

The Book Rack Newsletter

It just makes sense to buy your books at The Book Rack!

Vol 10, #3
March 2017

4764 Elmore Ave, Davenport
563-355-2310

Store Hours: 10:00 - 6:00 Monday - Sunday

<http://www.thebookrackqc.com/>
BookRackQC@Gmail.com

Trivia for March

What is unusual about the 50,100-word novel *Gadsby*, written by Ernest Vincent Wright in 1937?

See below for the answer.

Did you know?

Sir Walter Raleigh burned a volume of his History of the World in a fit of depression. He was in prison and had just seen a murder take place outside his cell window. His version of the killing differed substantially from that of two other witnesses and he thought to himself: 'What chance have I of giving a true picture of the world's history when three eye-witnesses to something that took place five minutes ago can't agree!'

March Holidays and Events at The Book Rack:

March is

- Irish American Month
- National Women's History Month

March

1 - Ash Wednesday

3 – I Want You to Be Happy Day (Actually that's every day at The Book Rack)



12 – Plant a Flower Day – Hope it's warm enough!

15 – Ides of March

16 – Everything You Do is Right Day

17 – St. Patrick's Day



23 – National Puppy Day



24 – I Am in Control Day (And don't forget it!)

Free Verse is a regular, monthly, feature by one of our wonderful Quad Cities area local authors. Each month we enjoy writing by a different talent. These articles and poems are on a variety of topics bound to be of interest to many of our readers. Please help spread the word by forwarding the newsletter to others. Give these folks as wide an audience as possible, please.

Our Free Verse Author for March is **Robin Throne**



Quad Cities area writer Robin Throne was selected as the October 2016 writer-in-residence at Wolff Cottage in Fairhope, AL, by the Fairhope Center for the Writing Arts. The 1920s bungalow has a rich literary tradition and was her writer's residence for the month of October. The FWCA included all basic utilities in the residency award, and her contribution was to facilitate a writer's workshop at the Fairhope Public Library during her stay. The remainder of the residency offered time and space for her own writing.

Here is a poem she shared with the cottage when she departed the month-long residency:

Ode to the Muse at Wolff Cottage

for FCWA

I know you live here among floor gaps and plaster cracks along the
bedroom wall

where sleep fetches a new shade of morning sky through half-draped
tall windows

and I call you out or you find me, not sure which

Yet, somehow, you greet me each morning before or after the walk to
the Bay.

Later days, I see you in faces I meet counting sidewalk lines back to
you

The woman with a home outside the Library, I hear you in her, too;
sure of it now.

Take me with you, she shouts to no one.

I beseech you for Lady Alchymia, but mainly her adepts whom I hunt
in your black-white

kitchen; perhaps it is hers, once was hers, but you live here now

louder than all of them.

You meet me in this room where I scribble solitary words sprawled like
magnolia cones

littering these rooms as some random cover to hide the gist, the
discord.

Perhaps the stories by these other guests carved you forever into
shelves of rhetoric.

Did you remain here for me? Tell me you did.

Stop with the questions, you say.

Point me to answers, I say back.

Answers are not why you came here, you say finally

as I ready to depart, leaving you behind for the next

and the next after that.

Robin Throne was also the recipient of the fourth David R. Collins literary achievement award, the third annual fiction chapbook prize from Gambling the Aisle and a literary fiction award from the Writer's Well for her debut novel, Her Kind. Her work has appeared in The New Poet Journal, Tipton Poetry Journal, Gypsy Cab, Mankato Poetry Review, North Coast Review, Split Lip Magazine and Crab Fat Literary Magazine among many others.

Book Reviews

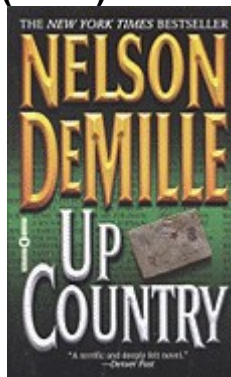
The Various Haunts of Men by Susan Hill (2004)



As the story begins, a lonely woman vanishes while out on her morning run. Then a 22-year-old girl never returns from a walk. An old man disappears too. When fresh-faced policewoman Freya Graffham is assigned to the case, she runs the risk of getting too invested--too involved--in the action. Alongside the enigmatic detective Chief Inspector Simon Serrallier, she must unravel the mystery before events turn too gruesome. Written with intelligence, compassion, and a knowing eye--in the tradition of the fabulous mysteries of Ruth Rendell and P.D. James--The Various Haunts of Men is an enthralling journey into the heart of a wonderfully developed town, and into the very mind of a killer.

This is Hill's first Simon Serrallier Mystery and my first of her books. She spent a lot of space developing the principle characters. Too much time for my preference, but after reading another of her titles in this series may well change my mind. It just seemed to drag and I struggle to retain my focus. In the end it was a good story. I'd recommend trying one of her book, but a later one, to see how it strikes you. Similar authors are Reginald Hill, Peter Robinson and John Harvey. I give it a C+.

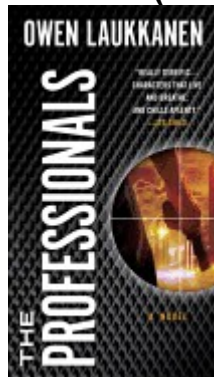
Up Country by Nelson DeMille (2002)



One of the last things that Chief Warrant Officer Paul Brenner wanted to do was return to work for the Army's Criminal Investigation Division-an organization that thanked him for his many years of dedicated service by forcing him into early retirement. But when his former boss calls in a career's worth of favors, Paul finds himself having to do the last thing he ever wanted-return to Vietnam. His mission: investigate a murder that took place during the war, thirty years before. But almost as soon as he returns to Vietnam, a country that still haunts him, he discovers that there is more to this investigation than a forgotten murder-much more. Brenner, former combat veteran, again finds himself in a battle for survival as he enters a world of corruption and double-crosses, where, for the second time in his life, he cannot distinguish friend from foe, and where his only allies are his wits and his bravery-and possibly a beautiful American expatriate named Susan Weber. She, like the country in which she's chosen to live, is exotic, sensual, and quite possibly dangerous.

One of our favorite authors, DeMille did himself well with this book. Lots of excitement, a setting that is not common and a subject that captured my interest early and held it tight. I give it a B+ and a recommendation. If you're not already a fan of DeMille you probably haven't read him.

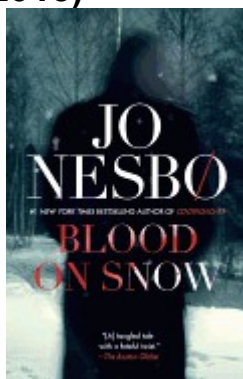
The Professionals by Owen Laukkanen (2012)



Four friends, caught in a terrible job market, joke about turning to kidnapping to survive. And then, suddenly, it s no joke. For two years, the strategy they devise works like a charm until they kidnap the wrong man. Now two groups are after them - the law, in the form of veteran Minnesota state investigator Kirk Stevens and hotshot young FBI agent Carla Windermere, and an organized crime outfit looking for payback. As they crisscross the country in a series of increasingly explosive confrontations, each of them is ultimately forced to recognize the truth: The real professionals, cop or criminal, are those who are willing to sacrifice everything.

I picked this book up after seeing a Lee Child comment on the cover, “Really terrific – characters that live and breathe, and chills aplenty.” I usually don't pay a lot of attention to cover praise, but after reading the description on the flap I dove in. The story kept me engrossed to the end. It's not a long book and it moved quickly. The principle characters are likable and I found myself hoping it ends well for them. Well, ... you'll need to read it to find out and you won't regret the investment of time. I give it an A-. If you like it, Laukkanen has written several additional books you can look forward to reading.

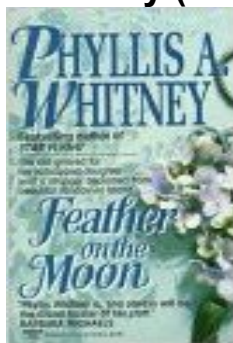
Blood on Snow by Jo Nesbo (2015)



A fast, tight, darkly lyrical stand-alone novel that has at its center the perfectly sympathetic antihero: an Oslo contract killer who draws us into an unexpected meditation on death and love. This is the story of Olav: an extremely talented “fixer” for one of Oslo’s most powerful crime bosses. But Olav is also an unusually complicated fixer. He has a capacity for love that is as far-reaching as is his gift for murder. He is our straightforward, calm-in-the-face-of-crisis narrator with a storyteller’s hypnotic knack for fantasy. He has an “innate talent for subordination” but running through his veins is a “virus” born of the power over life and death. And while his latest job puts him at the pinnacle of his trade, it may be mutating into his greatest mistake. . . .

I've reviewed several of Nesbo's book and always raved and given them high marks. Blood on Snow is a bit different from his others – shorter with a unique tenor – but still wonderfully written. You'll thoroughly “love” Olav. You'll not know what the end will bring, but will hope for his best. It's a quick read at only 180 pages. I give it an A and highly recommend it.

Feather on the Moon by Phyllis Whitney (1988)



“I must warn you that I hope this child will not prove to be yours. It is to my interest, Mrs. Blake, that she not be. But I must be sure, if that's at all possible...”

Jennifer Blake can still vividly remember the day when momentarily distracted by an odd young woman, she left her three-year-old daughter, Debbie, unattended in a grocery cart. When she turned back, the child had vanished. The police believed the strange woman Jennifer had seen was part of an organized team. Over the years, their search for the kidnappers – and for the missing Debbie – proved fruitless. Jennifer, who had lost her husband earlier in a tragic climbing accident, returned to the home of her deaf parents, anguished and shocked.

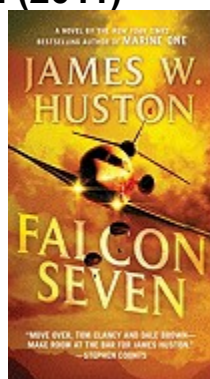
Now, seven years later, Jennifer has found hope...hope in the startling words of Corinthea Arles. The wealthy Mrs. Arles has telephoned from Victoria, on Vancouver Island. It seems she has seen Debbie's photograph and believes the little girl may be living in her own home – through circumstances she would prefer to explain to Jennifer in person.

From the moment Jennifer arrives in Victoria, she is caught up in events over which she has little control. Is the child – now names Alice – Corinthea Arles's long-lost great-grandchild, who stands to inherit a vast fortune? Or is she really Jennifer's own lost daughter? Amid a maze of family intrigues, buried secrets, and unexpected romance, Jennifer Blake is determined to uncover the truth.

A Thrilling, suspense-filled drama, *Feather on the Moon* makes for an unforgettable reading, set against the colorful backdrop of resplendent English gardens, mystical Indian traditions, and the haunting mystery of the feather and the moon.

Have you read Whitney? I hadn't until I picked up this title. It's 90% mystery and 10% romance. She writes in a rather low key way without sudden shocks, violence or sex, but does a wonderful job grabbing your interest, introducing the characters, building the suspense and slowly revealing the key clues to ultimately resolve the mystery. Her integration of the actual locations and attractions in Victoria caused me to add Vancouver to my wish list of travel destinations and added interesting color to the story. I give “*Feather on the Moon*” a B+ and highly encourage mystery readers to pick up one of Whitney's 60+ titles and give her a try. I think you will find a rich new author to love.

Falcon Seven by James Huston (2011)



A U.S. Navy F/A-18 flying over Afghanistan is suddenly diverted and ordered to bomb a building in Pakistan, where a meeting between al Qaeda and the Taliban is taking place. After destroying its target, the fighter is immediately hit by Stinger missiles and the pilots eject over Pakistan. They are captured, assaulted, and dragged through the streets of Peshawar. The world is on edge.

A Secret Mission

The pilots are quickly forced onto a private Falcon jet headed for the Netherlands, where they'll stand trial for war crimes at the International Criminal Court. The building they hit was actually a medical post run by Europeans for Afghan refugees--and sixty-five innocent people were killed.

A Trial by Fire

It's up to Washington criminal defense lawyer and former Navy SEAL Jack Caskey to defend the two naval officers. Caskey implores President Obama to intervene, but he is wary of a direct conflict with the ICC. Already fighting a losing battle, an outraged Caskey works with his contacts in the shadowy world of special operations and CIA operatives to free the pilots...or help them battle through an international show trial and face imprisonment--for life.

If you like tense courtroom drama or high risk CIA or dark ops assaults you will love Falcon Seven. It's high energy from beginning to end and the ending is quite creative. Pick up a copy or add it to your request list while you can. It's out of print and will be rather hard to get. We have several other Huston titles, if this one isn't currently on our shelves. I highly recommend Falcon Seven and give it a B+.

Spy Games by Adam Brookes (2015)



In a world of lies, one man wants the truth.

Journalist Philip Mangan is trying to stay out of trouble in East Africa, his reputation and his life are in tatters. But when he is caught in a terrorist attack in East Africa and a shadowy Chinese figure approaches him in the dead of night with information on the origins of the attack, Mangan is suddenly back in the eye of the storm.

Meanwhile, thousands of miles away on a humid Hong Kong night, a key British

Intelligence source is murdered minutes after meeting spy Trish Patterson. From Washington, D.C. to the hallowed halls of Oxford University and dusty African streets, a sinister power is stirring, one which will use Mangan and Patterson as pawns -- if they survive.

Adam Brookes has been a foreign correspondent for many years, reporting for the BBC from China, Indonesia, and the United States. Assignments also took him to Afghanistan, Iraq, Mongolia, North Korea, and numerous other countries around the globe.

Spy Games is Brookes second novel, his first being Night Heron, also featuring Philip Mangan. This is my first Brookes book and I'd compare him favorably to John le Carre' and Frederick Forsyth. The action is pervasive and chaotic, and I say that as a compliment. Much of it takes place in China and you're not sure where it is headed and what the final resolution will be. I found it enjoyable and give it a B+. I look forward to reading another of his titles, whether it's Night Heron, or a future book. I expect many good tales to come from him.

Trivia for March

What is unusual about the 50,100-word novel *Gadsby*, written by Ernest Vincent Wright in 1937?

Answer: It didn't contain a single letter "e"- the most frequently used letter in the English language. Wright made sure he didn't use it by tying down the "e" bar on his typewriter.

Inspired by Wright, Georges Perec decided to write his own novel without the letter "E"—in his first language, French. Published in 1969, it was called *La Disparition* and was later, incredibly, translated into English in 1994 by Gilbert Adair, who renamed it *A Void* (as the direct translation would have been *The Disappearance* which, you might have noticed, contains three examples of the letter in question).

La Disparation has since been translated into many languages in the same lipogrammatic form, including German, Italian, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, Turkish, Romanian, and even Japanese. You have to wonder who had the harder job here: the author of the original novel, or the writers who managed to stick to the rules when they translated it.

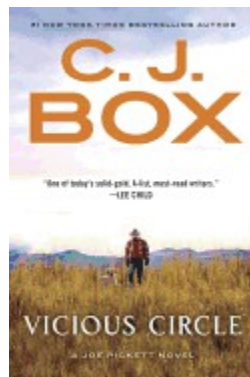
The Book Rack actually had a copy of *A Void*, which we sold in December 2012!

Upcoming New Releases:

Check out the prices following the title of the book. The price is the publisher's price. The [The Book Rack](#) price is normally 20% lower. When you pick it up at the store there is no shipping cost, though we can also ship it to you. Order now by calling the store or stopping in. We do ask for prepayment on all special orders. **You can also add any of these titles to your request list.** Some will come in soon and others may take a while, but most will get to you eventually.

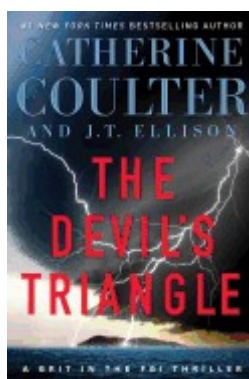
Hardcover and Trade Paperback

CJ Box – *Vicious Circle* – 27.00



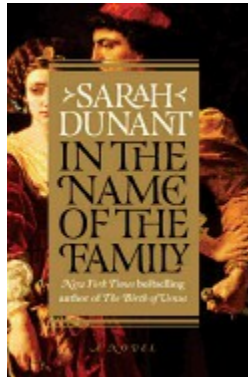
Patricia Briggs – *Silence Fallen* – 27.00

Catherine Coulter – *The Devil's Triangle* – 27.99



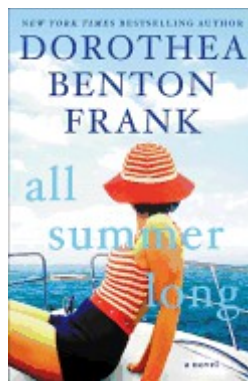
Clive Cussler – The Cutthroat – 29.00

Sarah Dunant – In the Name of the Family – 28.00



Joanne Fluke – Banana Cream Pie Murder – 26.00

Dorthea Benton Frank – All Summer Long - 15.99



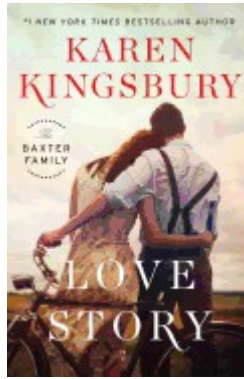
Heather Graham – A Perfect Obsession – 26.99

Greg Iles – Mississippi Blood – 28.99



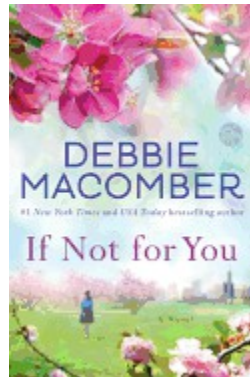
JA Jance – Man Overboard – 25.99

Karen Kingsbury – Love Story, The Baxter Family – 22.99



Donna Leon – The Waters of Eternal Youth – 16.00

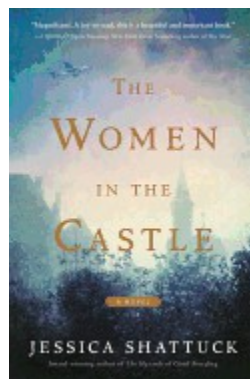
Debbie Macomber – If Not for You – 27.99



Carla Neggers – Red Clover Inn – 26.99

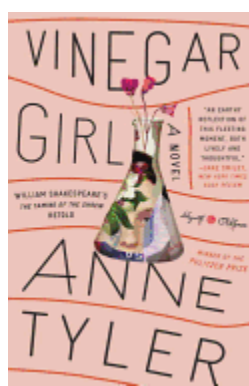
James Patterson – The Black Book – 28.00

Jessica Shattuck – The Women in the Castle – 26.99

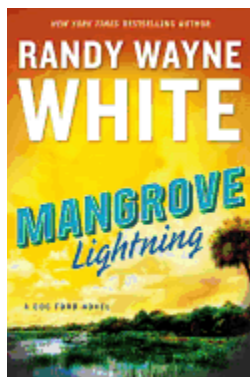


Danielle Steel – Dangerous Games – 28.99

Anne Tyler – Vinegar Girl – 15.00

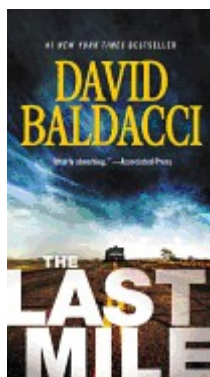


Randy Wayne White – Mangrove Lightning – 27.00



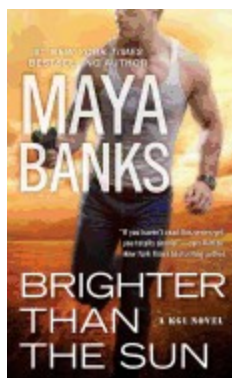
Paperback

David Baldacci – Last Mile – 9.99



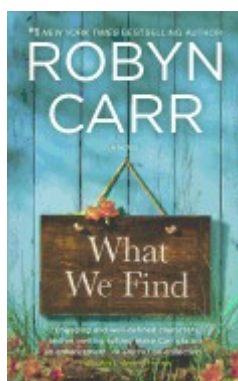
Mary Balogh – Someone to Hold – 7.99

Maya Banks – Brighter Than the Sun – 7.99



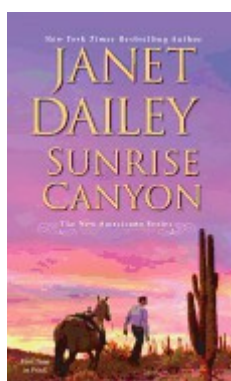
Allison Brennan – Make Them Pay – 7.99

Robyn Carr – What We Find – 8.99



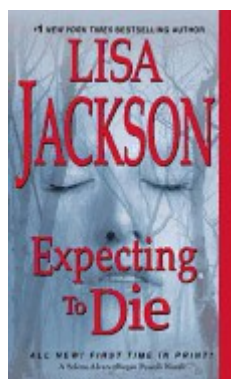
Catherine Coulter – Insidious – 9.99

Janet Daily – Sunrise Canyon – 7.99



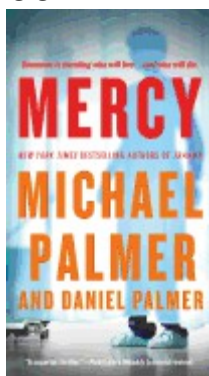
Christine Feehan – Dark Promises – 7.99

Lisa Jackson – Expecting to Die – 9.99



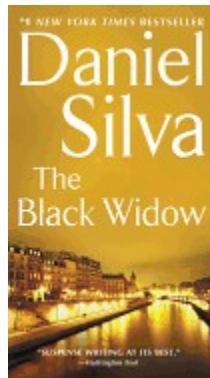
Iris Johansen – Night and Day – 8.99

Michael Palmer – Mercy – 9.99



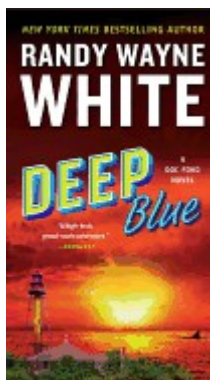
Julia Quinn – When He Was Wicked – 5.99

Daniel Silva – The Black Widow – 9.99



Debra Webb – No Darker Place – 9.99

Randy Wayne White – Deep Blue – 9.99



Sherryl Woods – About That Man – 7.99

Stuart Woods – Dishonorable Intentions – 9.99

