

Popular Threads on Solosez

Summer Reading List

One of the Solosez traditions is the May pre-summer reading list.

"The Good Life," Jay McInerney. A love story set in the aftermath of 9/11. This is right up there, IMHO, with "City of Falling Angels" for best book of the year.

"Empire and Revolution : The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War," John Mason Hart. An academic but highly readable book. That is, if I ever get through the footnotes.

"In Cold Blood," Truman Capote. Every bit as good, if not better, than the first time I read this one, back around my freshman year of high school. Since I knew I'd probably never get around to seeing the movie about Capote, I just had to revisit this one. That boy can really write.

"The Outside World," Tova Mirvis. Chick-lit with style, exploring the world of the Orthodox from the author of "The Ladies Auxiliary."

"Books and Bombs in Buenos Aires: Borges, Gerchunoff, and Argentine-Jewish Writing," Edna Aizenberg.

"Philip Roth: Novels and Stories 1959-1962 (Library of America). I owe Dick O'Connor for telling me about this one. Not only are binding and paper quality excellent, I really enjoyed revisiting vintage Philip Roth.

Creature of the Ether

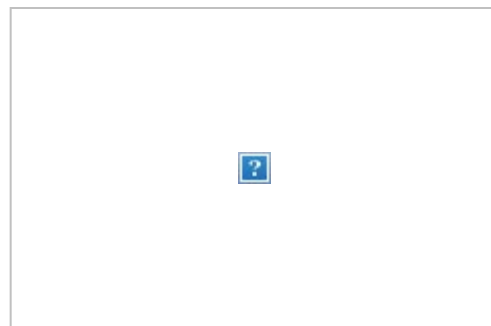
You could try almost anything by Orson Scott Card, particularly the Ender books.

Fern Summer, New York

Try anything written by John G. Hemry. His newer stuff is a lot like the TV show JAG, just in space. I have recently started reading him and find that he is a very good writer and does well with his court room drama. See <http://tinyurl.com/gm4ks> for more info.

I also recommend Lois McMaster Bujold, at least her Vorkosigan series. I especially recommend Memory, Komar, and A Civil Campaign in that order. The earlier books are good too, but those are the best three, especially A Civil Campaign which will keep you in stitches for hours. See <http://www.dendarii.com>

If you liked Pournell's mercenary books and Heinlein's Starship Troopers, I recommend the Starfist series written by David Sherman and Dan



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Cragg. They have an excellent series with a large number of books. See <http://tinyurl.com/kz893>

Similarly you may want to try the "Dirigent Mercenary Corps" books by Rick Shelley, they are another fun, fast read. See <http://tinyurl.com/e5o87>

Frank Kautz, Woburn, Massachusetts

Oh ditto - I enjoyed those.... if you NEVER read the DUNE SERIES - there's a whole summer's reading! In fact - if you read it once, years ago, consider re-reading them.... I did - and found things I had forgotten.... which "tied" things in the later series books together ... Also - there have been the recent additions written by his son, based in part on dad's notes, with co-author Kevin Anderson. The latest is a publication of an original "draft" short story version of "DUNE" story line that was discovered after Herbert's death. Many of the main character's names are different - but you can "see" the character development and story changes he made to come up with the original "DUNE" It is in the book "The Road to Dune" - it also contains some amazing notes and letters about his struggle to get Dune published and how the automotive publisher CHILTON ended up publishing the novel... Really interesting reading...

Cheryl Kegganm Beaver creek, Ohio

Well and all about the classic names, but why not do something new and interesting, like giving my pal (and EFF fellow Fellow) Cory Doctorow a try? All of Cory's sci-fi novels can either be downloaded for free or purchased the old-fashioned way, your choice. (Yeah, he does make some coin on sales, even though they're all freely downloadable.)

<http://craphound.com/index.php?cat=5>

James S. Tyre, Culver City, California

I am looking to rekindle my interest in Science Fiction. Its been a long time since I read Asimov, Heinlein, Zelazny, Pournelle, Clarke. Anybody got any ideas on Titles?

Jeff Galston

Old Man's War, by John Scalzi. It's up for the 2005 Hugo. I've gotten the sequel, Ghost Brigades, but haven't read it yet.

On Basilisk Station, by David Weber -- the first Honor Harrington book.

Anything by Asimov, Heinlein, Zelazny, Pournelle, or Clarke. You might also add Del Rey.

If you're not familiar with it, look for the short story (later expanded into not-quite-so-good-a-novel) of Asimov's "Nightfall."

Mike Riddle, Nebraska

By coincidence, this past week has been the Golden Week national holidays in Japan. I was browsing through the authors in the Gutenberg Project, and found Cory Doctorow's books listed as downloadable there (I believe there was a link to his site.)

I was not looking for sci-fi, but made a mental note to look at this again later.

Norman R. Solberg, Japan

You guys really read books? Like, for fun? I must have read three novels in the last 10 years. Or so it feels.

Meyer Silber, New York

Yes, but you have read much more Talmud than most of the rest of us, Meyer, I would hazard a guess:))

Alan P. Bernstein

Busted!

Meyer Silber, New York

I am reading the Berendt book and loving it (thanks to Jennifer Rose)! I have the new books by Elinor Lipman (read Isabel's Bed) and Sue Monk Kidd (The Secret Life of Bees-read it if you have not) on my nightstand. If I think of more, I'll post them.

Andrea Goldman, Nebraska

I have a pile of books on my nightstand - and another in my office - and another in my library - of books that I intended to read for "pleasure." I keep buying them and adding to the pile.

Reading used to be my favorite escape if I could not attend a live art event - a play or concert....Now reading for pleasure is a distant memory...

Maybe this summer....

Christy A. Schmidt-Noe, Point Pleasant, New Jersey

Three piles? That's all? Try 2 large bookshelves. Gave up on the piles.

Lisa Runquist, California

Shelves? I just cannot do it. That would be admitting defeat.

Christy A. Schmidt-Noe, Point Pleasant, New Jersey

Anything by Carl Hiaasen is great summertime reading, especially his first 4 books (Tourist Season, Double Whammy, Skin Tight, Native Tongue). I laughed out loud throughout all 4 in the middle of the beach; people thought I was crazy or something). I think he is one the greatest living authors of satire-humor-suspense; kinda like Elmore Leonard but not quite as noire and more funny. I never loved Strip Tease, nor the mangling they did in the Demi Moore movie version (they also removed all the humor). And his kid's book Hoot is arriving in movie theatres on May 5, produced by Jimmy Buffet.

He was originally a columnist for the Miami Herald

Diane Leigh Davison

1. Author Stephen White -- anything by him. He writes a psychological thriller series with a Boulder, CO psychologist, Alan Gregory as the protagonist. 2. City of Falling Angels by John Berendt, author of Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil. The city of Venice through its characters. Shortly after reading this book I saw an art glass exhibit by a student of the master Murano artist in the book, Archimede Seguso. 3. Laura by Larry Watson. Boy develops crush on father's mistress. Beautifully written. 4. That Old Ace in the Hole by Annie Proulx. City boy sent to nowhere, Texas to sucker people into selling their property to giant hog farm company. Very funny. 5. Blue Shoes and Happiness by Alexander McCall. The latest in his "Ladies No. 1 Detective Agency" series.

Ellen Buckley, Westminster, Colorado

Here's my reading list for this summer:

California Code of Civil Procedure (particular emphasis on Discovery Act which was recently revised) California Rules of Court (over 1,000 pages of page-turning fun) Thomas Mauet, Trial Techniques David Ball, Damages

For the occasional break, I keep the following next to my computer:

National Enquirer People Any other rags that talk about Jess and Nick or Heather and Denise.

I figure the latter balances out the former, so I net out somewhere around Vonnegut, Capote and McInerney.

Cheers,

Gene Lee

This is a great one. I'm also curious about the new Charles Tilley book that Gladwell recently reviewed in the New Yorker.

Jake London

If you like Blink and The Tipping Point, read Freakonomics. Interesting in the same way as Gladwell's books.

Meg Tebo, Illinois

Freakonomics was good, but not as good as the Gladwell books imho.

Jake London

1) Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land by David K. Shipler

2) People's History of the United States : 1492 to Present (P.S.) by Howard Zinn

3) Natural Capitalism by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins, L. Hunter Lovins

justin eisele

I also highly recommend *In Cold Blood.*

If you were a *DaVinci Code* fan, you might want to try *The Historian* by Elizabeth Kostova*--*this book also weaves past and present together-- I loved it.

Lisa Wolfe

American Theocracy -- Kevin Phillips

Marc S. Stern, Washington

I also recommend Blink and The Good Life. In addition, The Tipping Point (also Malcolm Gladwell) and Brightness Falls, the prequel to the Good Life (also Jay McInerney) are excellent.

For heavier reading, the Lincoln biography by Doris Kearns Goodwin (team of Rivals) and The Assassins' Gate, by George Packer, are great!

Mark Rubin, Tucson, Arizona

Dave Barry Hits below the Beltline is another in long line of good books. I listened to it in the car. Very enjoyable.

Robert W. "Robby" Hughes, Jr., Stone Mountain, Georgia

[In Cold Blood] Yeah, I just read that. Good book, good writing.

"Good Omens" by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman, has just been re-released. Good read.

I am currently reading Samuel Pepys: The Unequaled Self by Claire Tomalin. It was remaindered down at Books a million. I've never read his diaries, but it's a good biography.

Ronald A. Jones, Florida

Donald Westlake books--short and highly entertaining. If you like Carl Hiassan and Elmore Leonard, you'll enjoy him. Perfect for the beach. Steven Hunter's novels, especially his Bob Swagger trilogy. Hunter won the Pulitzer prize for movie reviews, but his novels are great...

Scott Hodes

Sebastian Junger. I read an excerpt from Vanity Fair. Apparently the Boston Strangler was the author's handyman when he was a kid. Freaky.

Shane Jimison

...a real nice, quick read...."A Death in Belmont" ...deals with a murder case that took place when the Boston Strangler was at large. Author is the same guy who wrote "A Perfect Storm".....

Steven Satter

French Quarter: An Informal History of the New Orleans Underground -- by Herbert Asbury. He's the same author who wrote the book "Gangs of New York", Written in the early 1930s, its been republished in paperback along with Gangs of New York and Gangs of Chicago. Its title is a bit misleading because it is an excellent history of New Orleans from its founding through the closing of Storyville. For those whose interest in the city has been increased by Katrina, it's an outstanding book.

Devil in the White City -- Great book about the Chicago Worlds Fair in 1892, and America's first mass murderer. The murder part of the book probably accounted for its popularity, but it's the story of the fair which is fascinating.

Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America -- This is an incredible story of a piece of often-overlooked American history. It tells of the great 1927 flood, and how thousands of African Americans were literally held prisoners on islands. It has particular relevancy as we try to rebuild New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

The March -- E.L. Doctorow's novel of Sherman's march to the sea. A powerful tale of war and the people caught in the onslaught. Great storytelling and much more.

Steve Terrell, Indiana

One more GREAT book for the list:

Everybody Pays: Two Men, One Murder and the Price of Truth -- by Maurice Possley, Rick Kogan

"Aztek" Steve Terrell, Indiana

Trying to open The Flat Earth. Just finished Tipping Point, and Blink is good on tape.

Last summer's best book I read was The Dante Club, by Matthew Pearl. A thriller with some thought to it.

Ted A. Waggoner, Rochester, Indiana

Here are some I've read, read partially (and will still work on this summer), and some I'm going to read (the links are to the books on Amazon.com):

Last Man Standing - David Baldacci. Started this one; gave up; now a

friend has suggested it is worth finishing. <http://tinyurl.com/pscub>

The Sybil in Her Grave - Sarah Caudwell. This is great fun; I just haven't had the time to finish it yet, but will soon. <http://tinyurl.com/r2gtx>

Churchill: A Biography - Roy Jenkins. Go to the gym before lifting this one; but so far it's the best one on Churchill I've ever read.
<http://tinyurl.com/mlq4y>

Baudolino - Umberto Eco. Haven't read it, but it sounds great and Eco is amazing. <http://tinyurl.com/nneht>

Player Piano - Kurt Vonnegut. Will re-read for 4th time. Every summer I try to read at least one classic, even if I've read it before.
<http://tinyurl.com/rqcsd>

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire - J.K. Rowling. OK, I'll admit it, guilty pleasure. <http://tinyurl.com/oxfhz>

TJ Thurston, Illinois

Preferring non-fiction, I really like Jared Diamond. You gotta be into the whole historical anthropology stuff, but his recent book, "Collapse" is very good. Very detailed study of why some cultures/societies thrive and others do not and eventually die out.

Also wrote "Guns, Germs & Steel" a few years ago.

Randal A. Harvey, Troy, Ohio

How about books on tape/cd/Ipod: I liked MEMORY OF RUNNING by Ron McLarty, read by the author. He is an actor first, this is his first book. A Great Listen.

Joel Selik

I've listened to a lot of good books, and some stinkers. Thankfully, I find it easier to stop listening to stinkers than to stop reading them.

One of my favorites was The Secret Life of Bees, by Sue Monk Kidd (her follow-up book is on the stinker list). Others: The #1 Ladies Detective Agency series (Andrew McCall Smith); The Red Tent (Anita Diamant); The Known World (Edward P. Jones) -- except you really have to focus; Cry the Beloved Country; any Janet Evanovich book is hilarious; Fannie Flag reads her own novel Redbird Christmas -- I haven't but should find out if she's recorded others of her books.

A lot of those may be "ladies' books," now that I look at the list.

Chris Tozer

But I cannot recall a single conversation about books in which a female participant has commented on a sci-fi book, with possibly one exception, and she attended MIT.

hmm - I mostly deleted the summer reading thread I read more Sci -Fi than any other genre.... I was a sci-fi nut before it was popular.... when I went to college, there was a class in "Science Fiction" I thought - cool... read Sci Fi - get credit -- much to my dismay I had already read everything on the reading list for the class.... I got an A+ mostly because I led more discussions in class - (and seemed to know the material better than the instructor.... LOLLOL)

Cheryl Keggan

David Liss, A Spectacle of Corruption. You can probably tell by the title, yes, its about politics. But politics set in 18th century England. You think 21st century American politics is rough? Think again. Vote buying was legal and openly handled. Story starts out with a character by the name of Benjamin Weaver, on trial for murder. He is a "thief-taker" which is a cross between a private investigator and a bounty hunter. After being convicted, he escapes and the book is about his search to find the real murderer and who framed him, all set in the midst of a raucous election. Find out why there were no defense lawyers. Find out about "evidence brokers." Really great adventure story, great read.

William F. Buckley, Jr., Last Call for Blackford Oakes. If you like espionage novels, can't do better than Buckley's novels

I agree with the recommendations of Alexander McCall Smith. If you ever get a chance to hear him speak, go. Absolutely delightful. He's actually a law professor from Scotland. If you want something really light, really funny, and short, you can't do better than the trio, The Finer Points of Sausage Dogs, Portuguese Irregular Verbs, and At the Villa of Reduced Circumstances.

Khaled Hosseini, Kite Runner. Good story, need Kleenex at the end. Source of my new favorite quote, "For you, a thousand times over."

Recently re-read Charles Dickens' Bleak House. "The one great business of the English law is to make business for itself."

Glad to find someone else who appreciates the books of Sarah Caudwell. Too bad she is no longer alive and she only wrote four books. All are good with great English tongue in cheek humour. (note the English spelling)

Philippa Gregory, The Other Boleyn Girl. About Mary Boleyn, sister of Anne, who at age 14 was mistress of Henry VIII. Repellent yet at the same time fascinating look at the power and politics of the Court of Henry VIII.

John Bailey, The Lost German Slave Girl. Set in New Orleans. A mystery

and a good look at legal system and state of slavery at the time. Also, get to see some real lawyers of the time at work. And a good look at New Orleans. Based on a true story.

Esther Forbes, Paul Revere and the World He Lived In There's more to Paul Revere than just that one ride

Laurie King's series on Sherlock Holmes

Anything by Martha Grimes (English mysteries)

Anything by David McCulloch

Anything by Anne Perry (English mysteries set in Victorian England)

Recently read The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman and recommend it. Currently reading Thomas Friedman's From Beirut to Jerusalem. Filling in a lot of gaps in my knowledge of recent Middle East history.

Sharon K. Campbell, Dallas, Texas

Yes, yes to David Liss. I'll have to read your recommendation. I have read his "A Coffee Trader" and really liked it. It's about coffee trading in 1659 Amsterdam and is far more interesting than my description.

Ellen B. Law

Did anyone else note that of the eight posts on sci-fi summer reading, only one was by a woman? Although not a big fan, I have read and enjoyed well written sci-fi lit. But I cannot recall a single conversation about books in which a female participant has commented on a sci-fi book, with possibly one exception, and she attended MIT.

Do you think this goes back to institutional sexism that started in seventh and eight grades when many girls (a) became insecure about their math and science skills and/or (b) were not encouraged by teachers or parents to exhibit an interest in science and math? Do people have a sense that our education system is changing in this regard?

Donald M. Spector, New York, New York

Funny, most of the time I find more women than men commenting on Sci-Fi. Of course, I have more female friends that read Sci-Fi than not, so I would expect to here more female comments.

Of course it could be that the majority of Sci-Fi written is militaristic in nature. This tends to attract more males than females. Certain books, such as Eve's Rib (<http://tinyurl.com/s8sxq>) have generally attracted far more women than men. So, the books are out there, they just tend to take a bit more effort to find. My wife is an avid Sci-Fi/Fantasy fan as are many of

my female friends, so I tend to get to see many of the books that otherwise get missed.

Just my two cents,

Frank J. Kautz, II, Woburn, Massachusetts

David Liss' "A Conspiracy of Paper," "The Coffee Trader," and "Spectacle of Corruption" are excellent. I'm not sure where "The Ethical Assassin" will go, because it's a departure from what he's written before.

<http://www.davidliss.com>

The pickings at Barnes & Noble in Kansas City and the bookstore at the Houston airport weren't anything to write home about, but I did pick up:

The Last Voyage of Columbus : Being the Epic Tale of the Great Captain's Fourth Expedition, Including Accounts of Mutiny, Shipwreck, and Discovery by Martin Dugard.

Goodnight Nobody by Jennifer Weiner.

Rococo : A Novel by Adriana Trigiani.

jennifer j. rose, Mexico

The one non-fiction book I think should be on everyone's list if they haven't already read it is Tom Friedman's "The World is Flat". I read it and heartily recommend it. I've lots of other stuff on my list, fiction and non-fiction, but that is really a must on any list. I'm going to try hard to get both my college age kids to read it this summer!

Michael D. Caccavo, Barre, Vermont

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