

BOOKS

Stash these books for summertime reading



Don't forget to stash two or three good reads as you head out for summer vacation days. Whether your destination is the Outback of the backyard, these paperbackbacks are guaranteed to take you away from it all.

"In the Beauty of the Lilies," by John Updike (Fawcett Columbine, \$12.95, 491 pp.). This is one of those big, rambling novels in which you can delightfully lose yourself. Updike loves words and uses plenty of them here, but they never bog down this engrossing saga of an American family as it evolves throughout the 20th century. It all begins with Clarence Wilmot, a Presbyterian minister who eventually loses his heart to that 20th-century phenomenon, the movies. It ends with a kind of full-circle flourish, as his great-grandson, Clark, embraces the Christian right and appears on television in a real-life drama

echoing Waco. In between is a fictional treasure, with the 20th century as a featured player, and Updike singing our song as only he can.

"The Cat Who Said Cheese," by Lillian Jackson Braun (Jove, \$6.50, 284 pp.). As Moose County busily looks forward to a community event called the Great Food Expo, a deadly blast rocks the New



Pickax Hotel, killing a young housekeeper. Was the explosion aimed at the mysterious female stranger in town? Or was the woman-in-black perhaps behind the dastardly deed herself? The little village of Pickax ("400 miles north of everywhere") is abuzz with rumors and rumors of rumors. Before you know it,

other murderous happenings occur. Time for semi-retired, filthy-rich bachelor Jim Quillner, Koko and Yum Yum, to spring into action and cleverly resolve all questions — as they have in 18 previous "Cat" tales. This one's spiced with bako-offs, cheese-tasting events and even a recipe of sorts for authentic Cornish pasties. If books were food, this one would be among the lightest of souffles; nevertheless, it's delicious fun, especially if you're a mystery fan or "a congenial foodie," like the slightly ridiculous Quill. If you've never sampled this Michigan native's best-selling work, now's the time to dig in.

"In the Presence of the Enemy," by Elizabeth George (Bantam, \$6.99, 623 pp.). To say Elizabeth George is a mystery writer is like saying the Pope is a priest. This Californian who sets her psychologically incisive stories in Britain is one of the most gifted writers working today, and any reader who has not yet done so should make it a point to experience an Elizabeth George novel ASAP. This one begins with the kidnapping of

Charlotte Bowen, the small daughter of London celebrities Dennis Luford and Eve Bowen. He is the editor of a popular, leftist scandal sheet; she is an ambitious, Conservative politician. After a one-night tryst years earlier that resulted in the child's birth, the two sent their separate, ambitious ways and he has never acknowledged the child as his own. Now come mysterious messages threatening the child's life if he does not make this acknowledgment on the front page of his own newspaper. Scotland Yard Inspector Thomas Lynley and his cohorts enter the picture and, in a tale that is both wide and deep, send all manner of skeletons rattling their way out of various, shadowy closets. All of George's characters glow with life, but her depiction of the frightened child at the center of this contemporary drama is simply unforgettable.

"High Tide in Tucson," by Barbara Kingsolver (HarperPerennial, \$12.50, 270 pp.). This group of essays by the author of "Pigs in Heaven" is the perfect book for languorous summer reading. You can start in the middle. You can read the last

essay first. You can begin at the beginning. No matter where you turn, you'll discover a marvelous bouquet of lyrical prose and arresting insight on these pages.

In the title essay, Kingsolver likens her own transplantation years ago from Kentucky to Tucson (in "the shell of a tiny yellow Renault"), to that of the hermit crab now residing in her Tucson home. The crab, accidentally transplanted via luggage brought home from a trek to the Bahamas, seems hell-bent on setting up housekeeping in its new desert abode. Perhaps, she concludes from the crab's behavior, we all respond to high tides, even if we live in deserts. How odd we are, she notes, "pitched

and wrecked and absurdly resolute, driven in spite of everything to make good on a new shore." Other eloquent essays (often leavened with humor) look at the Terrible Twos, a cross-country book tour, a visit to an atomic missile museum and what happens when a "weaking" joins a health club.

Other summer pleasure-treasures: "Dreaming in Cuban," by Cristina Garcia (Ballantine, \$11, 245 pp.), a luscious novel about how a family is/was touched by the Cuban revolution; "Independence Day," by Richard Ford (Vintage, \$13, 251 pp.), not the movie in book form, but a finely wrought novel about the aftermath of a divorce and the challenges of parenthood; "Running in the Family," by Michael Ondaatje (Vintage, \$10, 206 pp.), a memoir set mostly in exotic Sri Lanka, and written by the extraordinary author of the extraordinary novel, "The English Patient."

Victoria Diaz is a *Liunio* free lance writer who specializes in book and theater reviews. You can reach her by voice mail at 953-2045, then press 1854.



New book puts Cranbrook school history in context

Once More With Joy: Perspectives of Cranbrook School for Boys
By Ben Snyder
(Cranbrook Schools, \$29.95)
By HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

Ben Snyder has been teaching at Cranbrook since 1948 and knows every nook and cranny of the famous school.

He was the perfect choice to continue the history of Cranbrook's boys school, picking up where Bruce Coulter left off in his book "Forty Years On," which ended with 1964.

Snyder's book covers the years 1964-1985, when a merger with Kingswood ended the period of

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Ben Snyder

the two schools as separate entities.

"I know that at some point I would be commissioned to write the rest of the story," Snyder said. "So the story of the book is an extension of what had been

done. Interesting things that happened 1984-1985."

Snyder is originally from Philadelphia and did undergraduate work at North Carolina. He graduated "just as the war was heating up." He served in the Army Air Corps and was a bombardier in the South Pacific where he received a Distinguished Flying Cross.

"I came home and got a master's degree from Harvard," Snyder said. "I was offered a position in a place I'd never heard of. I came as a teacher, coach and dorm supervisor, the usual things you do at a school like this."

Over the years Snyder has

worn many hats (as he says he did "everything of consequence"), giving him a special insight into the school and its place in the nation.

"This book is a little different than most school histories because of my background as a history teacher and I will look at the history and political science of the period," Snyder said. "People will have a sense of time — what happened outside of the walls and its influence on what happened within."

Snyder said he discusses how the schools were brought together under one person and moved in a single direction.

The book includes contributions by alumni including former U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson. Each reflects on a different decade in the life of the school. Other alumni write about sports at the school.

Though retired in 1980, Snyder continues to teach a class in U.S. foreign policy for seniors. He is especially proud of organizing the Horizons-Upward Bound program for inner city children which includes a summer camp on the school campus. He is a recipient of the prestigious Cranbrook Founders Medal. He is married and he and his wife, Margot, have three children and four grandchildren.

Snyder doesn't shy away from the schools problems. He discusses parochialism, gender con-



Ben Snyder

licts and other issues.

"One of the challenges is to use those assets and resources for the common good," Snyder said.

"We have a highly respected graduate school right next door. Ways have to be found to share what we have. To think beyond the confines of the school."

The book will have an initial printing of 3,000 copies. It is available by mail for \$29.95 plus \$5 shipping and handling. Write to Office of Development and Alumni Relations, P.O. Box 801, Bloomfield Hills, Mich. 48303-0801.

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BOOK HAPPENINGS

Book Happenings features various happenings at suburban bookstores. Send news leads to Hugh Gallagher, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax them to (313) 591-7279.

BORDERS (BIRMINGHAM)
Kathleen Deveraux will lead a discussion of Oprah's favorite novel "She's Come Undone," by Wally Lamb 7 p.m. Monday, June 23. Dr. F. Leung Stewart will discuss and sign copies of "Joy Song," Trumpet Blasts and Hallelujah Shouts: Sermons in the African American Preaching Tradition" 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 24; "Hieroglyphs," learn about hieroglyphic writing of ancient Egypt, 3 p.m. Wednesday, June 25; Harpest, Donna Novak will demonstrate instruments from around the world 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 25; Robert Davis signs his thriller "Plutonium Murders," 6 p.m. Thursday, June 26 at the store, 31150 Southfield Road, Birmingham. (810)644-1515.

BARNES AND NOBLE BOOK-SELLERS (WEST BLOOMFIELD)
Storytime features "Homerun Pete" by Sharon Gayle 10 a.m. Monday; the mystery club discusses Peter Frey's "The Venture Fund" 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 25; at the store, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. (810) 626-6804.

BARNES & NOBLE (NORTHVILLE)
When a Wolf Meets a Chicken at story time 11 a.m. Tuesday, June 24; Meow Now, cat stories, 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 25; Lee Meadows will discuss and sign his new book "Silent Conspiracy," 7 p.m. Thursday, June 26 at the store 1711 Haggerty Road, 810-348-0696.

BORDERS BOOKS AND MUSIC (DEARBORN)
Intermediate Fiction Group will watch the film "The BFG" and discuss Roald Dahl's book 2 p.m. Sunday, June 22; Mary Walton will discuss and sign her book "Car," 7:30 p.m. Monday, June 23; gospel singer Vicki Winans noon Tuesday, June 24; Sheri Wells discusses and signs "Michigan Law For Everyone," 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 24; World Wide Programmer's Forum, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 25; fiction discussion group discusses Sharon McCrumb's "If Ever I Return Pretty Peggy," 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 25; Dressing for Business Success, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 26; Saturday Morning Story "Smoky Night" by Eve Bunting 11 a.m. Saturday, June 28 at the store, 5601 Mercury Dr., Dearborn. (313) 271-4441.

BOOK SIGNING
Ann Hanawa will discuss and sign her book "The Spoken Word: The Story of Ivan," 2 p.m. Saturday, June 28 at the Southfield Public Library's Marcotte Room, 23000 Evergreen Road, Southfield, Gp. (248)948-0461.