

Recommended Summer Reading 2004

**Recommended by Margot Rutherford,
Courtenay Notary Public**

The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency by Alexander McCall Smith is one of five books Mr. Smith has written about Precious Ramotswe of Botswana. As her father is dying, his cattle are sold by a relative so that Precious will be able to buy a business to support herself. She bravely opens her own private detective agency. Precious tells us about her cases, her challenges, and life in Botswana.

I have finished reading the first four novels over the past two weeks. After the stress of the office, I found them restful and rejuvenating. I have the urge to travel to Botswana!

Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie is a bizarre journey in the life of our hero—born at the stroke of midnight when India became independent—and the lives of other Indian children born at that same time. In the moment the babies were born, the alignment of the moon and stars created a common bond among them. This cleverly crafted story won the Booker prize—later declared the best Booker in 20 years of Bookers!

If a person hasn't yet read a book, ever, I recommend this is the book to read. I'm going to read it again this summer.

**Recommended by Ann Coombs,
Coombs Consulting Ltd.**

Birth of Venus by Sarah Dunant brings alive the history of Florence at its most dramatic period; it tells a compulsive story of love, art, religion, and power. It is beautifully written and a page-turner from beginning to end!

Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World by Margaret MacMillan is a fascinating and compelling work of the history of the Big Powers after WWI to create a lasting peace.

The Swallows of Kabul by Yasmina Khadra follows four characters as they live and struggle under Taliban rule, trying to maintain their own beliefs. It is an extraordinary book in both writing and insights to human resilience.



**Recommended by Tim Perrin,
Technology writer for *The Scrivener***

In *The Secret Voyage of Sir Francis Drake*—an important book about the famous English explorer—former BC Minister of Recreation Sam Bawlf has revealed another side of himself, that of serious historian. Until now, history has said Drake's round-the-world voyage came up the west coast of North America only as far as Drake's Bay in Marin County, not far north of San Francisco.

In a highly readable style, Bawlf puts forward his case that Drake actually sailed much farther north, along the BC coast and up to Alaska.





I'll admit I picked up the book for two reasons.

First, I know Sam Bawlf from my days as a reporter in Victoria, covering the government of which he was a member. In fact, one of my very first freelance articles was about Sam Bawlf, written close to 30 years ago when we were both too young to know better.

The second reason was that Sir Francis Drake is my great-times-12 uncle, so I'm always interested in anything about him.

That's why I picked up the book. I stayed because Sam Bawlf has done first-rate research and written a lucid, fun-to-read, interesting volume that makes a significant contribution to the history of the Pacific Northwest.

**Recommended by Wayne Braid,
Secretary/Executive Director of
The Society of Notaries Public of BC**

New York Times bestseller, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, was written by Mitch Albom, author of *Tuesdays with Morrie*, which I reviewed last Summer. Publisher's notes: Eddie is a war veteran, an old man who has lived—in *his* mind—an uninspired life. His job is fixing rides at a seaside amusement park. On his 83rd birthday, a tragic accident kills him as he tries to save a little girl from a falling cart. He awakes in the afterlife where he learns that heaven is not a destination; it's a place where your life is explained to you by five people, some of whom you knew, others who may have been strangers. One by one, from childhood to soldier to old age, Eddie's five people revisit their connections to him on earth, illuminating the mysteries of his "meaningless" life and revealing the haunting secret behind the eternal question: "Why was I here?"

This is a great book, a very easy read, and perfect for people who like to read on airplanes.

Recommended by Val Wilson, Editor-in-Chief of *The Scrivener* magazine

Métis Outpost by Gerry Andrews is the memoirs of the First Schoolmaster at the Métis Settlement of Kelly Lake, BC, 1923 to 1925. Gerry Andrews was Surveyor General of British Columbia from 1951 to 1968. A very interesting story.

Stoopnagle's Tail is Twisted: Spoonerisms Run Amok (Rescued from Oblivion by Keen James), Stone & Scott Publishers, CA

I have not finished this book. I may never finish it. When I start to read, I laugh . . . loud and long. Here are some tales that await me: Beeping Sleauty, The Pea Little Thrigs, and Prinderella and the Since. To persevere, I will read indoors and alone. Lush me wick. ▲

