

MEditorial July 2011

“Summer Reading”

Having had a good vacation, affording me relaxation and time to read, not only do I not have a “medical topic” in mind right now; but I’d like instead to share with you some books you may consider for “summer reading”, should you so choose. If you are like me, and cannot keep your eyes open late at night for a good read, consider an audiobook source. We use Audible.com, a great service for downloading then listening to books (I do in my car) via a number of electronic devices.

You will see my reading biases over the years favor non-fiction and probably biography/history, at that. A few have a medical slant. I will start, however, with one of my favorite non-fiction books. The list could be a lot longer--and the books are in no particular order.

- Independence Day. *Richard Ford*. How one ordinary fictional character, plodding through his existence, spent HIS summer vacation.
- The Devil in the White City. *Erik Larson*. Great storytelling with juxtaposition of good/creativity versus evil (unfortunately, in the semblance of a physician), in the background of the Chicago World’s Fair, late 19th century.
- Blind Eye. *James B. Stewart*. Chronicle of an evil young doctor (again) who cunningly evaded his true past. Check your doctor’s credentials!
- King of Hearts. *G. Wayne Miller*. Uplifting story of a true medical giant, Dr. Walt Lillihei, whose “human experiments” on cardiac birth defects pioneered modern open heart surgery. Amaze yourself reading the part of the book about the lawsuit!
- Fly by Wire. *William Langewiesche*. Easy-to-understand but technical expose on modern commercial aviation in the context of the “miracle” landing of a US Airways plane on the Hudson.

- John Adams. *David McCullough*. Simply the best Presidential biography about the best President from my home state, penned by an unparalleled writer. Very emotionally moving.
- Polk: The Man who Transformed the Presidency. *Walter Borneman*. Another bio of a lesser known (and “unlikely”) President whose policies expanded the country to the Pacific Ocean.
- Einstein: His Life and Universe. *Walter Isaacson*. Reads like a novel, beautifully explaining this man’s transition from a meager Swiss patent clerk to the most prominent theoretical physicist in modern times, as well as a political force.
- Frank Lloyd Wright: A Life. *Ada Huxtable*. I’ve always admired architecture and there is something quite fascinating about Wright’s style, both artistic and personal.
- A Beautiful Mind. *Sylvia Nasar*. Mathematical brilliance and paranoia. Even better than the movie of the same name.
- American Prometheus. *Kai Bird and Martin Sherwin*. Epic story of the rise and fall of Robert Oppenheimer, the conflicted project manager of and genius behind the Manhattan Project to create US nuclear weaponry superiority.
- Rocket Men. *Craig Nelson*. Timely read, with the end of the space shuttle era, about the bravery of those who pioneered space and would go to the moon--and beyond, if they could.
- Power, Faith, and Fantasy. *Michael Oren*. Great piece of historical writing about US involvement in the Middle East, starting in colonial times. The irresolvable conflict there dates back farther than you knew.
- The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11. *Lawrence Wright*. History that reads like a novel; paralleling Michael Oren’s book, radicalism in the Middle East towards the West has a long and winding road as its basis. **The merging of history and a personal saga, at the climax, of the book is amazing.**

Dr. Alan Freedman

401 Old Newport Blvd., Suite 101

Newport Beach, CA 92663

Phone: (949) 645-3434

FAX: (949) 645-0277