



# Sandy Oxx

## Great Readers, Great Leaders

*We are delighted to feature book recommendations from Sandy Oxx.*

## Sandy's Bio

Our Great Leaders, Great Readers bookmark series continues with books selected by Sandy Oxx, Executive Director of the Carroll County Arts Council (CCAC).

During the 15 year period since Sandy accepted the leadership role, the Arts Council ([carrollcountyartscouncil.org](http://carrollcountyartscouncil.org)) has grown significantly. One of Sandy's first challenges was to raise funds for and oversee the renovation of the 1937 Art Deco Carroll Theatre into the beautiful Carroll Arts Center in Westminster, which celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013. The Arts Center is a community treasure, offering a wide range of art exhibits, theater productions, concerts, movies, lectures, summer camps, field trips, community art projects, and other learning opportunities.

The non-profit Arts Council also administers funds from the Maryland State Arts Council to help strengthen local art initiatives and enhance cultural opportunities. Last year the CCAC awarded 30 Community Arts Development and Education Grants to support projects throughout the County. CCAC annually provides Tevis College Art Scholarships to each high school in Carroll County, awarded to an outstanding art student pursuing a college degree in the arts. The Musical Instrument Bank started by the CCAC has paid for the cleaning and repair of more than 400 used musical instruments, so they can serve a new generation of budding musicians.

CCAC's biggest fundraiser is the annual Festival of Wreaths, celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. From November 24 – December 1, 2012, thousands of people will visit the Arts Center to admire and place bids on the 200 wreaths on display. The creative ideas and interesting materials used to make the donated wreaths never ceases to amaze the appreciative audience. Unfazed by the hectic set up before the festival, Sandy states, "My heart gets so full when the wreaths come in."

Anyone who saw September Song's 2010 Production of *Gypsy* knows that Sandy is a very talented performer. She says, "Before *Glee*, my high school was *Glee*." She performed in many shows in high school and college and graduated with a degree in music from Colorado State University. She then headed to New York City where she got a degree in Arts Management from NYU's City University of New York. Before moving to Maryland, Sandy managed the theater collection at the Museum of the City of New York and worked for the O'Neill Theatre Center, and the Rochester Museum and Science Center.

Sandy serves as treasurer of the Community Arts Alliance of Maryland, a statewide assembly of arts councils. She is on the Advisory Board of Maryland Life Magazine, and serves on the Board of the Maryland State Arts Council, which supports the work of arts organizations of all sizes through projects and grants that promote collaborations between communities and artists.

# Sandy's Picks

## ***Making the Mummies Dance: Inside the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Thomas Hoving***

Making the Mummies Dance chronicles how Thomas Hoving – almost single-handedly – revolutionized the museum world. He shook the dust off the MET and transformed it from a dusty repository of artifacts to a vibrant exciting place. He offended many along the way with his groundbreaking ideas, but he also inspired many cultural leaders in our country to take bold and fearless staff and create an interest in the arts.

## ***Bel Canto by Ann Patchett***

Since the arts are an essential part of my life, I am always drawn to books that are set in an artistic environment. This is a fascinating novel that centers around an unlikely combination—opera and terrorism. The story is mesmerizing and Patchett creates a unique cast of characters. Seeing how they react to the incredibly challenging situation in which they find themselves makes for a real page-turner. I'll be the first in line if they ever make this one into a movie!

## ***Girl in Hyacinth Blue by Susan Vreeland***

An “art themed” book, it focuses on a lovely painting, possibly by Vermeer. It starts in modern times and transports the reader back through time as it tells the story of each of the painting's various owners throughout the centuries. Those who like the combination of historical fact with a fictional story line will love this book. It is a terrific read and provides a novel approach to the study of art history.

## ***Dancing with Butterflies by Renya Grande***

I never thought a book about Latino dance traditions would captivate me as this book did. It follows several women in southern California who have nothing in common but their love of traditional Mexican dancing. Several stories are interwoven describing how these Latino women assimilated (or didn't) into the American culture, and how their love for dance was often the only thread that gave them stability in a challenging environment.

## ***Finishing the Hat by Stephen Sondheim***

Those who know me are well aware that the composer Stephen Sondheim has long been my idol. The penultimate Broadway composer, his lyrics are complex, witty and stand the test of time. His musicality is unsurpassed and shows by other composers pale in comparison to his masterpieces. I love reading about his genius talent almost as much as I enjoy his music! This book gives the reader an inside look at Sondheim's creative process.

## ***Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers by Mary Roach***

Variety is the spice of life. I don't just read books about the arts; a nonfiction selection every now and then keeps the brain active! I don't know where I got this book but I couldn't put it down. It is all about the industry of “death” from many perspectives—doctors, funeral directors, crime scene investigators, clergy, etc. Some may find it macabre, but I found it answered many “end of life” issues that I had always wondered about.

## ***The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer***

Growing up, I always moaned and groaned when my mother made me handwrite thank you letters and letters to distant relatives telling them about how I was doing in girl scouts, college, theatre, the work world etc. But she was right, letters are so very important and they are quickly becoming a lost art in this age of technology. This book tells a captivating story all through letters. The different perspectives of the writers and the recipients give the novel an amazing richness.

## ***A Dog's Purpose by W. Bruce Cameron***

It is a rarity that I find a book that both my husband and I enjoy, but this one certainly fit the bill. It was the perfect soothing balm after losing our beloved Golden Retriever Copper this summer. Cameron has an uncanny ability to “speak” from a dog's perspective and he joyfully captures their exuberance, loyalty and sweet simplicity. You'll never look at a dog in the same way after you read this book.

## ***Peace Like a River by Leif Enger***

When asked what is my favorite book, the answer is usually “the last one I read.” Peace Like a River was the most recent selection by my Book Club in Lake Langanore. It tells a riveting story that causes the reader to ponder the power of miracles, family bonds and good versus evil. The central character is a precocious 9-year old girl who is somewhat reminiscent of Scout in To Kill a Mockingbird. I encourage everyone to join a Book Club. It is a fun way to discover literature that you might not have chosen on your own. Participating in a lively discussion helps you get even more out of the book.....and you usually get wine.

## ***My Working Mom by Tedd Arnold***

I've always considered my work to be my second child. Because my job has always involved long hours and often working at night or on weekends, I missed many of my son's activities as he was growing up. This book helped to show him that jobs are important and that just because someone isn't there 24/7 doesn't mean they don't love you. I must have read it hundreds of times and I treasure my copy. Even though my son is grown, I still use this book when I'm asked to participate in reading to local school kids. Arnold's illustrations— Mom is a witch— are hilarious.

