

Page turners: Readers chime in on book recommendations

Looking for a good book? We challenged newspaper readers to answer a question – “What’s the best book you read in 2011?” – and some of your responses are on this page.

We received a range of recommendations, from a book on how to turn back one’s biological clock to a World War II tale of Leningrad museum artifacts.

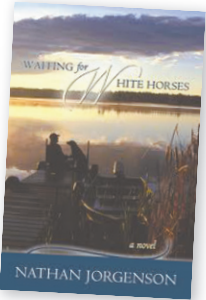
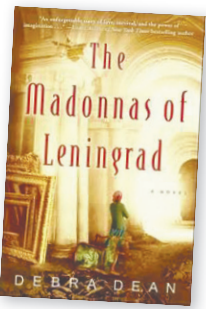
Perhaps the reader advice published here will motivate you to buy a book or two, hunker down during the winter months ahead, and either learn, explore or be entertained by turning one page after another.

Our thanks once again to all the readers who shared their thoughtful book recommendations.

Two stories share contrasting experiences

Here are a couple books I read in 2011: “The Madonnas of Leningrad,” by Debra Dean. By way of saving the contents (madonnas) of the Hermitage museum during WWII, this novel informs the reader of the intense hunger and cold the peasants endured in Leningrad. It makes hunger and cold unforgettable.

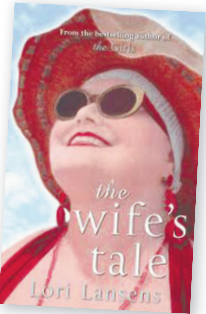
“Waiting for White Horses,” by Nathan Jorgenson, a Minnesota author. This novel is a sweet read. Every character I would like to know better and would like to have for my neighbor. The two dentists value their friendship, which has grown through seasons of duck hunting in northern Minnesota. I have never been duck hunting, but this read certainly makes it enticing.



Barbara Colhapp
Chaska

‘The Wife’s Tale’ by Lori Lansens

The best book I read in 2011 was “The Wife’s Tale” by Lori Lansens: Mary Gooch’s husband quietly leaves her on the eve of their 25th wedding anniversary, which catapults Mary onto a path of tremendous self-discovery and personal growth. The premise sounds sad and it is. However, it is exciting and wonderful to watch Mary’s metamorphosis as the story unfolds. I fell in love with Mary Gooch – her courage, her strength and her humanity. I hated to see the story end!

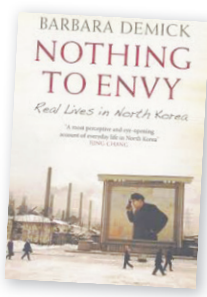


Tory Brogan
Eden Prairie

‘Nothing to Envy’ by Barbara Demick

North Korea is a country I knew nothing about; the people, the politics, the culture. This book sheds a little light on this dark, hidden country by following the lives of a few people. It’s interesting to have this insight with the recent events occur-

ring there and the few images the government allows to be seen. While a short read, it is engaging and made me appreciate the small liberties I take for granted.



J. Boevers
Chanhassen

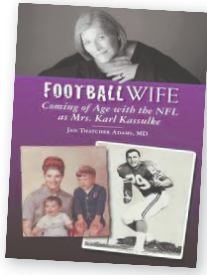
‘Football Wife: Coming of Age with the NFL as Mrs. Karl Kassulke’ by Jan Thatcher Adams, M.D.

I read a lot of books, good, bad, and in-between. “Football Wife: Coming of Age with the NFL as Mrs. Karl Kassulke,” by Jan Thatcher Adams, M.D., is a good book published in 2011.

This is a memoir. All memoir writing is self-serving. The requirement for memoir is telling the Truth. Emily Dickinson in poem 1129 says:

*Tell All the Truth but tell its slant
Success in Circuit lies
She ends her poem with these lines:*

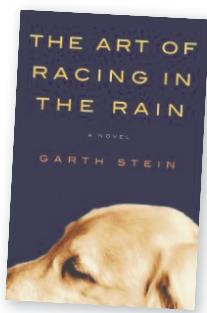
*The Truth must dazzle gradually
Or every man be blind*
Jan Adams told her Truth. Some of her candor may be shocking and disturbing to some readers, but she conveys an understanding and kindness about this time of her life. Reading this book will be an insightful learning experience. The family photos included tell an inclusive story. As a good memoirist should, Dr. Adams puts enough in and leaves enough out of her story. She allows us to read in as well as read out in this well-crafted memoir.



Tom Dubbe, Ph.D.
Shakopee

‘The Art of Racing in the Rain’ by Garth Stein

I loved this book! Very readable, it is an intriguing story told from the perspective of a wise and insightful dog who wants badly to be a human. He loves his family and is heartbroken by what he observes and cannot share.

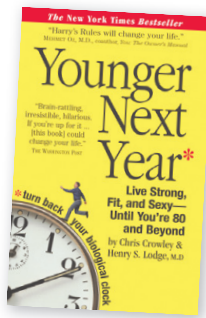


Joyce Goff
Savage

‘Younger Next Year’ by Crowley and Lodge

My husband and I recently read “Younger Next Year” by Chris Crowley and Henry S. Lodge.

Crowley is a 70-plus retired attorney. He shares ideas, attitude and inspiration about living long and strong during “the last third” of our lives.



Lodge is an internal medicine doctor who shares the science behind the theory that if we stay active (meaning aerobic exercise five to six days per week and active involvement in family and community), our body continues to grow rather than decay, as we’ve been conditioned believe.

By following this program, the authors suggest you can avoid 70 percent of the decay and 50 percent of the illnesses and injuries associated with getting older.

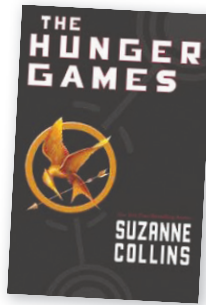
Published in 2005, the book is humorous and empowering all at once. Good information about a healthful diet, too, all told in a practical, funny tone. It was a really excellent read for this time of life and the beginning of the New Year. “Younger Next Year” and “Younger Next Year for Women” are available at the Scott County Library as hardcover and audio book.

Barb Tieben
Jordan

‘The Hunger Games’ by Suzanne Collins

The best books I read in 2011 were “The Hunger Games” series books by Suzanne Collins.

I loved these books. They are fast-paced. They have action and romance. The characters were really good. They were page turners. They never got boring. I couldn’t put them down. I can’t wait for the movies!



Alex Wagner
Age 14

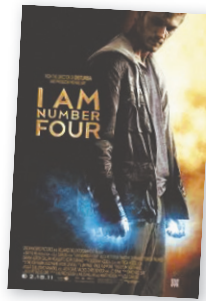
Student at St. Michael’s School
in Prior Lake

Suspenseful books are best

I actually have two books that I loved in 2011:

“The Hunger Games” series books. I loved these books because they had a lot of action and suspense.

I also loved the book “I Am Number Four” by Pittacus Lore. It had a lot of action and suspense and kept you turning pages.



Kate Wagner
Age 14

Student at St. Michael’s School
in Prior Lake

‘Safe from the Sea’ by Peter Geye

I really loved Ann Patchett’s “State of Wonder” and it is partially set in Eden Prairie, Minn. But an-

other book that rates on the top of my 2011 list is by a Minnesota author, Peter Geye.

The title is “Safe from the Sea.” It is set on a northern lake not far from Superior where a college professor visits his dying father and hears the true story of the father’s experience on an ore boat that goes down in a gale on Superior. The son comes to understand his father’s life and in the process come to terms with his own life.



Phyllis Bofferding
Eden Prairie

Good reading noted

Most of the books on my list were published prior to this year. However I did read them this year.

“The Book Thief,” by Markus Zusak. An interesting look at German life during World War II from the perspective of the main character, “Death.”

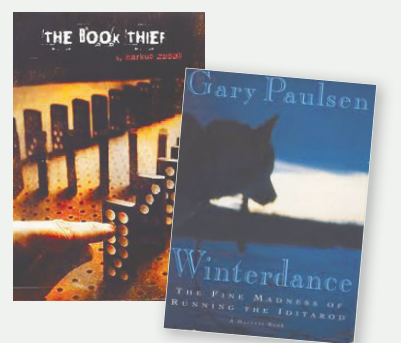
“Reading The OED: One Man, One Year, 21730 Pages,” by Ammon Shea. The author read the OED in one year and reveals to the read very unique words that are not commonly read. Fun book to read.

“The Cigar Maker,” by Mark McGinty: I enjoyed reading about Cuba and Cuban migration into Tampa, Fla.

“Alas Babylon,” by Pat Frank. Published in 1959. An amazing post-apocalyptic novel written during the Cold War era.

“Cutting for Stone,” by Abraham Verghese: A complex story of two brothers who are raised in an orphanage in Ethiopia.

“Packing for Mars: The Curious Science of Life in the Void,”



by Mary Roach. This was a funny book about space exploration, astronaut training.

“Still Standing: The Story of SSG John Kriesel,” by Jim Kosmo. John Kriesel was a member of the Minnesota National Guard and was stationed in Iraq.

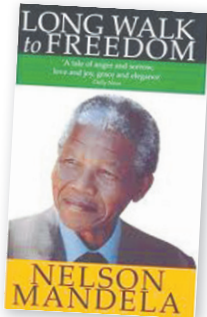
“Winterdance: The Fine Madness of Running the Iditarod,” by Gary Paulsen. This is about the author’s decision to run the Iditarod. Honestly, this is not a topic that I would normally select to read but this in the top-five favorite books that I’ve read.

Jody Brennan
Shakopee

Walk to Freedom,” the autobiography of Nelson Mandela.

It covers his entire life, his youth, his rise into notoriety as a leader among the ANC (African National Congress), his persecution and three decades in prison and his eventual election as the president of South Africa.

This book defines what a true leader is – I wish more of our elected leaders would demonstrate similar leadership.



Matt Sasse
Prior Lake

‘The Clockwork Angel’ by Cassandra Clare

The Chaska High School Hawk’s Nest Book Club just finished reading “The Clockwork Angel” by Cassandra Clare with rave reviews. This book is the prequel to Clare’s popular “Mortal Instruments” series, and it is written in the steampunk (think Sherlock Holmes/Victorian era with supernatural and sci-fi elements) genre.

Tessa Gray, 16, travels from America to London to join her brother, who has fallen under the influence of the supernatural underworld of London and plans to turn her over to the Dark Sisters who kidnap her in order to develop her previously unrealized ability to change shape into another person.

Only the half-angel Shadowhunters can save her and protect her from those in the Underworld who wish to exploit her powers. The paranormal romantic triangle keeps the story moving along quickly, but some of the more predictable elements of the plot created a lively discussion among the avid readers of the book club!

Want to see other great titles teens across the country are reading? Join us in reading some of the choices from YALSA’s (Young Adult Library Association) Top 25 Nominees at www.ala.org/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/ttt11.

Lisa Gearman
CHS Hawk’s Nest Book Club

‘For Love of Lakes’ by Darby Nelson

I read the book “For Love of Lakes” by Darby Nelson, a professor at Anoka-Ramsey Community College, an aquatic ecologist and lake-protection activist.

The book engagingly challenges us to consider both our relationship with lakes and how our choices affect their future. It’s about lakes going way back to early humans, to Henry David Thoreau’s experience on Walden Pond, Concord, Mass. in 1845, and present times. He talks about the current state of our lakes and what we can do to preserve and improve them.



Steve Pany
Prior Lake

Chaska Middle School East eighth-grader book choices

The following book reviews are from Chaska Middle School East eighth-graders, submitted by language arts teacher Leslie Geissler, and media specialist Venisha Bahr.

I recommend the book, “We Will Always Have Summer,” by Jenny Han. It is a great romance book that will keep you flipping the pages! You never know what is going to happen next!

Carly Kriesel

I recommend: “Hunger Games” series, of course! (“Catching Fire” was my fav); “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire”; “Mysterious Benedict Society” because these books are perfect for engaging teenagers.

Kirsten Haugen

“13 Reasons Why,” by Jay Asher: I thought this book was very fun to

read because 13 different people were blamed for a girl’s suicide and each of the teens do not know why or how they are involved – intriguing and keeps you reading.

Paige Hall

“Shoeless Joe and Me,” by Dan Gutman: This book is an easy read and it is funny. It is about a boy that can travel through time with baseball cards. This is a series that teen boys will definitely want to check out.

Preston Hasting

“If I Stay,” by Gayle Forman: I like this book because it is so suspenseful that you never want to put it down. The girl protagonist (she is in a coma) has to make a choice of whether she wants to go back to earth and finish living her life or go and join her family in the afterlife. It is also very romantic. I would recommend this

book to eighth-graders and high-schoolers.

Jessie Ireland

“Pretty Little Liars,” by Sara Shepard: I like this book because I watch the show and it’s very dramatic. It also has a lot of suspense. Teen girls who like series books and like chick lit will want to read these books.

Morgan Ingram

“The Last Song,” by Nicholas Sparks: This would be a great book to read if you like summer romances with some tragedies. It may be a little sad at times but that’s what makes the book interesting. It also shows how a rebellious teenager finds herself again and becomes really close with her dying dad over the summer. Hope you read it!

Michaela Spielberger

