BIBLIOPHILES
MEETING #27

Our second meeting at Spezia (11/12/14) was memorable in several ways. The pasta with salmon was wonderful, but the service was a somewhat slow. We must allow a little more time for acculturating the servers at Spezia to our routine.

Suggestions were made for revision of our book selection process to allow more research into selected titles. A volunteer selection committee was formed, with Chris Behr graciously accepting the role of convener. He offered an unparalleled incentive of meetings to be held at his house, with access to his wine cellar!!! Volunteers serving on the committee are: Sue Matson (argon@cox.net), Lee Myers (llmyers@cox.net), and David Clements (cvn59@cox.net). The committee will make book recommendations to this reporter for our March 4, 2015 discussion.

Our discussion of Paulo Coelho's bestseller THE ALCHEMIST was more disapproving than any other in my memory. The most positive comments related to the book’s look and feel: bright cover and excellent etching-like drawings; open, attractive and legible print layout on cream colored paper with rough-cut edges.

Our readers expected more out of this book than it delivered. Several reported that it was a long and tedious journey to discover “there’s no place like home”. The allegorical story of a shepherd boy's physical and spiritual quest for a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow was considered simplistic, naïve, wishful thinking, and unworthy of the
book’s marketing promotions and worldwide popularity. One reader reported that the characterization of the protagonists was thin or non-existent, and the writing style was uninteresting.

There were resonances for some readers in the story, its literary allusions and the quest theme, but many simplistic metaphors were considered unsuccessful, and the end point of the journey (buried gold) seemed trite and unworthy of the seriousness of the journey.

A Google search revealed that Mr. Coelho is extremely active on many social media promoting his book, projecting a warm and fuzzy personality as a kind of self-help guru to many youthful enthusiasts.

Two of S.R. Ranganathan’s five laws of library science are: 1) “Every reader his (or her) book, and 2) Every book its reader.

For our next meeting on January 14, we will be discussing two books with a NEBRASKA setting:  

Mari Sandoz, SON OF A GAMBLING MAN
Karen Shoemaker, THE MEANING OF NAMES

Both titles are in paperback editions and will be available at the Book Worm. Visit them in their new location in the Loveland Center on 90th St. and West Center Road. Ask Beth Black for your 20% discount offered to members of the Bibliophiles Book Club.

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