

1. ***The Poincare Conjecture*** by Donal O'Shea ©2017. 200pp. Russian Gregory Perelman solved the Poincare Conjecture by proving, in 3 papers published on the internet in 2002-03, that a counterexample did not exist. We first learn something about Bernhard Riemann (1826-1866), Henri Poincare (1854-1912) & Felix Klein (1849-1925). I skipped some technical parts. John Milnor wrote this limerick about Christos Papakyriakopoulos: The perfidious lemma of Dehn/Was every topologist's bane/"Til Christos Papa/Kyriako/Poulos proved it without any strain. Perelman declined the Field Medal. The "Ricci Flow" is an important tool in studying manifolds.
2. ***A Woman of No Importance*** by Sonia Purnell ©2019. 312pp I have read several books about the Resistance in Vichy France. This biography of the American spy Virginia Hall (1906-1982) is the best of them. Photo plates. Virginia spoke 6 languages and had served 10 years with the State Department in foreign postings without a promotion. At the beginning of the War she quit, and got a job as an ambulance driver in France. Later she ran a spy network, the work she was born to do. I was bowled over by the details of several prison breaks she orchestrated. She married another resistance fighter. He was 8 yrs younger and 6" shorter than she. They were together for 38 yrs.
3. ***Fascism, a Warning*** by Madeleine Albright ©2018, read by the author. Albright describes herself at 80 as "an optimist who worries." She is not writing about ideology. She is talking about bullies, who, however they got into power, use any means to keep it. She touches on Mussolini, Hitler, Kim Jong Il, Stalin, Putin, Erdogan, and Duerte. It starts with small steps. She tells her own history, childhood to Sec.of State (1997-2001), & UN Ambassador...
4. ***Leaving the Witness*** by Amber Scoriah. ©2019. 276pp. Similar genre to *Educated*. The author was a 3rd generation Jehovah's Witness & didn't go to college until she was over 30. In her twenties she learned Chinese and lived in Shanghai for 6 years with her husband, both secret missionaries with cover jobs. Hers was at a podcast for people trying to learn Chinese. She's great at describing cultural differences between the US and China, and at describing personal relationships. Scoriah writes insightfully about religion, marriage, living abroad, work, and starting over.
5. ***Grace, An American Woman in China 1934-1974*** by Eleanor McCallie Cooper & William Liu ©1999. 365pp. In 1932, in NYC, Grace (1901-1979) married Liu Fu-Chi (FC), a young engineer. She was in NYC studying opera singing. Interracial marriage was against the law in TN, where she came from. The family in Chattanooga were upset about FC being a non-believer. FC & Grace raised their three children in Tientsin, where FC modernized the waterworks. In the 1930's it was a colonial-like situation where Grace enjoyed friendships in the international quarter. The war turned everything on its head, and Mao yet again. Grace, a widow by the Cultural Revolution, and her son (Wm. Liu) were under house arrest together. They had admirable inner resources. In 1974, when Grace returned to the US for the first time in 40 years, she started to record her memories. Also, her sister-in-law had saved all her letters from China. Photo plates. In China, Grace taught English in the local University. She sang at parties.
6. ***Half the House*** by Richard Hoffman ©1995 175pp. In a 15 page afterward written for a later edition he tells of reader response. Richard, born in 1949 to a blue-collar Catholic family in Allentown, PA, was the oldest of 4 boys. At the age of 41 Richard told his father about "it"—his molestation by his baseball coach at ages 11-12. He was writing this book and he'd rather have his father hear about it in person. It turned out the coach had been molesting boys for 40 years. This book brought it to light. A brave 11 year old in 1995 testified in court. He phoned Richard to thank him for making it stop. It. But that's only one aspect of this memoir. It's about family relationships. Richard's mother carried the gene for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, which boys get because it's recessive. Girls just need one good copy of the X chromosome to avoid it. Two of the Hoffman boys got MD, and died as teenagers. By the way, I recently read on the internet about experimental gene therapy that has ameliorated Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy in two boys who volunteered. A virus is equipped with the good gene and it infects most of the cells.
7. ***44: Dublin Made Me*** by Peter Sheridan ©1999 464pp. (Large print). Memoir. Da, Ma, 6 sons and 1 daughter lived at #44 Seville Place. Only the daughter had her own room. Plus they took in roomers who bunked in with the boys. It opens in 1959, when the narrator is 9, and covers to 1970. The narrator is raped at 13 by one of the roomers and never tells anyone. The narrator, a brother, and Da get heavily into community theater. They mount two Sean O'Casey plays & Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. It's great how an interest in something like theater can transform lives. The NYer calls Peter Sheridan "An Irish Theater impresario." His brother is Academy-award-winning film director Jim Sheridan (*My Left Foot*, 1989; *In the Name of the Father*, 1993).
8. ***Working*** by Robert Caro. ©2019 207 pages. About Caro's working methods. It takes Caro (1935-) 8+ years to write a volume of historical biography. It's a creative process. We get glimpses into the Robert Moses biography and the LBJ volumes. Wife Ina is Caro's only research assistant. There's a chapter called *Sanctum Sanctorum for Writers*, about the Frederick Lewis Allen Room at the New York Public Library. Eleven cubicles for writers.
9. ***The Wright Brothers*** by David McCullough ©2015. 8 CDs. Read by the author. Except for Orville's (1871-1948) unreasonable objection to his sister Katherine's marriage in middle age, the family loved and supported each other admirably. Katherine, a teacher, and graduate of Oberlin, ran the household for her two bachelor brothers and their father. Wilbur, 4 years older than Orville, died of typhoid in 1912. Wilbur was a genius. Orville had incredible mechanical ingenuity. After a crash they just rolled up their sleeves and fixed the broken plane. The first powered machine heavier than air carrying a pilot flew at Kitty Hawk, N. Carolina, in 1903. The Wrights had character.

10. *Spillover* by David Quammen ©2012. 520pp. Medical detective accounts of animal infections transmitted to humans, with much information discovered this century but also historic milestones. We learn what drives individual scientists. Quammen hangs out with field biologists in China, Borneo, Africa, Bangladesh, Australia... There are 1116 species of bat, which is 25% of all mammal species! Molecular clocks are based on mutation rates.
11. *The Fifth Risk* by Michael Lewis ©2018. Audio book. 5 hrs. Narrated by Victor Bevine. I would love to discuss this with a Republican who believes there is very little that government does that private enterprise couldn't do better. If you only have time to read one Trump book, choose *The Fifth Risk*. Also good are *Blowout* by Rachel Maddow ©2019, a deep dive into the oil and gas industry, and *Fear: Trump in the White House* by Bob Woodward ©2018, a refresher of what happened up until Charlottesville. Personnel shuffles. Sequence of events.
12. *Eva, Her Life, Her Artwork* by Anne Gunshenan. Wm. Gillcrist, editor. ©2020. 83pp. 8.5' X 11". Full disclosure: A.G. is my cousin, Eva is my grandmother. Some basic facts about Eva Healy Casey (1868-1935), & color plates of her pastels—all done before her marriage in 1894. Also included are artistic creations of her descendants.
13. *Quest for Gold* by William Gillcrist ©2017. 423pp. Full disclosure: the author is my cousin's son. He expanded a 40 page diary written in 1898 by our Great-Uncle Leo Healy. Leo kept the diary while participating in the Alaska Gold Rush. William did historical research and includes vintage photographs. In every chapter he includes the actual words of Leo, then fills in details using imagination on a framework of historical fact.
14. *The Other Einstein* by Marie Benedict ©2016. Audio book narrated by Mozhan Marno. 8.5 hrs. A historical novel that imagines the life of Mileva Maric Einstein (1875-1948) from her arrival at the polytechnic in Zurich in 1897 until her separation from Albert (1879-1955) around 1914. The relationship starts off with a charming courtship. He brought his violin to musical soirees at her *pension*. He introduced her to café culture. They were passionate about physics together. She became pregnant. Albert's selfish side emerged. She went home to Serbia to give birth to Liesl who died at age 2. After he got the job in the Berne Patent Office, Albert married Mileva. They had two sons. Albert was not faithful. They had both dreamed of an equitable marriage where they'd write papers together but that never materialized. I'd say it was doomed by the era, but then there's Marie and Pierre Curie...
15. *Where We Come From* by Oscar Casares ©2019, 252pp. Everybody in my book group liked this novel. Nina retired from teaching early to move in with her 94-yr-old mother in the border town of Brownsville, Texas. Her 12-yr-old godson, Orlando, comes to stay the summer. A complication is that, against her better judgment, Nina has gotten roped into sheltering some refugees in the "Pink House" behind her house. She's hiding them from her mother, and her suspicious brother, and now Orly. It started when Nina's once-a-week maid, Romalda, who walks across the bridge daily with hundreds of other day laborers, begged for emergency shelter for relatives. The *Texas Observer's* reviewer said, "If I had to recommend just one book to comprehend the border it'd be this."
16. *As It Was In Heaven* by Niall Williams ©1999, 310pp. My book group selected this love story set in Ireland. Violinist Gabriela Casstoldi captures the heart of gangly Stephen Griffin, a high school history teacher in rural Co. Clare. Stephen's widower father is in failing health in suburban Dublin. I'd like to read more by Niall Williams.
17. *Echoes* by Maeve Binchy ©1985. 494pp. 30 years ago, Natalie recommended this novel set in Ireland. Did I mention I am going through bags of old cards and letters from my attic? It was lovely to get caught up in a novel about a small town in Ireland in the 1950's--to escape from current events. Families, religion, secrets, love affairs.
18. *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee ©2017. 18.25 hrs.. Narrator Allison Hiroto. Novel set initially in Korea, and then in the Korean community in Osaka. Being born in Japan does not confer citizenship. A 3-generation family saga.
19. *The Search* by C.P. Snow ©1934. 343pp. A novel about the life of a scientist that made my book bag when it was mentioned by Francis Crick years ago. My book-bag used to be an actual bag of book reviews and notes to myself. Now it's a document, but this year I went through a physical bag from 25 years ago tossing a lot but adding some to book_bag.rtf. There's a cover blurb by I.I. Rabi: "I read *The Search* when it first came out. I have since recommended it as the one novel which was really about scientists living as scientists." C.P. Snow (1905-1980) was once a Fellow in Physics at Cambridge. World affairs barely impinge, though at one point a character seeking a new opportunity mentions the job market has dried up in America (it was 1931). I noticed that there were no opportunities for women. Of course the novel is not about that—women's issues were not a thing in 1934. The central character, Arthur Miley, spends a few months in Munich to work with a colleague. The one woman who had a good job—she was a translator, and 22—was the German scientist's girlfriend. She'd lose the job if she married. So they secretly lived together, only open with their inner circle. It was mentioned that scientists in Germany were not paid as well as in England. The novel did a good job of describing the work, including a temptation to fudge the data. Personal lives are not omitted. Career hopes happen and are sometimes dashed. The scientist turns to writing.
20. *Olive, Again* by Elizabeth Strout ©2019. 12 hrs. 33 min (e-book). Olive Kittridge of Crosby, Maine, now widowed, navigates her 70's and 80's. She has a hard time telling her son, Christopher, of her plans to marry a local widower, Jack. 7 years later, a widow again, Olive feels lonely in Jack's big house. She recovers from a heart attack. Christopher engages home aides. One Olive particularly likes is from the Somali community in nearby Shirley Falls. Olive has a scary fall. She decides to move to an independent living apartment within the town's assisted living complex. At first she does not have anyone to sit with in the dining room, but soon she makes friends. Throughout, Olive visits people, so we get a cross section of attitudes and personal relationships. Some find Olive too outspoken. Olive is a retired high school teacher. We learn some backstories of people she encounters.