

VPA Connections

Office of the Vice President for Administration
Harvard University



Connecting to Harvard, to work, to colleagues

Summer 2008

Arnold Arboretum • Faculty Club • Harvard Magazine • Harvard Real Estate Services • Harvard University Dining Services • Harvard University Press • Office of the Vice President for Administration • University Operations Services • University Planning Office

SUMMER READS 2008

Join VPA Connections for three summer reads. You may choose to read one, two or all three selections – books will be sent out in June and we will reconvene each group in September.

Harvard Yard

by William Martin

Tuesday, September 9, 12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Martin, author of the successful *Back Bay* (1979) and *Cape Cod* (1991) returns with a new mystery located right in Harvard Yard. The author races back and forth through time in order to solve a bookish mystery rooted in historical events. When antiquarian bookseller Peter Fallon follows the clues he hopes will lead him to recover a lost Shakespeare play written in the bard's own hand, he himself becomes the target of both underworld thugs and unscrupulous academics. The most compelling action takes place in the past as he traces the utterly fascinating evolution of Harvard University by interweaving it with the intimate history of one of New England's first families. Bound by oath to preserve John Harvard's library, Issac Wedge takes care to squirrel away the Shakespearean quarto the dying Harvard entrusted to his care. Realizing that Puritan reactionaries would most certainly destroy the play, Wedge hands it down for safekeeping to his own son, establishing a pattern that is repeated by each succeeding generation until it appears that the manuscript has been lost. Or has it? It is up to Fallon to put all the pieces of the puzzle together. The unexpected twists and turns through history will keep readers guessing and the pages turning (from *Booklist*).

Unaccustomed Earth

by Jhumpa Lahiri

Wednesday, September 17, 12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

From the internationally best-selling, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, a new work of fiction: eight stories that take us from Cambridge and Seattle to India and Thailand as they enter the lives of sisters and brothers, fathers and mothers, daughters and sons, friends and lovers.

In the title story, Ruma, a young mother in a new city, is visited by her father, who carefully tends the earth of her garden, where he and his grandson form a special bond. But he's harboring a secret from his daughter, a love affair he's keeping all to himself. In "A Choice of Accommodations," a husband's attempt to turn an old friend's wedding into a romantic getaway weekend with his wife takes a dark, revealing turn as the party lasts deep into the night. In "Only Goodness," a sister eager to give her younger brother the

perfect childhood she never had is overwhelmed by guilt, anguish, and anger when his alcoholism threatens her family. And in "Hema and Kaushik," a trio of linked stories—a luminous, intensely compelling elegy of life, death, love, and fate—we follow the lives of a girl and boy who, one winter, share a house in Massachusetts. They travel from innocence to experience on separate, sometimes painful paths, until destiny brings them together again years later in Rome. Lahiri's stories confront issues of exile, identity, disappointment and maturation while dealing with the most intricate workings of the heart and mind (from *Publisher's Weekly*).

Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me & Cheryl to the Mall: A Parent's Guide to the New Teenager

by Anthony Wolf

Thursday, September 25, 12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Wolf, a clinical psychologist who works with adolescents clearly has a feel for both the angst of young people who must deal with an evermore complex world and the difficulties parents face when a cooperative loving child morphs into a teenager who lies, talks back and avoids parental company. Humorous and insightful, Wolf describes what is, rather than what mothers and fathers of rebellious and thoughtless adolescents wish would be. He is forthright in stating that "you do not win the battle for control with teenagers... usually the best you get is imperfect control." Despite the best efforts of parents, today's adolescents frequently drink, experiment with drugs and are sexually active. According to the author, however, it is still important to have rules even though a teenager may break them. If parents clearly state their expectations of behavior and restate them when a teen disobeys, their son or daughter will, to some extent, internalize the rules and abide by them sometimes. In addition to providing excellent advice on particular situations, including divorce, school problems and stepparenting, he makes the often obnoxious manner in which teens communicate with their parents understandable as a rite of passage that they will eventually outgrow (from *Publisher's Weekly*).

Complimentary copies of the book will be sent to participants upon registration.

All programs are free. To register please call or email:
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