

Librarian makes shocking discovery when reviewing 2002 books

Looking back over the books I have read in 2002, I made a rather shocking discovery: The books that I seemed to read, and frankly enjoyed the most, were almost always crime novels in one form or another. Has it come to this, I wondered? Have I become completely obsessed with mysteries?

But, I asked myself, what about that terrific biography of the Revolutionary War generation called *Founding Brothers* by Joseph Ellis?

That was an absolutely wonderful book-history lesson combined. And speaking of history, Bob Greene's book called *Once Upon A*



Joanne Sunderman •Library Link

Town: The Miracle of the North Platte Canteen and Stephen Ambrose's *To America* were two of the best books I read all year.

Or what about that fantastically funny book by Jeannie Ray called *Step-Ball-Change* that I recommended to so many people? And then there was that romance novel *No Place Like Home* by Fern

Michaels I read and enjoyed. As for historical fiction, I loved *Susannah Morrow* by Megan Chance about the Salem Witch trials — I learned so much.

And there was the absolutely fabulous biblical historical fiction book *Queenmaker* by India Edghill that filled in the gaps about King David's wives - I stayed up late

reading both of these.

I really liked Fannie Flagg's book *Standing in the Rainbow* but, alas, some of the people to whom I recommended it did not feel the same - vehemently, I might add. I read *Longitudes and Latitudes* by Thomas Friedman and found there sure was a lot of stuff about the Middle East that I had no clue about, and although I did not agree with everything he said, I found the book to be exceptional.

The book *Abraham* by Bruce Feiler was another interesting look at the trouble in that region of the world.

Want to know what books I didn't

like very much? One was Sandra Dallas's *The Chili Queen*. I really expected more out of her as I loved her other books - this one was just a dud in my opinion, but if you are a Dallas fan you should read it and see for yourself.

And I guess I should mention another disappointment. It was *Visions of Sugar Plums* by one of my all-time favorite authors Janet Evanovich. But just because I didn't think these books were winners doesn't mean others didn't like them.

Back to my original premise, I guess I have to admit that in spite of all those non-mystery titles I just mentioned, I do think I probably read more mysteries again this year than any other genre.

In my defense let me say that I believe there were once again more mysteries published than any other kind of book last year - so perhaps that is why they seemed to outnumber the others on my list.

If mysteries were what I mostly read, then maybe I ought to pick out a few I liked or that stuck out as true winners for me. Perhaps you missed them. Here are my choices. There

was *Jinxed* by Carol Higgins Clark about an eccentric former silent-film star who decides to give \$1 million to each of her second husband's relatives - but only if they show up at her wedding, and *Reversible Errors* by Scott Turow about a guy on death row who just might be innocent.

Hope To Die by Lawrence Sanders, *He Sees You When You're Sleeping* by Mary Higgins Clark, *Splintered Bones* by Carolyn Haines, and *Steps To The Altar* by Earlene Fowler are just a few more on my list - and I probably haven't gotten to the best of the best.

These are just off the top of my head. So what were your favorites in 2002? I would love to hear what you thought of the year in terms of the best (and worst!) reads.

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Group goes to court over state's budget cuts

TOPEKA (AP) — Kansas already spends too little to help disabled citizens and should not be allowed to cut programs further, a lawyer for an advocacy group and five service providers argued in court Thursday.

But a top state official said fairness dictated that all agencies be required to reduce spending by the same proportion in the current budget crisis.

The testimony came in a Shawnee

County District Court hearing on an effort to block Gov. Bill Graves' November order cutting \$26.6 million from the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. The agency's total budget for the current fiscal year is \$2.1 billion.

"A lack of money does not relieve the state of its obligations," Rodney Murrow, attorney for the plaintiffs, told Judge Frank Theis.

Murrow's clients — five groups

that serve the developmentally disabled and a statewide association called InterHab — seek a temporary restraining order blocking the state from reducing reimbursements to service providers Jan. 17.

The hearing was adjourned until Tuesday or Wednesday of next week, after Graves leaves office, sources said.

Thursday's witnesses included Administration Secretary Joyce Glasscock.

She rejected the advocates' suggestion that Graves acted arbitrarily in ordering a cut of 3.9 percent in general fund money for all state agencies except the Department of Education, the judicial branch and the Legislature.

"In a macro sense, the state was spending more than it was taking in," Glasscock testified.

"It was considered an issue of fairness to apply the 3.9 percent to all agencies."

Babies

Brianna Hanson
Mark and Jill Hanson of Wallace, announce the birth of their daughter Brianna on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2003 at Citizens Medical Center in Colby.

She weighed 6 lbs. 14 oz. and is 19 1/2 inches long.

Grandparents are Carl & Gloria Hanson of Wallace, Kans., Ev Manning of Highlands Ranch, Colo., and the late Earl Manning.

Brothers D.J. Noyes and Skylar Hanson welcome their sister home.

Amarissa Jewel AraSmith
Autumn and James AraSmith of Rexford, announce the birth of their daughter, Amarissa Jewel, on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2003 at Citizens Medical Center. She weighed 7 lbs. and 11 oz.

Grandparents are Everett AraSmith, Julie Cunningham and Gayla and Bryon Davis.

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