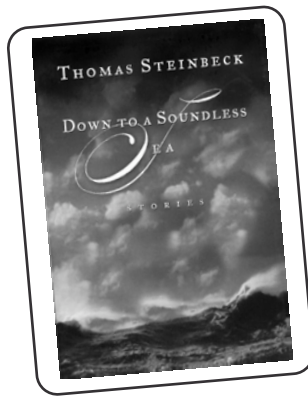


What if Everybody in Lamorinda Read the Same Book?

By **Sophie Braccini**

Susan Weaver, Linda Waldroup and Caroline Gick, Lamorinda's brilliant trio of librarians, are preparing to have our communities join Salt Lake City, Seattle, Buffalo, Anchorage, Omaha, Indianapolis, Arlington, Albuquerque, Redwood City, Brentwood, Danville, Alamo, Los Angeles and hundreds of other cities that are engaged in very successful city-reads programs. All over the United State, programs in which large numbers of people read the same book and share with their friends and neighbors have proven to be an effective way to bring people together and attract to literature those who do not usually go to the library.

The trio's first task was to pick a book. It had to be gender neutral; they wanted it related to California history, not too long and be moderately priced. "And we had to pick something that not everybody had read yet," commented the librarians. They chose *Down to a Soundless Sea*, by Thomas Steinbeck (son of John Steinbeck). The book is a collection of stories, though it is more accurately depicted as a collection of seven tales, that take place mostly in the Monterey County at the turn of the century through the 1930s. The tales are born of lore and legends that Steinbeck heard while growing up in a family circle of raconteurs. Rich in imagery and uncommon characters, the tales are memorable stories written in a forceful voice that Thomas



Steinbeck can call his own. The librarians loved the book and think it will be very well received by adults of all ages and high school students as well.

Then they tackled the funding challenge. Success for such an operation depends on how available the book is to the entire community.

Books are available for borrowing at the library, but what makes this program unique is that books will be made available in public places so people can just pick one up, read it and then return it so that a friend or neighbour can read it next. The three librarians decided to buy 600 books, 200 per city. As usual, our community organizations rose to the occasion and the budget of \$30,000 has been secured. The contributing organizations are: the Friends of the three libraries (Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda), the Lafayette Bookstore and the Orinda Bookstore, the Moraga Women's Society, the Lafayette Arts and Science Foundation, Moraga Kiwanis, the Lafayette Community Foundation, the Association of American University Women and Minteman Press.

The Lamorinda Reads kick-off is set for September 4th. Events are scheduled throughout the month of October. The discussions held at

the 3 libraries will include a children's event: "Otterly Awesome Creatures of Monterey Bay," by Gael Gallagher at the Moraga library on October 20th at 3:00 PM. The Grand Finale will be a reception/author program on October 25th at 7:30 PM in the Orinda Auditorium with author Thomas Steinbeck himself. Books that are returned will be given to local high schools.

Calendar of events:

September 4th

Kick-off, books available in libraries and point of distribution

September 9th

Whale Bus in Lafayette and Orinda

October 11th

Susan Shillinglaw 7:00 PM Moraga library

October 13th

Ruth Halpern 7:00 PM Lafayette library

October 20th

Gael Gallagher 3:00 PM Moraga library

October 25th

Thomas Steinbeck

7:30 PM Orinda Auditorium

Places to pick-up the books:

Lafayette:

Starbucks and Peet's Coffee & Tea

Orinda:

Starbucks, Caffe Teatro, Royal Ground Coffee and Peet's Coffee & Tea

Moraga:

Sisi Café, Starbucks, Curves for Women and Moraga Hardware & Lumber



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