

# Local readers sing praises of book clubs

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BOOKS EDITOR  
November 04, 2007

Cape Codders love their book clubs.

In celebration of National Reading Group Month last month, we asked our readers what they liked and didn't like about their groups, and no one took us up on the latter.

"I look forward to our once-a-month 10-year-old book club for several reasons," wrote Richard Enfield of Pocasset and San Luis Obispo, Calif. "First, I enjoy the members of the club, which initially started as a neighborhood book club but has expanded in geographic reach. Second, it is always interesting and sometimes mind-boggling how others react to the same book that I just read. Third, I learn from the discussions and almost always gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the work of fiction."

"At the age of 90, I find myself here at EPOCH with my first opportunity to join a book club," wrote Tom Lawson, a resident of the EPOCH Assisted Living Center in Brewster. "The coordinator is just half my age, and I think we have both been pleasantly surprised that our understanding of books has been mutually enjoyable. I am especially glad that 'our books' have been a pleasure to both of us to read and understand. We have differences of opinion about where the authors are taking us, but we can exchange ideas calmly and without rancor."

Holly Michaud, life enrichment director at EPOCH, couldn't agree more.

"I have never learned so much, laughed so hard, traveled so far in time and imagination, or enjoyed reading more than I have in leading the book club at EPOCH," she wrote. "From classic literature to current best sellers, we read and discuss books with great anticipation of what we will learn about history, human nature, the world and especially each other. Reading the same book creates unity; discussing the same book creates community!"

Moira Swiatkowski of East Dennis commented on that same sense of community when she wrote that "camaraderie is the best thing about my book club."

"It's great to have an intellectual discussion about the book, but the main reason we go every month is to be in each other's company. There are about 10 of us between the ages of 34 and 47. Our rules are:

1. Whomever hosts chooses the book.
2. You don't have to read the book to attend.
3. Whatever happens at book club stays at book club."

"Unique personalities emerge during our book group discussions each month," wrote Gail Marshall of Harwich. "Certain members look at plot and characters from a psychological standpoint, some take an historical viewpoint, a retired English teacher offers well-thought-out opinions, and others simply find sheer joy in reading a good book. This wonderful blending of people, good books, delicious desserts and coffee, and a sharing of personal life experiences, has forged fine friendships over the years."

The Women's National Book Association says it launched the monthlong celebration of such gatherings to:

- Bring about public awareness of the joy of shared reading.
- Provide time for existing groups to celebrate their reading accomplishments and make plans for the future.
- Encourage libraries, bookstores and organizations to host special events for reading.
- Provide opportunities for individuals to get involved in an existing reading group or start one of their own.



To learn more about forming a book group, check out <http://wnba-books.org>.

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