

What is your number one recommendation for work-related and/or recreational reading?

*The following responses are available on AALLNET only. For the responses published in the April 2009 issue of *AALL Spectrum*, please see the issue in its entirety.*

"It is very difficult for me to ever recommend just one book for recreational reading. In the past twelve months or so, I have read many excellent books such as: *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* and *Peony in Love* (Lisa See); *Bonesetter's Daughter* (Amy Tan); *Hearts of Horses* (Molly Gloss); and *Widow's War* and *Bound* (Sally Gunnings).

"Three that I have read multiple times include: *Jump-off Creek* (Sally Gunnings), *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* (Margaret Craven), and *Cold Mountain* (Charles Frazier). I also love anything by Louise Erdrich.

"Actually, it really is cruel to ask a reader to name one book and I will never ask my patrons that question again!"*

- **Mariann Storck**, library manager and legal information expert at the U.S. Attorneys Office in Denver, Colorado.

Lawyers, law librarians, and Americans of all stripes ought to read Barack Obama's first book, *Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (2004). His writing is insightful into both the American experience as well as his own personal experience. Published in 1995, soon after he graduated from Harvard Law School, it is one of the better contemporary lawyer autobiographies.

"If you don't feel like an entire book (or even if you do), I also recommend his American Library Association annual conference keynote address, "Bound to the Word," available in the August 2005 issue of *American Libraries* on pages 48-52. In that talk, then-Senator Obama shares his love and respect for the work of librarians. He even quotes part of *Good Night Moon*. He reminds us all of the good we can do as librarians. (I think AALL ought to recruit him to speak at this year's Annual Meeting in D.C.)"

- **Galen L. Fletcher**, faculty services librarian at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

"My number one recommendation is *The New Yorker*. I have read it since childhood because my parents had a subscription. In addition to listing cultural events in my town, it is incomparable for political and social commentaries and the mix of light-hearted looks and serious reports about unique persons, situations, trends, and places. It covers topics of current or future interest and every issue has a short fiction story. The cartoons are often very amusing and some favorites are displayed on my kitchen refrigerator or on the walls in my office.

"Unfortunately, I am usually a few weeks behind reading the most current issue. After seeing me remove an issue from the mailbox in my apartment building, my next door neighbor asked if I would share the finished issues with her so she could practice reading English because she enjoyed the fiction. I am still thrilled to share them with her. Although the editors have changed over the years and I may not agree with every viewpoint or be interested in reading each article with the same amount of gusto, my anticipation of this publication has not wavered."

- **Martha Goldman**, library services manager at Jones Day in New York, New York.

"Work-related reading: the *New York Times* for three reasons:

1. In-depth knowledge of current events helps law librarians understand reference questions and their context.
2. Reading well-written articles like those in the *New York Times* improves writing skills.
3. Coverage of information technology, telecommunications, internet, and related issues keeps librarians on top of relevant changes.

"For recreational reading: *Harper's* or *The Atlantic* magazines. But to each his or her own."

- **Mary Rumsey**, foreign, comparative, and international law librarian at the University of Minnesota Law Library in Minneapolis.

*All opinions included herein are the author's own and do not represent that of her employer in any way, shape, or form.

member to member

“This is really two different questions, since most of the time what I read for work is very different from what I read for recreation.

“That being said, I think the book *Dewey* by Vicki Myron could colorably be described as work related since it does contain some material about library management and policies. Admittedly, it’s mostly about Dewey Readmore Books, a cat whom Vicki Myron, the library director of a small public library in Iowa, adopted as their official library cat. Anyone who loves cats will be able to relate to this story, and Myron does an effective job of describing not only the distinctive personality of this particular cat, but also how he affected the people he came in touch with, and, eventually, his entire town.

“As for full-out recreational reading, I’m quite enjoying the Jack Reacher thrillers by Lee Child. In the past, I’ve been known to observe that the problem with modern novels is that the people who are the finest writers, such as the recently departed John Updike, are often very poor storytellers, and some of the best storytellers, such as Robert E. Howard, are stylistically, very poor writers. Lee Child, however, seems to have managed to combine the both: his stories have tremendous pace and convincing action, but they also have psychological insight and beautifully rendered descriptive passages. The only problem is that I sometimes have to go through his novels twice: the first time to be swept up in his narrative, and the second time to fully absorb and appreciate his finely wrought prose style.”

- *Lorin Geitner, reference lawyer and librarian at Chapman University School of Law in Orange, California.*

“For work-related reading, my number one recommendation is to read everything you can about topics that touch on any or all aspects of your work. The goal of work-related reading is to improve your knowledge base, your expertise, and most of all to keep you excited about what you do at work. As editor of the Southern California Association of Law Libraries (SCALL) newsletter, I study newsletters published by organizations and associations—inside and outside of law librarianship—to identify novel approaches to content and style that may be useful to our SCALL newsletter readers. As an upper-level law library manager, I seek out articles that help me to improve my job effectiveness and prepare me for promotion to the next level.

“My personal reading is all about my passions in life—new titles in American history and politics, law, and my core interest in genealogy and family history. My number one recommendation is to read what feeds you—your mind and your soul. What makes you happy? What brings you peace? If you don’t know the answers to those questions, get to know yourself better and keep searching those bookshelves!”

- *Hugh Treacy, associate director of the law library at Whittier Law School in Costa Mesa, California*