want to go out and sit and meditate something and feel stress free from all these anxieties what we are going through every day in our lives.

Kate M 09:03

I'd say that's a universal goal.

Uma 09:07

Thank you. Each chapter features a number of short, thought provoking essays that provide a fresh perspective and familiar topics. The author also encourages us to accept our reality and live our lives from that starting point. This he believes will free us from anxiety, relationship problems and negative emotions. So, this is the book what I'm going to introduce you guys to read during the upcoming months. It's coming out on April 2. So far it's I thought this will be a perfect book for our summer that you can take it with you wherever you can sit next to the beach or lake and read about this book and just think about yourself.

Kathy 10:03

Oh, I'll order it...I might already have after I read your thing you know on OverDrive.

Uma 10:11

Oh, I already ordered in I it's in the cart and I think I ordered yesterday, this book I'm talking

Kathy 10:19

I'm talking about digitally.

Phil 10:23

Hopefully we'll have a physical and electronic

Uma 10:26

Physical book and so you can do that Kathy. Okay.

Phil 10:31

Well that sounds great. Well, thank you so much to low stress books. No pressure, Kate, but what's your first book,

Kate M 10:36

I'm pretty low stress too my book is called Stuzzichini: The Art of the Italian Snack. So, we don't normally pick cookbooks, I feel like for these podcasts are like lists of things that we're excited about. But I saw this one, and I was pretty excited about it. So, it I learned a new word Stuzzichini, which is from the root word in Italian stuzz a kadhi, which means like to whet your appetite. So basically, what this is, is like finger foods. And what it says in the description is that in Italy, this is something that they eat, like in the afternoon, along with like Happy Hour drinks, and that sort of thing. Um, so I'm excited, because I don't really cook much on a day to day basis. But when I go to like parties and events, I put my whole self into it. So, people think I'm a really good cook based on what I bring. But that's just because, like, that's the only effort I ever put into cooking. So, I'm excited about this, because it there just seems to be like a ton of recipes that I that I think I'm gonna make over the summer and bring to like, Memorial Day barbecues and stuff like that, the pictures are really striking to.

Kathy 11:45

Okay.

Phil 11:47

Sounds amazing. I am a terrible cook. So, I think it's a perfect book for you. As compared to me.

Kathy 11:55

I watched that Stanley Tucci. And that, what's the name of the show?

Kate M 12:00

Searching for Italy searching for Italy. I watched into it. That was good.

Kathy 12:04

He's 100% Italian by race in the US. And I mean, how do people get these jobs? I don't know. I don't know when we met only is he a prolific actor. And I mean, and then he gets a tour. And every time I watch it, my mouth is watering through the whole thing.

Kate M 12:23

Oh, yeah, it was so good.

Phil 12:26

That sounds amazing. Yeah, Val and I were lucky enough to go to Italy and just everything was great. Just having basic pizza. It was like the most amazing pizza I've ever had.

Uma 12:37

Yeah. Something it's something great. You have to visit at least once in your lifetime.

Kathy 12:43

I intend to.

Uma 12:45

Yeah, it's a great place to visit. This summer. I was there right last summer. What is the thing what I learned? You know, it is water is very expensive than wine.

Kate M 13:02

It's true, as it should be

Uma 13:05

If you're a good wine drinker. Lovely place to visit.

Phil 13:10

That makes me happy. It's the best wine you've ever had. All Italian wine. Thank you. I appreciate that, Kate. So, my first book. I don't know if it's stressful or not. I don't think so. This one seems pretty fun and light. It's called The Fixer: moguls mobsters, movie stars in Maryland by Josh Young and Manfred Westfall. This one comes out April 16. And it is an official nonfiction hot read. So, it's a riveting tale all biography that delves into the extraordinary life of Hollywood's most infamous private detective and fixer to the stars, revealing newly discovered shocking revelations from his never before seeing the investigative files. So, during the height of Hollywood's Golden Age, one man lorded over the city's lurid underbelly of forbidden sin and celebrity scandal like no other and his name was Fred Otash. I loved the description of this book. I'm like, it makes me want to read it. He was the most sought-after private detective and fixer to the stars, and he specialized in the dark arts that would suit and dominate the entertainment industry. So, he was notorious for bugging the homes offices and play pens of movie stars, kingmakers and powerful politicians employing state of the art methods of electronic surveillance and wiretapping for a who's who's, who's whose list of clients for whom he do anything short of murder. He lied to federal authorities to protect Frank Sinatra from criminal liability. He recorded Rock Hudson's private confessions to his estranged wife. He moved in with Judy Garland to help her get sober, and he taped Marilyn Monroe's rendezvous with John F. Kennedy and others.

Kathy 14:59

Oh,

Phil 15:00

So, sounds like a nice, fun, juicy tell all. And I'm a big fan of film noir. You at home can't see this, but I'm drinking from my film noir festival mug. And this book seems like it might read a little bit like a real-life noir. I think there's something kind of inherently fascinating about old timey private detectives and celebrity scandals and kind of the darker side of Hollywood and in the mid-century, I buy lots of our history books and biographies for the library, and a lot of them are World War Two and Civil War battles. But sometimes it's just fun to have a history book that doesn't read like a history book. It's just kind of sort of gossipy fun. And one of our let's get real book club members once told me, and I'm kind of paraphrasing there's nothing more fun than reading about rich and famous people doing dumb things. I completely agree with that.

Kathy 16:00
Right?

Phil 16:01
This...This book will be a lot of fun. Yeah,

Kate M 16:02
His methods don't sound too legal to me, I wonder if he ever like went to jail or something?

Phil 16:07
I don't know.

Kate M 16:07
We'll have to read the book.

Phil 16:08
How to read the book to find out. But anyway,

Kathy 16:11
That sounds great, Phil.

Phil 16:13
Yeah. Kathy, what's your next pick?

Kathy 16:17
Okay, well, my next one. I'll be short and kind of sweet with this one. It's called in fact, I think I had it on for a hot read. I don't think it made it though. It's called Dogland by Tommy Tomelson.

Kate M 16:33
I voted for it.

Kathy 16:34
Thank you. It's do out in April. That's Tomlinson. Okay to TOMILISON. So, he was watching a dog show on television a few years ago when he had a sudden thought. Are those dogs happy? How about pet dogs? Are they happy? Those questions sparked a quest to venture inside the dog show world in search of a deeper understanding of the relationship between dogs and humans. That has endured for 1000s of years. Dog land shares a surprising entertainment and moving adventures. Okay, so this is I don't know his how many people he's sitting here have watched Best in Show.

Kate M 17:17
Oh, I've seen it as funny.

Phil 17:19
I've not but I've heard great things about

Kathy 17:21

you have to watch it. Literally. You have to watch it because I could watch it over and over again.

Kate M 17:27

Yeah. I think it's the best Christopher Guest movie.

Kathy 17:31

And Eugene Levy who does?

Phil 17:34

Oh yeah.

Kathy 17:34

Did Best in Show and then more recently and superbly Schitts Creek. Yep. Yep. That is obviously I was trying to find Shitts for there on the podcast audience. Okay, so, as I was saying, it's, you know, like a real-life version of Eugene lovies. Best in Show, he follows one champion dog named striker a beloved, maybe a dog lover knows the way to pronounce this Samoyed. Has anybody heard? S Amoy. Ed, I'm only thinking maybe it's from Samoa. Yeah, and so it's pronounced Samoyed, who took honors at the Westminster Dog Show two years running, and was profiled in the New York Times. So, he illustrates the personalities and practices of the characters on the dog show circuit, particularly the relationship between Stryker and his handler, Laura King who travels with as many as 20 dogs, in a motorhome that she calls Betty White, who was famous for her love of animals. So, the reviewer says that Tomlinson's limitless curiosity about people and dogs reaches far beyond the show's tense and into the ordinary lives of dogs. We hear from experts who have discovered new insights into how dogs and humans formed their bond. And how that bond has changed over the centuries. We discover the fascinating origins of different dog breeds. Learn about elaborate breed standards that determine an ideal show dog and consider the health issues that can arise in purebred dogs. I think it was it some kind of oh, gosh, sorry. Never mind. I won't go into that because I'm, you know, a French Bulldog. I think...

Kate M 19:38

The one with the big head?

Kathy 19:40

I think so. That is so valuable because they have many health issues. And one can cost as much as \$15,000.

Uma 19:53

Oh, wow. Oh,

Kathy 19:56

I tell you. Engaging, charming and insightful Dogland is irresistibly appealing. It's an irresistibly appealing read that invites us on a rollicking, backstage tour through the rituals, tricks and wonders of the dog show world and reveals what matters most for the happiness of dogs and dog lovers

everywhere. So, yep, I'm looking forward to that one too, even though I don't have a dog. And I'm not a real true animal lover, except for my daughter's dog, Edgar. I really think that this will it would make a cute movie, I bet but anyway,

Phil 20:32

Yeah, that sounds like a great one. That'd be popular. That comes out in April. Also, a lot of these books as soon as we placed the order, typically they are able to be put on hold. So, check our catalog soon. And you'll probably be able to place your order on any one of these books that we're talking. Well, thank you, Kathy. Uma, what's your second and final pick?

Uma 20:54

Okay, so before I give you out the title, I would like you guys to guess it. So, what is this? Many of us are all excited about something in April coming up. We are all excited about it. What is that?

Kate M 21:13

Opening Day of baseball?

Uma 21:14

No many of us are about to view upcoming full solar...

Kathy 21:21

I was gonna say I was gonna say April Fool's Day.

Uma 21:27

No, it's a full solar eclipse. So, I'm going to the second title is The Astronomy Handbook. To ultimate meet guide to observing and understanding stars, planets, galaxies, and the universe. It is by Schilling Gilbert. He's an award-winning astronomy writer. And so, this is such an interesting book, those who are having trust with the universe study about this, planets, stars and etc, etc. And so, what is this? We are going to get this full solar eclipse on April 8. Why do we get these eclipses? What is the universe about? How do these galaxies stars and planets work? You have all these questions about I would say this title, the astronomy handbook, The Ultimate Guide to observing and understanding stars, planets, glass galaxies, and the universe by Schilling Govert is a must read.

Kate M 22:47

That sounds great. Sounds really good.

Uma 22:49

This is a go to guide for learning everything about our universe, and every universe beyond. So, this is my second pick I just I don't want to say much about it. Please check it out. Read this and understand about universe if you are interested with all this blank study of planets or stars and all this.

Kathy 23:14

I love that. Yeah, I remember. Oh gosh, a long time ago, probably 10 years ago when I loved to vegetable garden. And I did everything by the moon, okay. So, I knew when the waxing or waning what was good for potatoes. I mean, I really got into it that summer. It was very fun.

Uma 23:36

Did you check our digital copy? A digital copy Kathy?

Kathy 23:40

Okay, I will I definitely will. Okay. All of these actually. That's what we usually do. So, I will be happy to.

Uma 23:48

Yeah, sure. Okay. Actually, this book, this title is coming out on May 28.

Phil 23:56

May 28. Okay, great. And since you brought it up, we have we'll have a limited number of eclipse glasses, available at the library while yes last, for resident card holders. Resident Card holders.

Uma 24:09

Yes, that's yeah, that's a good thing. You did mention that here.

Phil 24:16

Hey, what's your final pick?

Kate M 24:17

My final pick is called Everest Inc, the renegades and rogues who built an industry at the top of the world by oil Cockrell, and I I'm excited about this because I love reading books about people climbing Mount Everest, because I myself never want to do such a thing. So it sounds so miserable and treacherous and unforgiving that I'm like, oh my god, I'm so happy I'm just sitting here in the warmth reading about one.

Uma 24:41

One of my friends actually, she's my doctor. She did that. Oh, wow. Mount Everest and that was recently. She when she was talking about I oh my god as you said she practiced so many sweat.

Kate M 25:01

Yeah, so this book is kind of about the business and what goes on...on Mount Everest, um, because what they were saying in the description is that like, back in the day used to be people that climbed Mount Everest were like these intrepid adventurers who would somehow find their way to the top of the mountain. But now its more business based. So, you hire a Sherpa. The Sherpa brings you to the top of the mountain. You know, they evoke pictures of like, long lines, like people staring at a single file line to get to the top and that sort of thing. And seems like they kind of mentioned, like that it used to be the intrepid adventurers going to Mount Everest, but now anybody can go as long as they have enough money. And that's all tied to the business end of the Sherpas. And instead, the Sherpas. A lot of them

have been in business for decades. Starting this, like probably in the 70s or something and continuing till now and growing their business, for better or worse what that looks like.

Uma 26:01

Yeah, but I have one more question here, Kate. Yeah, although it is a business kind of thing. Anybody cannot better because they do have some test. Right? Physical, you know,

Kate M 26:12

I'm sure

Uma 26:13

Physically fit right mentally or physically or to be fit to I'm sure you do.

Phil 26:17

Those are those are specifically designed to keep me off the mountain.

Kathy 26:21

Yeah, I'm with you.

Kate M 26:23

Yeah, but the authors Will Cockerel and it sounds like he's done a lot of work with like Outside Magazine. And he, in this book, he interviews Jimmy Chin who I'm a big fan of and he's a climber slash filmmaker, slash photographer. He's done a lot with National Geographic and like he he's made movies like free solo and Meru. So, I think this is going to be an exciting book. And Kathy, I'm hoping you can get the eAudio.

Kathy 26:49

You betcha, you betcha just for Kate and everybody. But everything I've heard about it. Within the recent history is the miserable illness of the 1000s of people trying to climb it at the same time. And seeing having to pass dead bodies. Yes. Bodies frozen in the side of the road.

Kate M 27:14

Yes.

Kathy 27:14

I mean, that's horrible.

Phil 27:18

It's never the Sherpas that get the glory, it's always the rich people that definitely have the money to go, right?

Kate M 27:26

The funny thing too, is like it's a huge accomplishment, if you are one of the rich people that got to the top but like the Sherpas to it every day.

Phil 27:32

Yeah, right. Yeah. So, Tuesday for them.

Uma 27:36

Sure, my doctor sees a rich doctor.

Phil 27:40

I'm sure with all due respect to your doctor. Well, thank you. Okay, well, I've got one last one myself. It's *The Demon of Unrest: A saga of hubris, heartbreak and heroism at the dawn of the Civil War* by Erik Larson. This one comes out April 30. So, the best-selling author of the splendid and the vile *Devil in the White City*, brings to life the pivotal five months between the election of Abraham Lincoln and the start of the Civil War, a simmering crisis that finally tore a deep, deeply divided nation and to on November 6 1860, Abraham Lincoln became the unlikely victor in a tight race for president. The country was bitterly at odds southern extremists were moving ever closer to destroying the union with one state after another succeeding and Lincoln powerless to stop them. Slavery fueled the conflict but somehow the passions of North and South came to focus on a lonely federal fortress in Charleston Harbor. Fort Sumter master storyteller Eric Larsen offers a gripping account of the chaotic months between Lincoln's election and the Confederacy's shelling of Sumpter, a period marked by tragic errors and miscommunications and flamed egos personal tragedies and betrayals. Lincoln himself wrote that the trials of these five months were so great that could I have anticipated them I would not have believed it believed it possible to survive them. That's Abraham Lincoln. So anyway, this one is it's Erik Larsen. It'll be a hit.

Kathy 29:20

Of course,

Phil 29:21

Popular. Publishers Weekly gives it a positive review so discourteous so yeah, I buy lots of Civil War history books. There's 1000 that come out every year and apparently there's just a new angle to cover endless, endless numbers of angles to cover on the Civil War and of course, World War Two. But I have a particular soft spot for Erik Larsen. I've read his books *Devil in the White City*, about the serial killer HH Holmes in Chicago and I read *Splendid and the Vile* about Winston Churchill during the bombing of London and they are two of my favorite historical nonfiction books are Carson is a really great storyteller. You often hear him described as writing nonfiction that reads like fiction, and I definitely agree with that assessment. At this point, I feel like it's my personal duty as our library's purchaser of US history books to let the public know whenever Erik Larsen comes out with a new book and April's the month, so this will definitely be popular. You can I think, already start putting, putting your holds on that one if you want, and we'll have extra copies, because it's a hot read.

Kate M 30:31

Oh, really interesting. Um, I went to Fort Sumter actually, a few years ago, you have to take a boat to get there and you see dolphins along the way. But it's designated as a national park. So, they had like a national park ranger there to kind of explain the historical context of it with the Civil War and like, what it

was and what happened there. Which I had no idea if I ever learned that in US history. I forgot about it. So it was it was really fascinating. So, I think this book is gonna be good.

Phil 30:58

Yeah, I mean, the last I heard about it was probably elementary school. I just right there was there was some sort of battle that kicked off the Civil War, but this is on my want to read list. And so yeah, all these are coming out real soon. And so, watch for these other great titles coming to a library near you. Our heart reads can be found at all three of our library locations are at our main library, both new nonfiction and nonfiction hot reads can be found on the second floor. That's where we all work. Thank you all so much for listening and have a happy spring, everybody.

Uma 31:38

Happy Spring.

Kathy 31:39

Happy Spring, everyone. Happy Spring. Bye bye.