

## HAA OF ZTA BOOK CLUB - 2010 READING LIST

### **JANUARY – “Always Looking Up: The Adventures of an Incurable Optimist” by Michael J Fox**

There are many words to describe Michael J. Fox: Actor. Husband. Father. Activist. But readers of *Always Looking Up* will soon add another to the list: Optimist. Michael writes about the hard-won perspective that helped him see challenges as opportunities. Instead of building walls around himself, he developed a personal policy of engagement and discovery: an emotional, psychological, intellectual, and spiritual outlook that has served him throughout his struggle with Parkinson's disease. Michael's exit from a very demanding, very public arena offered him the time-and the inspiration-to open up new doors leading to unexpected places. One door even led him to the center of his own family, the greatest destination of all.

*Always Looking Up* is a memoir of this last decade, told through the critical themes of Michael's life: work, politics, faith, and family. The book is a journey of self-discovery and reinvention, and a testament to the consolations that protect him from the ravages of Parkinson's.

With the humor and wit that captivated fans of his first book, *Lucky Man*, Michael describes how he became a happier, more satisfied person by recognizing the gifts of everyday life.

*Amazon.com*

### **FEBRUARY -- “Love in the Time of Cholera” by Gabriel García Márquez**

While delivering a message to her father, Florentino Ariza spots the barely pubescent Fermina Daza and immediately falls in love. What follows is the story of a passion that extends over 50 years, as Fermina is courted solely by letter, decisively rejects her suitor when he first speaks, and then joins the urbane Dr. Juvenal Urbino, much above her station, in a marriage initially loveless but ultimately remarkable in its strength. Florentino remains faithful in his fashion; paralleling the tale of the marriage is that of his numerous liaisons, all ultimately without the depth of love he again declares at Urbino's death. In substance and style not as fantastical, as mythologizing, as the previous works, this is a compelling exploration of the myths we make of love. *Barbara Hoffert, "Library Journal" Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc.*

### **MARCH -- “The Help” by Kathryn Stockett**

What perfect timing for this optimistic, uplifting debut novel (and maiden publication of Amy Einhorn's new imprint) set during the nascent civil rights movement in Jackson, Miss., where black women were trusted to raise white children but not to polish the household silver. Eugenia Skeeter Phelan is just home from college in 1962, and, anxious to become a writer, is advised to hone her chops by writing about what disturbs you. The budding social activist begins to collect the stories of the black women on whom the country club sets relies and mistrusts enlisting the help of Aibileen, a maid who's raised 17 children, and Aibileen's best friend Minny, who's found herself unemployed more than a few times after mouthing off to her white employers. The book Skeeter puts together based on their stories is scathing and shocking, bringing pride and hope to the black community, while giving Skeeter the courage to break down her personal boundaries and pursue her dreams. Assured and layered, full of heart and history, this one has bestseller written all over it. *Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.*

**APRIL – “Nefertiti: A Novel” by Michelle Moran**

This fictionalized life of the notorious queen is told from the point of view of her younger sister, Mutnodjmet. In 1351 B.C., Prince Amunhotep secretly kills his older brother and becomes next in line to Egypt's throne: he's 17, and the 15-year-old Nefertiti soon becomes his chief wife. He already has a wife, but Kiya's blood is not as royal, nor is she as bewitching as Nefertiti. As Mutnodjmet, two years younger than her sister, looks on (and falls in love), Amunhotep and the equally ambitious Nefertiti worship a different main god, displace the priests who control Egypt's wealth and begin building a city that boasts the royal likenesses chiseled in stone. Things get tense when Kiya has sons and the popular Nefertiti has only daughters, and they come to a boil when the army is used to build temples to the pharaoh and his queen instead of protecting Egypt's borders. Though sometimes big events are telegraphed, Moran, who lives in California and is making her U.S. debut, gets the details just right, and there are still plenty of surprises in an epic that brings an ancient world to life. *Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.*

**MAY—“The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society” by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows.**

The letters comprising this small charming novel begin in 1946, when single, 30-something author Juliet Ashton (nom de plume Izzy Bickerstaff) writes to her publisher to say she is tired of covering the sunny side of war and its aftermath. When Guernsey farmer Dawsey Adams finds Juliet's name in a used book and invites articulate—and not-so-articulate—neighbors to write Juliet with their stories, the book's epistolary circle widens, putting Juliet back in the path of war stories. The occasionally contrived letters jump from incident to incident—including the formation of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society while Guernsey was under German occupation—and person to person in a manner that feels disjointed. But Juliet's quips are so clever, the Guernsey inhabitants so enchanting and the small acts of heroism so vivid and moving that one forgives the authors (Shaffer died earlier this year) for not being able to settle on a single person or plot. Juliet finds in the letters not just inspiration for her next work, but also for her life—as will readers. *Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved*

--

**NO MEETINGS IN JUNE, JULY OR AUGUST**

--

**SEPTEMBER -- “Marrying the Mistress” by Joanna Trollope**

Trollope, well-respected and a highly skilled chronicler of modern British life, presents a novel rich in accurate, piercing detail of domestic life and populated with strongly developed, realistic characters. Judge Guy Stockdale, age 60, is entering dangerous territory. He has decided to leave his wife of 40 years to marry his mistress of 7 years, a woman who is younger than his sons. He anticipates a storm, but the impact on his family exceeds his expectations. Merrion, the mistress, is no bit of fluff but, rather, a strong intelligent woman with her own legal career. Guy's sons and grandchildren find themselves liking her a great deal and see Guy differently because of his involvement with her. But as Trollope's characters don't live in a world with simple answers, there are many more complications on the route to an ending that is satisfying, though not the one that might be expected in this absorbing and excellent novel. *Danise Hoover Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved*

## **OCTOBER -- "Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" by Steig Larsson**

Once you start *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, there's no turning back. This debut thriller--the first in a trilogy from the late Stieg Larsson--is a serious page-turner rivaling the best of [Charlie Huston](#) and [Michael Connelly](#). Mikael Blomkvist, a once-respected financial journalist, watches his professional life rapidly crumble around him. Prospects appear bleak until an unexpected (and unsettling) offer to resurrect his name is extended by an old-school titan of Swedish industry. The catch--and there's always a catch--is that Blomkvist must first spend a year researching a mysterious disappearance that has remained unsolved for nearly four decades. With few other options, he accepts and enlists the help of investigator Lisbeth Salander, a misunderstood genius with a cache of authority issues. Little is as it seems in Larsson's novel, but there is at least one constant: you really *don't* want to mess with the girl with the dragon tattoo. --Dave Callanan ([amazon.com](#))

## **NOVEMBER -- "The Last Lecture" by Randy Pausch**

"We cannot change the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand."  
--Randy Pausch

A lot of professors give talks titled "*The Last Lecture*." Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. And while they speak, audiences can't help but mull the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy?

When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave--"Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams"--wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because "time is all you have...and you may find one day that you have less than you think"). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living.

In this book, Randy Pausch has combined the humor, inspiration and intelligence that made his lecture such a phenomenon and given it an indelible form. It is a book that will be shared for generations to come.

**NO MEETING IN DECEMBER**