

National Reading Group Month is Coming!

What's in a Name?
August 2008

Dear Barbara,

Ways to celebrate the month just for reading groups;

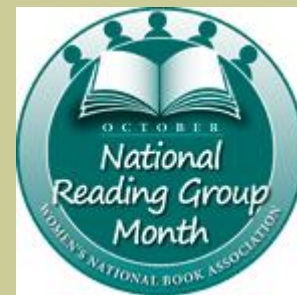
Ideas for book group activities;

Fun book club names;

And lots and lots of new choices

All await you in this month's issue of the **Reading Group Choices** newsletter!

National Reading Group Month



Plenty of New Choices!

A **variety** of new titles arrive at bookstores and libraries this month! Whether your group wants to discuss women's lives, understand the perspectives of children, escape into the impossible, find inspiration, experience the past, or puzzle over a mystery, there's something there for you.



Among the new discussibles is a smart, sexy, wickedly funny new novel titled ***Everything Nice***. Ellen Shanman, the acclaimed author of ***Right Before Your Eyes***, introduces an unforgettable and irresistibly real heroine: Michaela "Mike" Edwards, a woman who is forced to reinvent herself- and discovers that the biggest risk is not taking one at all.

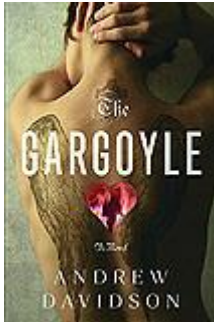
Enter for a chance to win a copy!

Narrated in the perfectly rendered voice of nine-year-old Lawrence, ***When We Were Romans*** powerfully evokes the emotions and confusions of childhood-the triumphs, the jealousies, the fears, and the love. Even as



Now is the time for planning your **National Reading Group Month** (NRGM) event(s)! In October, libraries, book stores, and reading groups will celebrate the month dedicated the joy of reading and literary discussion. Our friend and colleague, April Judge, Director of West Caldwell Public Library, kindly sent us a **National Reading Group Month Manual** created by the New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey State Library along with Martha Burns, the co-creator of NRGM and co-author of **Reading**

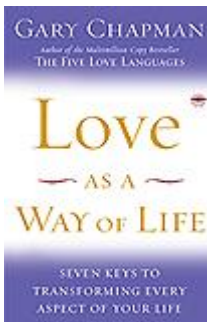
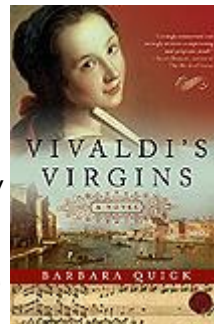
everything he understands is turned upside down, Lawrence remains determined to keep his family together, viewing the world from a perspective that is at once endearingly innocent and preternaturally wise.



The Gargoyle is an extraordinary debut novel of love that survives the fires of hell and transcends the boundaries of time. Already an international literary sensation, ***The Gargoyle*** is an ***Inferno*** for our time. It will have you believing in the impossible. Sara Gruen, author of ***Water for Elephants*** says, "I was blown away by Andrew Davidson's ***The Gargoyle***. It reminded me of ***Life of Pi***, with its unanswered (and unanswerable)

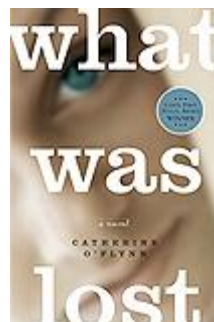
contradictions. A hypnotic, horrifying, astonishing novel that manages, against all odds, to be redemptive."

Set in Venice in the early 1700s, ***Vivaldi's Virgins*** depicts the last days of the Republic, a place where the hedonistic pleasures of Carnival and the severe austerity embodied by the Grand Inquisitor coexist and often collide. Seen through the perceptive eyes of Anna Maria dal Violin, this lyrical coming-of-age tale travels from the luxurious palaces of the elite and grand high society galas to the poverty of the Jewish Ghetto and the tenements of the underclass, capturing the city's magnificent heights, its squalid depths and everything in between.



In ***Love as a Way of Life***, Dr. Gary Chapman delivers a powerful plan for whole-life happiness, with strategies for developing new ways of accepting and responding to the gift of love. Memorable real-life stories and inspiring advice make this an ideal book to share with others, fostering meaningful conversations about the incredible possibilities that emerge when love becomes a habit.

According to Marian Keyes, author of ***Anybody Out There?*** and ***Angels***, Catherine O'Flynn's ***What Was Lost*** is "an off-beat



Group Journal.

Obtain a copy of the Manual

This useful handbook is filled with suggestions for NRG reading group events, including making a book, listening to music from the time period of the book you're discussing, holding a Read-a-thon in which the winner gets a prize, speaking with an author via speaker phone, and "speed booking." Each suggested idea can enhance your reading group experience for the big celebration and beyond.

What are you doing to celebrate the month dedicated to you? Please **let us know**, and we will share your ideas in future newsletters. Let's create our own literary discussion about the month celebrating literary discussion!

**Chances to
Win
Discussible**

quirky little mystery which punches way above its weight. Set in Birmingham in the mid-eighties, adolescent loner Kate aspires to be a great detective, spending days on stake-out at her local shopping centre. The narrative then jumps 20 years, when the ghost of a little girl starts appearing in service corridors. The author's achingly astute observations on consumerism make this far more than a generic mystery and the icing on the cake is a twist in the tail which I really didn't see coming."

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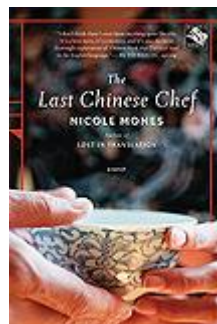


From the celebrated author of the international bestseller ***Suite Française***, comes a newly discovered novel, ***Fire in the Blood***, a story of passion and long-kept secrets, set against the background of a rural French village in the years before World War II. Written in 1941, ***Fire in the Blood*** is only now assembled in its entirety. As the narration of Silvio, its main character, unfolds, we are given an intimate picture of the loves and infidelities, the scandals, the youthful ardor and regrets of age that tie him to the long-guarded secrets of the past.

Olympic Picks

Given all the media attention on the Olympics, at least one group chose to read two books centered around Beijing China this month. Cynthia and the **Meta Book Club** report that they picked ***Beijing Coma*** by Ma Jian and ***The Last Chinese Chef*** by Nicole Mones.

Says Cynthia, "While ***Beijing Coma*** focuses on the government policies and development of the country as well as the tragic events of the Tiananmen Square massacre, ***The Last Chinese Chef*** focuses on the country's culture in regard to its passion to the culinary arts relationships family and history. Four members of our book group are Asian, and they have provided wonderful asides to these selections that make for very satisfying discussions during lunch. These two books are highly recommended and are decent portrayals of a very complex country according to my esteemed friends. Please do enjoy these books!!"



Books!

The Water's Lovely

What Was Lost

Everything Nice

The Memory Keeper's Daughter

New Profiles of Discussible Books

The Careful Use of Compliments

Little Brother

Red Rover

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Invite An Author To Speak With Your Book Group

Share Your Reading Group Tips

More About Reading Group

We enjoy hearing from book club members and sharing their choices with everyone. Please [**let us know**](#) about your group's discussible choices - you may win a book-related prize for every member of your reading group!

[**More Discussible Choices**](#)

What's in a Name?

It's not surprising that words are important to book group members. Readers search for just the right word to describe how they feel, what they see and experience, what they might like to experience or feel, and what they abhor. They marvel at their favorite authors' ability to put words together in a way that evokes deep emotions, both positive and negative. They appreciate and choose words for their meaning, of course, but also for their sound, their nuances, their derivations, and their double meanings.



So it's probably not surprising that book groups put considerable creativity into selecting the words to describe themselves. The names that they choose somehow reflect the character of the group as a whole, which may be quite different from the words that each member chooses to describe themselves.

It seems that groups name themselves to express humor, the joy of reading, or an appreciation of words and/or books. Some use their name to establish a group identity, reflect their focus, celebrate their activities, or even remind themselves of when and where they meet. In any case, they clearly have lots of fun doing it!

See for yourself - [**sample the names of groups**](#) that use [**Reading Group Choices**](#) to assist in their selections!

Thanks for keeping the joy of reading alive,

Choices

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