



The Owl

"The Owl of Minerva takes flight only as the dusk begins to fall." — Hegel

Winter Readers' Picks

Written and compiled by Christopher Poché, Ekstrom Library

In the years that I have been writing this column, I have tried to think of my reading in terms of the seasons (the winter and summer of these picks), but my reading habits have never provided any interesting connections in this regard. I follow my interests regardless of the seasons. One book (indeed any work of art—a painting, a film, etc.) is a window onto many others, and I am constantly looking through these. And it was looking through one such window that finally provided a seasonal link that has altered the way I read.

A couple years ago, I started watching the films of Akira Kurosawa and learned that he was a great admirer of Fyodor Dostoevsky, incorporating into his films the Russian novelist's existential focus on the nature of human choice in extreme situations. This pushed me to finally read Dostoevsky, and I started with *Crime and Punishment*. It just so happened that I started reading Dostoevsky during a snow storm that made getting around Louisville very difficult. Staying home and under warm covers with a big fat novel was the most appealing option at the time, and since then I have looked forward to winter as a good time to immerse myself in the alternate worlds of fiction, especially those with high page number counts. And I have kept up with Dostoevsky, reading two other big novels: *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

In a review of a biography of Dostoevsky, the inimitable David Foster Wallace makes an argument for reading Dostoevsky because he is "fun." Since Dostoevsky is a canonical author, reading his work may seem, as Wallace suggests, the literary equivalent of eating your vegetables.



The Furnas Family Album (circa 1887 -1910) Collection

You may not really want to do it, but you will because it's "good for you." Wallace offers the following description to suggest that reading Dostoevsky should not be a chore: "His novels almost always have ripping good plots, lurid and intricate and thoroughly dramatic. There are murders and attempted murders and police and dysfunctional-family feuding and spies, tough guys and beautiful fallen women and unctuous con men and wasting illnesses and sudden inheritances and silky villains and scheming and whores." This is a fair enough description of the novels I have read. I'll add just a few notes about what I specifically liked about *Crime and Punishment*.

After finishing the third novel, I looked back and realized with a sense of admiring awe that neither *The Idiot* nor *The Brothers Karamazov* (nor just about any novel in my experience) can beat *Crime and Punishment* for pure propulsive narrative drive. It wasn't just the cold weather that kept me inside reading the story of Raskolnikov, a down-on-his-luck student who decides to murder an old pawnbroker, not out of anger or for personal gain, but out of a belief in his own moral superiority. Raskolnikov is the original Nietzschean "superman," believing himself above the law that governs ordinary people. But it turns out that Raskolnikov does not really have the stomach to bear the consequences of his crime. He spends the rest of the novel wracked by his guilty conscience as he tries to elude the investigations of the brilliant police detective, Porfiry Petrovich.

That's just the main plot. *Crime and Punishment* is filled with many of the other elements Wallace describes. For example, there is a marriage plot involving Raskolnikov's sister, Dunya, and her pompous fiancé, Luzhin, both of whom want to marry for all the wrong reasons. She wants his money, and he wants someone to serve him. This leads to an explosive, chapter-long argument between Raskolnikov's family and the fiancé that beats anything on *Jerry Springer* and had me laughing all the way. No chairs are thrown, but the dialogue explodes with furious energy.

By the way, though I read *Crime and Punishment* in the dead of winter, the novel is set in a particularly hot summer. The heat heightens the sense of Raskolnikov's desperation. And that heat is just one of the many elements that Kurosawa used in his lesser known film, *Stray Dog*, a noir-ish drama about two police detectives (Kurosawa regulars Toshiro Mifune and Takashi Shimura) on the trail of a desperate killer. It's one of my favorite Kurosawa films (even above *Seven Samurai*) and is the one that pushed me to read *Crime and Punishment*.

As always, many thanks to all those who contributed to this column. And happy holidays to all.

Scott Campbell, Law Library

I have been on a Michael Swanwick reading jag lately. I had always liked him but have only recently begun to appreciate just how good he is. In my mind he is one of the top speculative fiction writers around. He is equally adept at science fiction and fantasy and at both novels and short stories. He is also really good at creating characters, a skill many science fiction and fantasy writers tend to lack. He has racked up an armload of awards that display the high regard in which he is held: one Nebula for one of his novels and



The Owl is published six times a year as an online PDF publication by the University of Louisville Libraries, Louisville, KY 40292.

There is a combined June-August "summer" issue and a November-January "winter" issue.

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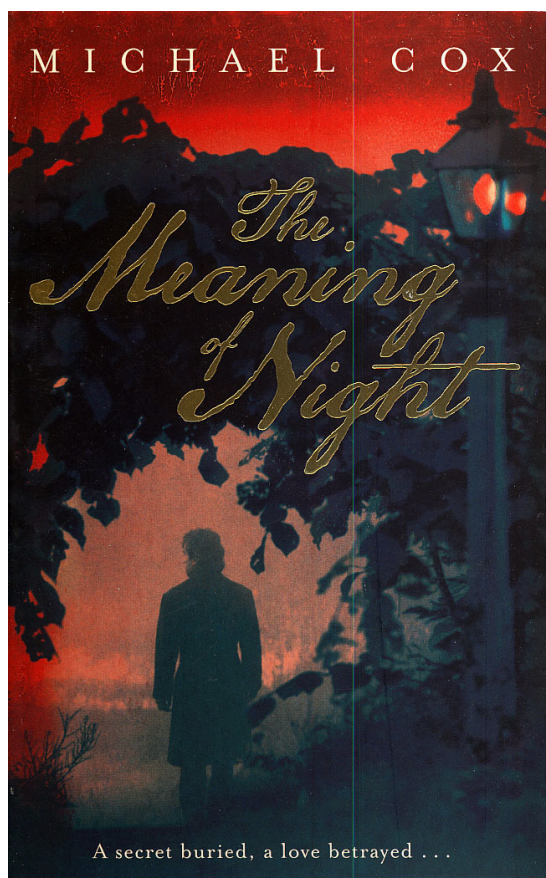
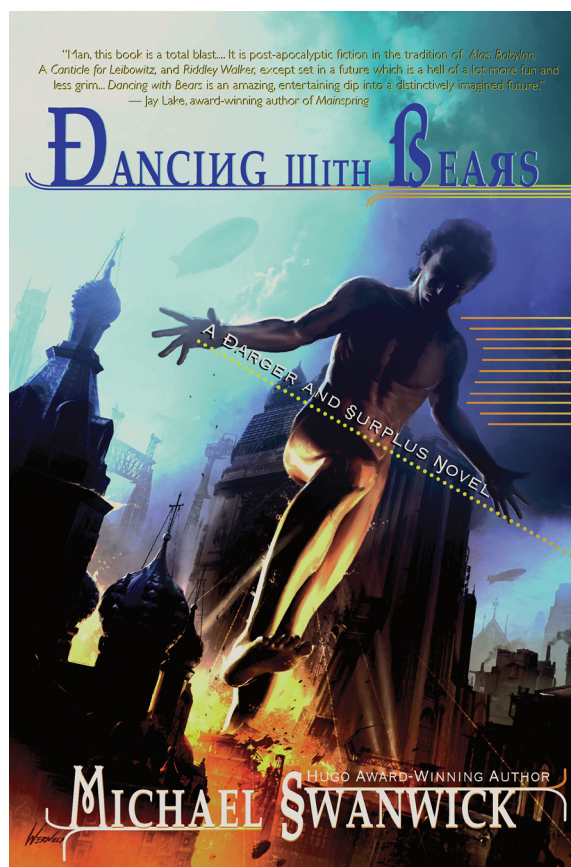
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Deadline for publication is the 21st of each month preceding publication.

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five Hugos for short stories. One of the stories to win a Hugo is “The Dog Said Bow-Wow,” which introduced the two con men Darger and Surplus, who then went on to be featured in two novels and numerous other short stories. While I like all of Swanwick’s work, I like his stories with Darger and Surplus the best, and I can’t think of a better way to be introduced to his writing than his novel *Dancing with Bears*. The setting of these stories is the distant future after an apocalypse that occurred after the Internet became self-aware and tried to kill all sentient life. (You’ve been warned.) Darger and Surplus wander from city to city in this post-technological landscape looking to line their pockets with as much treasure as they can get their hands on. Sometimes they succeed and sometimes they don’t, but they always manage to create the largest amount of havoc imaginable. In *Dancing with Bears*, they travel to Moscow in an effort to loot the lost library of Ivan the Great. Complicating their scheme are thieves, bureaucrats, revolutionaries, genetically engineered concubines, a giant slumbering Duke of Muscovy, and, deep underneath the city, the vengeful demons created by the Internet, waiting for the right moment to come out of hiding and take their revenge. The book is both exciting and hilarious—a combination that is pretty rare in science fiction.



Matthew Goldberg, Ekstrom Library

Since the last edition of Readers’ Picks, I actually tried to add some fiction variety to my reading list, but as always, it was a largely futile effort. Still, one of the books I read towards the beginning of the semester certainly fits the bill. *The Meaning of Night: A Confession*, by Michael Cox, is an atmospheric thriller set in Victorian London’s mansions, brothels, and stately country homes, told in the first person by an enigmatic and unsettling character, Edward Glyver, who sets the tone of the work with the jarring opening lines, “After killing the red-haired man, I took myself off to Quinn’s for an oyster supper. It had been surprisingly—almost laughably—easy.” The book, which begins with this random murder soon evolves into a much more intricate story about all-consuming love, hideous betrayal, dazzling inheritances, and the meaning of revenge as Glyver pursues his real enemy, the equally dangerous and despicable, Phoebus Rainsford Daunt. Cox’s work forces you to answer the question—can you sympathize with a character whose first action is a coldblooded and unspeakably dispassionate murder on the cold and foggy cobblestones of London’s dark streets?

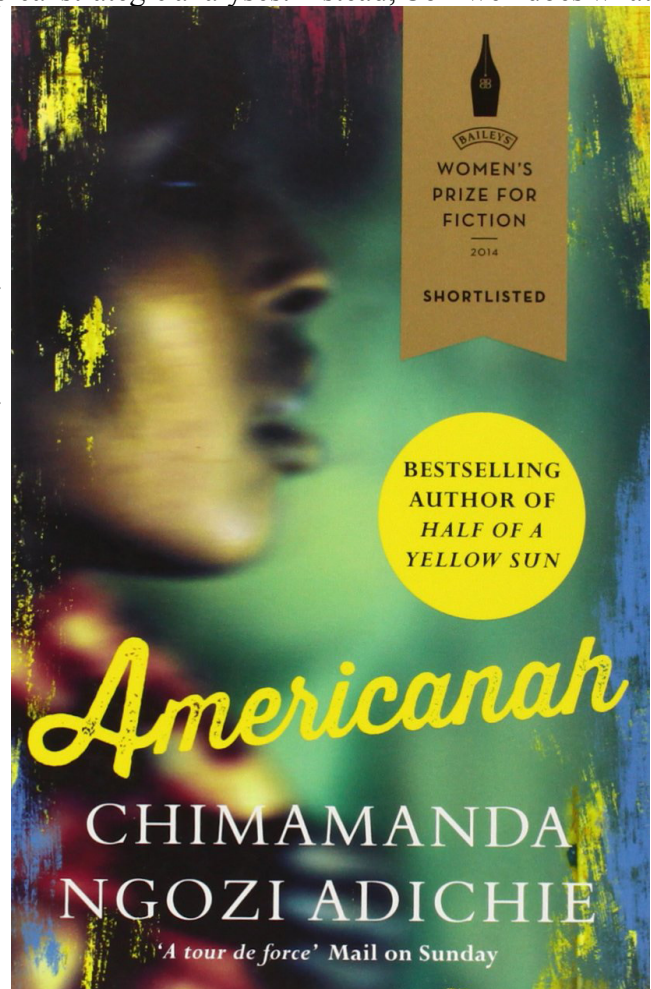
Sticking for a moment with the dark and creepy side of literature but jumping back to non-fiction, I read Colin Dickey’s new

work, *Ghostland: An American History in Haunted Places*, just in time for Halloween this year. Far from a simple collection of ghost stories, Dickey's work is about the nature of hauntings in America—why belief in them is so pervasive, what creates them, and what themes consistently present themselves in the ghost stories we tell one another. By examining the common tropes of hauntings through famous creepy locales across America – the House of Seven Gables, the Winchester Mystery House, and the Devil's Half-Acre, to name a few—Dickey attempts to separate fact from fiction, as much as one is able to in a field where skepticism and unshakable belief (on both sides) is common. If you are looking for cheap thrills, this isn't the best book—though I did make sure I read it with the lights on. Instead, it's an excellent work for anyone who wants to read about dozens of America's most famous ghost stories while exploring the sociological, historical, anthropological, and even physiological meanings behind the tales and the feelings they produce. Dickey delves into questions of identity, space, control, and loss to dissect what unites and forms our understandings of ghouls and things that go bump in the night. Additionally, I was quite struck by the author's ability to present the stories without ever clearly defining his own beliefs on the subject. After 300+ pages I honestly can't tell you whether or not the author believes in ghosts—or whether I do.

The most recent book I finished before the call went out for selections was Bernard Cornwell's *Waterloo: The History of Four Days, Three Armies, and Three Battles*. Cornwell, best known for his dozens of works of historical fiction, completed a new nonfiction account of Napoleon's great defeat just in time for the bicentennial of the battle last year (1815/2015). Unsurprisingly, given Cornwell's writing background, the book seamlessly blends excellent historical analysis with striking prose accounts of the battle. One of the most important battles in human history (and one of the most historically dissected) gets a riveting account largely devoid of some of the more mundane parts of typical strategic analyses. Instead, Cornwell does what he does best—telling a story. From the hand-to-hand struggle over the burning farmhouse at Hougomont, to the charge of the glittering French cuirassier cavalry regiments against the impenetrable British infantry squares, and the final doomed march of Napoleon's Imperial Old Guard, Cornwell describes it all with an artist's touch. However, far from a glorification of war, Cornwell does well to illustrate the folly and waste of a battle that cost more than 60,000 casualties in one day—all for Napoleon's vaulting ambition. Indeed, Cornwell certainly made sure to detail the exploits of even the lowliest soldiers who fought on that famous day. The best anecdote comes from a teenaged Prussian private who wrote home exultantly to his family after facing down the vaunted French in a battle that still resonates today with its legendary reputation, "Tell my sister I didn't poop my pants!"

Erin Gow, Law Library

One of the books I particularly enjoyed reading was *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. This is an interesting story following the main characters from Nigeria to the US and UK, and back again. I found the writing engaging, with an authentic view of the world that incorporates an interesting discussion of race and



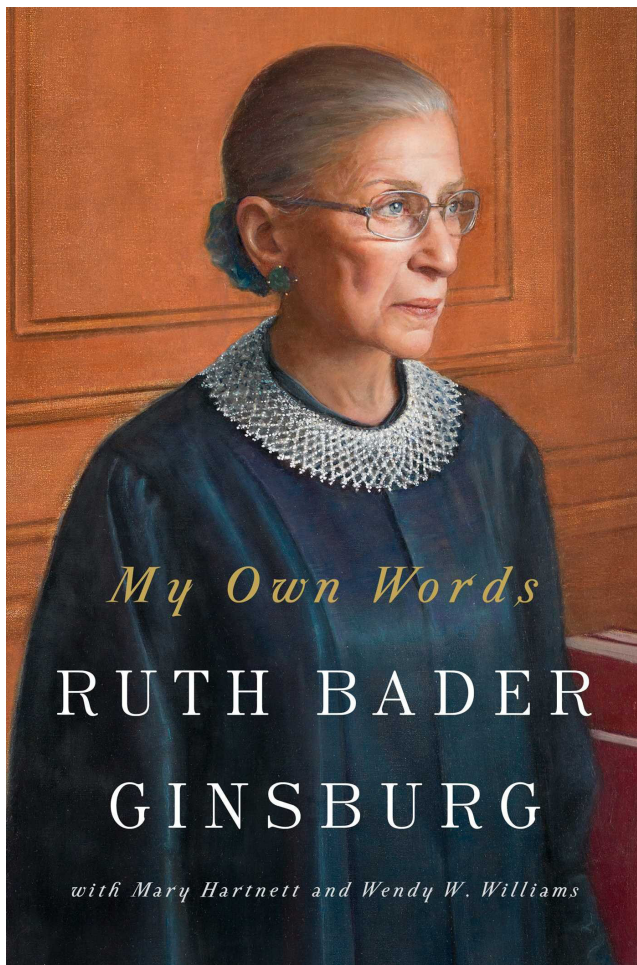
nationality. The holiday season is a time of goodwill, and although this book isn't traditionally festive, it seems like the right time of year to indulge in an entertaining read that simultaneously supports tolerance and understanding.

Robin Harris, Law Library

I Am Brian Wilson, Da Capo Press, 2016

Brian Wilson, composer of some of the most stirring and enduring pop music ever (and, of course, one member of the Beach Boys super group), holds an esteemed place in American music history. Paul McCartney has declared Wilson's song "God Only Knows" the greatest song ever written; and after hearing it, McCartney and John Lennon wrote Beatles classic "Here, There and Everywhere." If you are at all interested in the music of the Beach Boys and how it has influenced much of what is popular today, then this autobiography will keep your attention, despite its somewhat rambling style. And if you are a person who actually remembers the Beach Boys and all the drama surrounding the band, especially regarding Brian's mental illness, you will really appreciate this book. Wilson jumps from one time period to another, but co-author Ben Greenman (who recorded the many interviews with Brian on which the book is based) keeps the tale readable and enjoyable. For those who have seen the recent film *Love and Mercy*, starring Paul Dano (as the young Brian) and John Cusack (as the older Brian), you will know some of the history you need to understand Brian's story, beyond what he presents in this book. Early on in the book, Brian writes, "My story is a music story and a family story and a love story, but it's a story of mental illness, too." This book answers some questions about Brian Wilson, but leaves others untouched. A must-read for pop music buffs.

My Own Words, by Ruth Bader Ginsburg, with Mary Hartnett and Wendy W. Williams

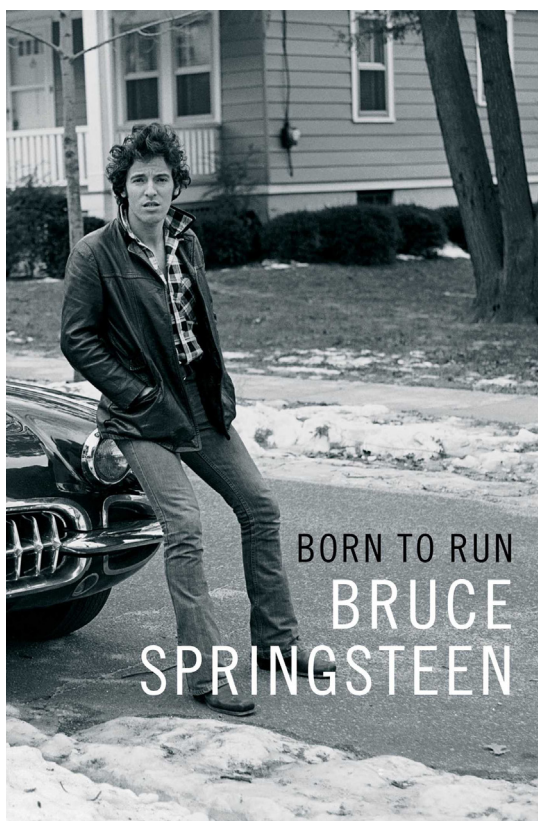


This is *not* a biography of United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (also known as "The Notorious RBG"). It is instead a compilation of her speeches and other writings, put together by her official biographers, Mary Hartnett and Wendy Williams, and contains lots of legal documents (briefs, arguments, and opinions). Other items include transcripts of lectures, published articles from her school days, memorial remarks, and even a sample libretto from an opera written about Justice Ginsburg and Justice Scalia. The photographs of Ginsburg from the age of two through the present day are especially winsome. Highly recommended for those interested in the Supreme Court and the history of the rights of women in this country.

Born to Run, by Bruce Springsteen, Simon & Schuster, 2016.

Going to a Bruce Springsteen concert is truly exhilarating. The wild happiness of some of the tunes and the deep sadness of others, the amazing energy of the audience, the dynamism and precision of Bruce and everyone in the show, all combine to create a three-hour-plus concert experience like no other.

Simon & Schuster has recently released Springsteen's



long-awaited autobiography, *Born to Run*, and the book does not disappoint. Written in a style that will be familiar to those who love his originality, his phrasing and his storytelling, this book explains the motivation of “The Boss” in a new way—in his words, without his music. Springsteen speaks candidly of his bouts with depression, which was, for me, the most surprising aspect of the book. It is heartbreaking to read about the struggles of this man who has created so much joy for so many people for so many years.

If you prefer to hear your books rather than read them, you are in luck--Springsteen has recorded his story himself, and it is available on Simon & Schuster Audible. Whether you listen to it or read it, this one you should not miss.

GodPretty in the Tobacco Field, by Kim Michele Richardson, Kensington Books, 2016.

Set in the fictional Appalachian town of Nameless in 1969, this novel is the story of RubyLyn Royal Bishop, a talented and feisty young artist who longs to escape the life that has been forced upon her by her Uncle Gunnar, a gruff and hardworking tobacco farmer who adopted RubyLyn after the tragic deaths of

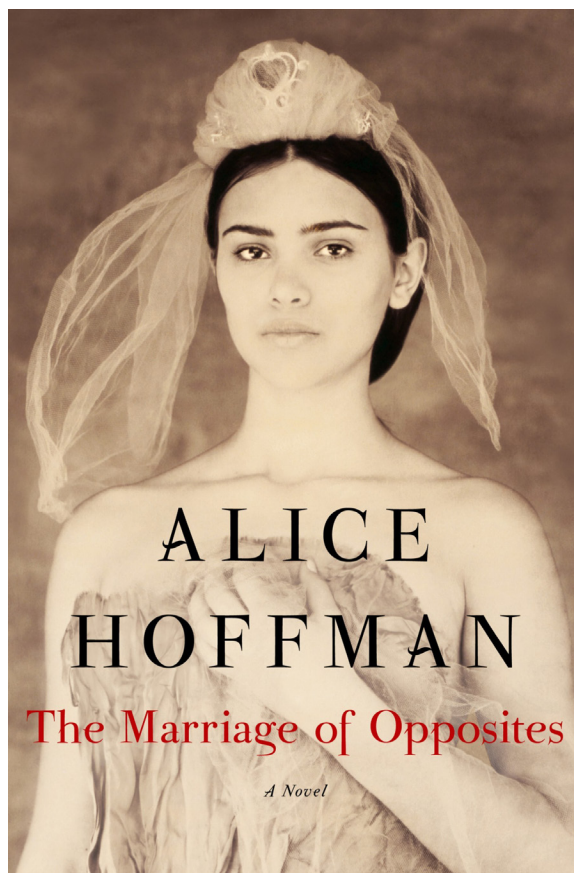
her parents. RubyLyn brings to mind the fourteen-year-old Lily Owens, the central character of Sue Monk Kidd’s wonderful novel, *The Secret Life of Bees*, which I had reread right before starting *GodPretty*. Both novels are Southern coming-of-age tales involving winsome young women, although RubyLyn is a bit older—almost sixteen—and more experienced than Lily. Both novels also feature a candid look at poverty, along with interracial romances, extreme racial prejudice and its aftermath, and human cruelty. Richardson manages to balance the stark reality with several characters who show remarkable kindness and patience. Because *GodPretty* has surprises throughout, I will not reveal any of the twists and turns that make this such a terrific read.

GodPretty is Kim Michele Richardson’s second novel. Her first was *Liar’s Bench*, Kensington Books, 2015. She will be the opening speaker at the 2017 Kentucky Women’s Book Festival on March 4, 2017, in the Ekstrom Library.

Anna Marie Johnson, Ekstrom Library

The Marriage of Opposites by Alice Hoffman

Historical fiction telling the story of the mother of Camille Pissarro, the father of impressionism. Rachel Pissarro is born in St. Thomas, an island in the Caribbean, to Jewish parents. She is a smart, headstrong woman at a time when women had few rights, including not being able to own property.



Her best friend is the daughter of her family's housekeeper. She is married off to a widower with three young children and has a happy but distant marriage until his death when she is still in her late twenties. Since she cannot own property, the husband's family sends a young nephew from France to manage the business, and he and Rachel fall madly in love, causing scandal since theirs was considered an incestuous relationship. The first half of the book is Rachel's story, and the second half is more Camille's. There's lots of mysticism and intrigue, and Hoffman paints beautiful pictures with words of both St. Thomas and Paris in the middle of the twentieth century.

***Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson**

The author is a Harvard-trained lawyer who founded the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery Alabama. In this book he describes his experiences with founding that organization and the people he and the organization helped along the way. The stories are both poignant and horrifying—innocent people whose lives are literally destroyed by false accusations and who spend time on death row; juveniles who, while guilty, were sentenced and incarcerated in ways that are far more damaging in some cases than the crimes they committed. It really is an eye-opening, important book.

***A Beginner's Goodbye* by Anne Tyler**

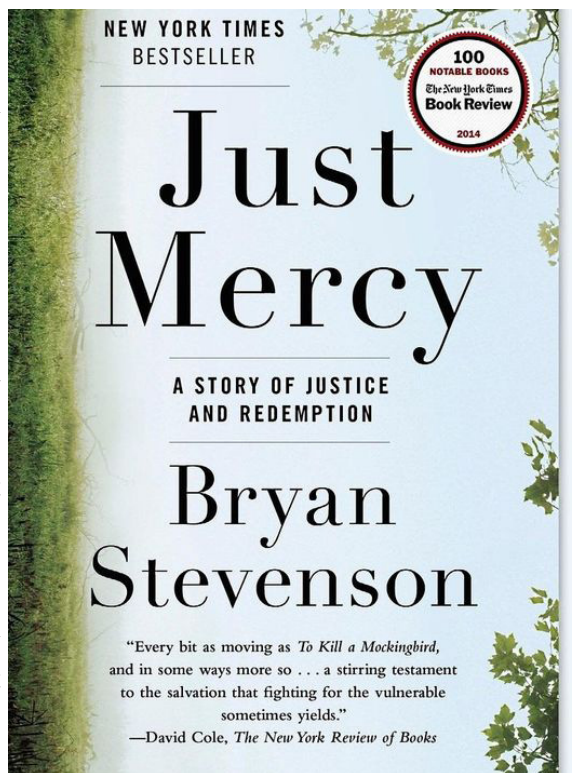
I remember loving *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* many years ago and thinking, I need to read more Anne Tyler, but for some reason, never have. This story, about a man's process through the grief of losing his wife to a sudden accident (I won't give it away), has intriguing characters that stick with you, even after you've finished the book. I was hooked after this opening line: "The strangest thing about my wife's return from the dead was how other people reacted." Plus, the main character Aaron works at a vanity publishing house, so that's a lot of fun as well.

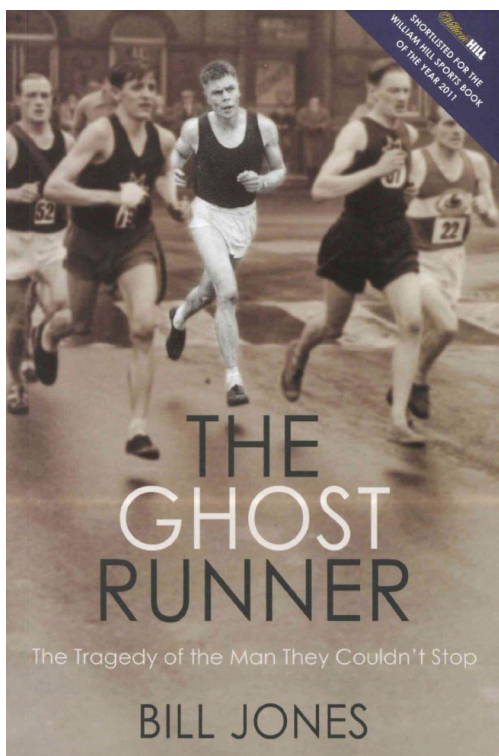
***Utopia Drive: A Road Trip through America's Most Radical Idea* by Erik Reese**

Reese is a creative writing professor at the University of Kentucky who has written other books including *Lost Mountain* and one of my favorite books of all time *American Gospel*. In this book, he explores various American utopian communities, both historical and present-day, including Shaker Hill here in Kentucky, New Harmony in Indiana, a "time-store" in Cincinnati, Twin Oaks in Virginia, Oneida in New York, and others. Each chapter covers a different community. What I particularly love about Reese's writing style is the weaving of history, philosophy, and commentary together. Reese is looking to these communities and their ideals as places to mine for correctives to current social problems. It is at once a call to arms and a hopeful way forward.

Ben King, Ekstrom Library

I enjoyed *The Ghost Runner: The Epic Journey of the Man They Couldn't Stop*, by Bill Jones, which is about John Tarrant, a British runner in the 1950s and 1960s. He was trying to figure out what he wanted to do and started out as a boxer. He did not care for boxing much. He boxed for a while, and one time when he won a bout someone gave him seventeen quid (or pounds, which I believe is about ten dollars in American currency). It was a piddling amount of money. John was young and did not think anything about it.





Through training for boxing he found that he was really good at distance running and turned his attention to that. When he first started registering for races he decided to be honest and tell the race officials that he was given money for that one fight. Even though it was a negligible amount of money, the decision to disclose would hound him for the rest of his life. He figured that being honest would serve him better down the road than not disclosing it, even though other athletes of the time would not always say that they had made money. But in the eyes of the establishment, the fact that someone had handed him that little bit of money made him a “professional,” and they would not let him register for races and receive an assigned number.

To say that it caused him frustration and angst is an extreme understatement. He wrote many letters, as did some of his fellow athletes, imploring the officials to reinstate him. It was all to no avail. So, finally he tried to gate crash races. His brother, Victor, would take John to races on his motorcycle or in his Mini. If John thought the changing areas were not being well monitored, he would go in them

and change into his running kit with the other runners, most of whom were very accepting of him. If he couldn't do that, he and his brother would just go try to find a secluded spot behind a tree or something for him to change, or he would change in his brother's Mini. Then he would put on a long coat and try to blend into the crowd around the starting line of a race. As soon as the race would start he would throw the coat off and start running. Of course he had no number pinned on like all the other runners.

He became known as the “ghost runner” because he would mysteriously show up at races and take off with no number. When the race stewards on the sideline saw him they would try to apprehend him. This was usually not successful because he was off and running. Also, John's brother, Victor, would sometimes ride his motorcycle; and if someone tried to pull John off the course, then Victor would come at them with his motorcycle. Finally, for a brief two-year period after letter writing from John's wife, Edie, and others the ban was lifted. This was the happiest period of John's life.

Previously, all of the races he crashed made no mention of his name in the final results, but at least he had the satisfaction of knowing where he finished. But after that brief period he wanted to run overseas. Once again the authorities reared their heads and said he was not allowed to run representing Britain overseas because of his “professional” status. He then asked if he could run overseas just as an individual and of course the answer was no he could not.

Towards the end of his life he started getting violently sick partway through his races. He was late diagnosed with stomach cancer and died at forty-two. The irony is he was never interested in money or work, although he did work to support his wife and son. But because someone slipped him that measly sum of around ten dollars when he was young he paid for that for the rest of his life because he was honest about it.



Library and Department News

EKSTROM LIBRARY

Dean's Office

Happy Anniversary!

Congratulations to the following faculty and staff members who celebrated work anniversaries in November:

John Chenault	✿ ✿ ✿	13 years
Jennifer Oberhausen	✿ ✿ ✿	4 years

Congratulations, Matt!

Matt Goldberg has been accepted into the Masters of Library Science program at University of Kentucky and will begin course work in January 2017.

ARL Presentations

Dean Fox and Bruce Keisling recently presented at the Association of Research Libraries Assessment Conference in Arlington, Virginia. The title of their talk was Advancing Campus Priorities through Informed Space Re-allocations. Maurini Strub and Melissa Laning delivered a paper, Event Evaluation: Developing a Rubric for Assessing the Value of Library Programming, at the same conference.

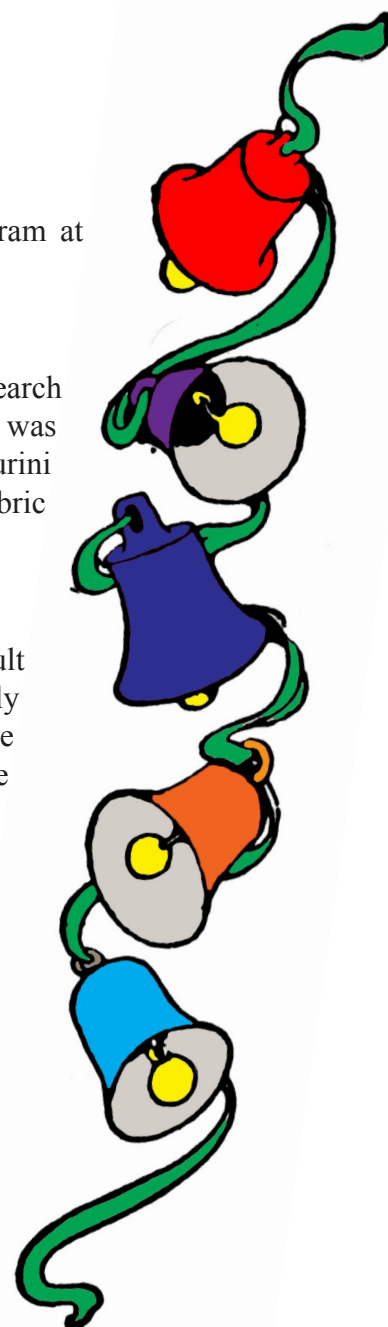
Difficult Dialogues Program to Launch in 2017

George Martinez has been selected as one of 28 facilitators in the Difficult Dialogues program that the University is launching in 2017. George is currently undergoing training for the program and will lead multiple sessions during the spring semester. The program will be marketed soon and is open to the entire campus community.

LAW LIBRARY

Welcome, Melodie!

The Law Library welcomed a new staff member on November 14. Melodie Hawkins is the Law Library's Archives Assistant, a newly created position. Melodie graduated from UofL in December 2014 with a BFA in 2-D Studio Art with a concentration in Drawing. While at UofL, Melodie worked for two years as a student assistant in Archives and Special Collections, with Rachel Howard and Jennifer Oberhausen. She is half-time, working Wednesday through Saturday.



NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Kyna Herzinger

UofL position and department: Archivist for Records Management, Archives & Special Collections, University Libraries

Schools Attended: Whitworth University, University of South Carolina

Unusual previous positions: I spent a summer working for the Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument in southern Idaho. Haven't heard of it? Yeah, most of our visitors had not either, but we had a clean lavatory...

Hobbies/Activities: Running, Cycling, Hiking

Favorite Movies: Anything that prompts a belly laugh, but I love the oldies: *The Thin Man*, Charlie Chaplin, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby's "Road to..." series.

Favorite Quote: People who love to eat are always the best people. – Julia Child



Holiday Luncheon 2016



Thank you, Dean Fox!





I want to thank everyone at Kornhauser who helped move nearly 90,000 volumes in one week. An awesome accomplishment. — *Neal Nixon*



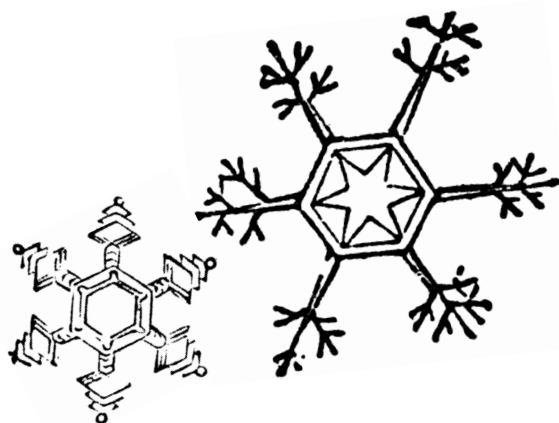
Thank you to those who sent cards and shared their kind words and thoughts as I bereave the loss of my sister. Be Blessed — *Fannie Cox*



The Bridwell Art Library would like to send muchas gracias to Trish Blair, for her enthusiastic embrace of newly acquired Excel statistics creation skills -- her determination to create custom reports is as strong as her infectious laughter when making charts! — *Kathy Moore*

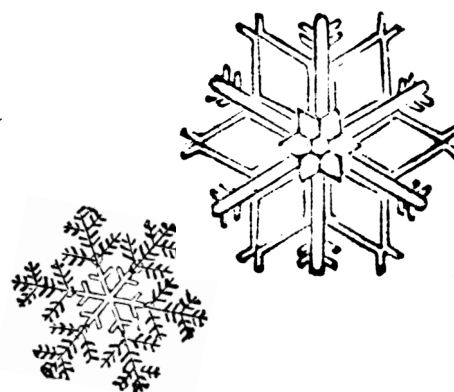


I would like to thank Alice Abbott-Moore, the Library Courier crew, Felix Garza, James Adler, Paul Mattingly, Angela Ren, and our student assistants for the successful completion of the project to relocate 2,200 volumes from the RRS back to Kornhauser. Thanks also to the Kornhauser faculty and staff who selected the titles from the list of 11,000, and especially Mary K Marlatt for managing the list. — *Betsy Osoffsky*



Thank You

Rachel Hodge
Melissa Laning
Christopher Poché
Jessie Roth



... for contributing to this issue of *The Owl*

Library Exhibits

Archives & Special Collections

Tom Fougerousse
25 years of UofL Photography

Through December 2016
Photographic Archives Gallery

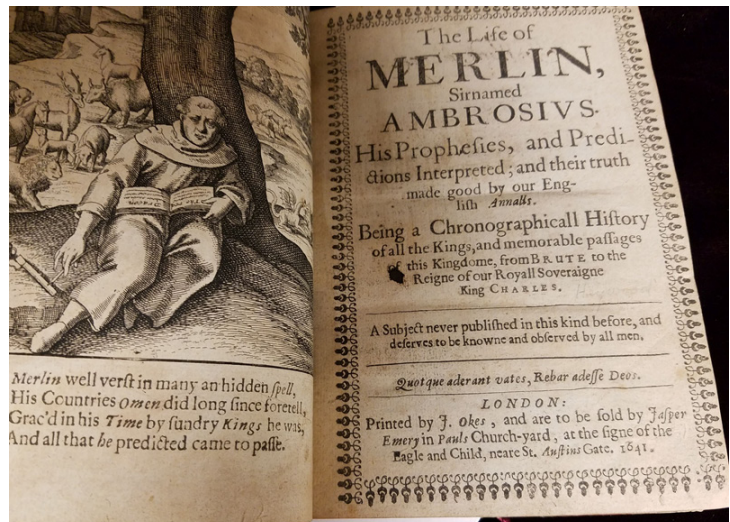


Jazz saxophonist/flutist Don Braden, a Louisville native, performing with jazz pianist Harry Pickens, a Louisville resident. Comstock Hall, 1999

Books of Shakespeare's Time

works of literature, history and exploration, science, and theology printed and read during Shakespeare's lifetime.

November 1 - December 23, 2016
Richard Kain Gallery, Rare Books



The Life of Merlin, 1641.

Law Library

Law Library Reading Room
Justice on Trial: Centennial of the Nomination and Confirmation of Louis D. Brandeis to the Supreme Court

Through December 31, 2016

THE BLOW THAT ALMOST KILLED FATHER



Music Library

Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition
Works of 2017 winning composer
[Andrew Norman](#)



First floor | Through January 2017