About This Year’s Book

“T’ve written an American story, a generational story. It’s about patriotism, about country.”

-Derek Miller

Norwegian by Night highlights important themes of returning from war and aging. The main character, Sheldon Horowitz, an ex-marine, eighty-two year old retired watch repairman warily agrees to immigrate to Norway from New York City to live with his granddaughter and her husband. Sheldon’s world is turned upside down when he witnesses a heinous crime and goes on the lam with a five-year-old child.

To find Reading Across Rhode Island programs in your area, go to ribook.org.

This booklet presents resources the Reading Across Rhode Island committee has gathered to enrich and expand the reading. Reading Across Rhode Island is a program of The Rhode Island Center for the Book at the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. The Rhode Island Center for the Book is a statewide organization devoted to promoting personal and community enrichment by celebrating the art and heritage of reading, writing, making and sharing books. Through a variety of programs and activities, the Center promotes a love for books among people of all ages and backgrounds across Rhode Island.

Our programs would not be possible without the support of our sponsors, partners and affiliates:

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Welcome to the 13th year of READING ACROSS RHODE ISLAND!

Reading Across Rhode Island, the statewide community read, kicks off its 13th year with Norwegian by Night by Derek Miller. Reading Across Rhode Island is a project of the Rhode Island Center for the Book, made possible through a vibrant collaboration of librarians, teachers, book group leaders and readers from across the State.

The 2015 program runs from January to May with readers in Rhode Island classrooms, libraries, and bookstores joining discussions and participating in lectures, art exhibits, poetry readings and dramatic interpretations focused on this year’s selection.

Senator Jack Reed serves as the program’s Honorary Chair.

GET THE BOOK

Pick up a copy of Norwegian by Night at your local public library or bookstore and start up a conversation with your family, friends, coworkers, or even the person sitting next to you as you ride the bus. This is your chance to take a moment to have a great conversation with an old friend or to make a new one.

JOIN IN

Join thousands of Rhode Islanders at one of the many book discussions and related programs around the state from January to May.

If you’re out and about, you might find copies of Norwegian by Night in unexpected places. Our wandering books appear in public spaces such as parks, buses, malls and doctor’s offices. If you find a copy, it’s yours for a short time. Register the book online and see how far it travels (instructions are included in the book), read it, review it and release it for someone else to enjoy.

About the Author

Derek Miller is the director of the Policy Lab and a senior fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. Born and raised in Boston, he has lived abroad for over fifteen years, in Norway, Switzerland, Israel and England.
Why does he decide to call the boy Paul?
Both Sheldon and the murder victim have saved some graphic photographs. What do they depict? Why does Envers want them?
Discuss the last conversation Sheldon had with Saul. Is his guilt over Saul’s death warranted?
Map the journey – Follow Sheldon’s attempt to reach the cabin using a Map of Norway.

Further Reading
• John Steinbeck’s The Moon is Down. A fictional account of the German Occupation of a small town in Northern Europe.


1. At the end of chapter 17, Sheldon tells young Rhea “being conceived in indifference but raised in love is better than the inverse.” Discuss the family ties that are woven throughout Norwegian by Night. How do they compare to the bonds experienced in your own family?
2. The novel is shaped by generations of warfare, from Hitler’s invasions to America’s campaigns in Korea and Vietnam to the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Ultimately, what do these story lines tell us about the nature of war? What determines whether its victims will seek peace or vengeance?
3. Do Sheldon and Rhea experience Judaism in the same way? How does Sheldon’s Jewish identity affect his sense of legacy as he copes with the aging process?
4. Discuss Norway as if it were a character in the novel. How does the landscape both beautiful and treacherous reflect the storytelling? Is Norway a naive utopia that will eventually succumb to the Envers of the world, or is it a shrewd stronghold that lives up to its Viking history?
5. What is the essential root of Enver’s power? Is his quest for his son driven entirely by his ego? What keeps Burim from breaking free, despite Adrijana’s pleas?
6. How did you interpret Sheldon’s conversations with Bill? How do his memories of Bill and Mario surpass the bonds he has with his family? Do “ghosts” who deliver encouragement and good advice during trying circumstances ever aid you?
7. How does Sheldon’s former life as a sniper shape the way he sees the world?
8. At the end of chapter 16, as Saul searches for meaning in the aftermath of his tour of duty, what accounts for the differences between the way he and Sheldon see the role of an American soldier? Why does Saul reenlist?

9. How does Lars’s view of the world compare with Rhea’s? What makes them an unlikely yet compatible couple?

10. What gives Sheldon the ingenuity and stamina to outwit the police and Enver? In his attempts to protect the boy, what unfinished business from his own life is he pursuing?

11. What do Sigrid and Petter discover about their homeland while the case unfolds? What are their best assets as investigators?

12. Discuss the novel’s title and the way it captures the expatriate experience. What do the novel’s immigrants hope to gain from a life in Norway? How does the boy’s disguise—a costume of stereotypes—capture the expat experience?

13. How were you affected by reading some of the scenes from Sheldon’s seemingly lucid point of view, followed by evidence of his dementia? How does this help us experience the gray areas of memory and reality?

14. Without words, Sheldon’s photographs speak volumes. What do you think they say? In the end, what does it take for him to make peace with his past?

15. As you watched the boy throughout the novel, what did you discover about the way humanity’s struggles look through the eyes of a child?

BOOKS ON RELATED THEMES FOR ADULTS

Compiled by Cheryl Stein, Rogers Free Library

FICTION

Vietnam War –

**The Things They Carried**
by Tim O’Brien

A classic work of American literature that has not stopped changing minds and lives since it burst onto the literary scene, *The Things They Carried* is a ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling.

**Matterhorn: A Novel of the Vietnam War**
by Karl Marlantes

High in the mountains of South Vietnam, a young lieutenant is flown to an isolated, anonymous hill between Laos and the DMZ where a company of Marines is building a fire-support base. It is his first day in the jungle.

**Tree of Smoke**
by Denis Johnson (National Book Award 2007)

This is the story of Skip Sands—spy-in-training, engaged in Psychological Operations against the Vietcong—and the disasters that befall him thanks to his famous uncle.

Korean War –

**The Coldest Night**
by Robert Olmstead

Henry Childs is just seventeen when he falls into a love affair so intense it nearly destroys him. To escape the wrath of the young girl’s father, Henry joins the Marines, arriving in Korea on the eve of the brutal battle of the Chosin Reservoir—the defining moment of the Korean War.

**The Marines of Autumn**
by James Brady

When USMC Captain Thomas Verity is called back to action, he must leave his Georgetown home, career, and young daughter and rush to Korea to monitor Chinese radio transmissions. At first acting in an advisory role, he is abruptly thrust into MacArthur’s last daring and disastrous foray - the Chosin Reservoir campaign

**The Bridges at Toko-ri**
by James Brady

Young and innocent, they came to a place they had barely heard of, prepared for war. They were American fighter pilots, trained but frightened, facing an enemy they couldn’t understand, and waging a war they had to win....

**The Good Man**
by Edward Jae-Suk Lee

A lyrically evocative, haunting first novel follows an aged Korean War vet and drifter as he returns to the bittersweet Montana home of his youth.

Norwegian Authors –

**Out Stealing Horses**
by Per Petterson

This novel tells the story of Trond Sander, a sixty-seven-year-old man who has moved from the city to a remote, riverside cabin, only to have all the turbulence, grief, and overwhelming beauty of his youth come back to him one night while he’s out on a walk.

**The Cold Song**
by Linn Ullmann

Some years after the disappearance of a young woman, three boys uncover her body during a treasure hunt out in the woods of Norway. *The Cold Song* centers itself on the individual lives of a small family and the murder of this woman, their babysitter, Milla.

**I222: A Hanne Wilhelmsen Novel**
by Anne Holt (First in the series)

A suspenseful locked-room mystery set in an isolated hotel in Norway, where guests stranded during a monumental snowstorm start turning up dead.

**The Bat by Jo Nesbo** (The first in the Harry Hole series)

Inspector Harry Hole of the Oslo Crime Squad is dispatched to Sydney to observe a murder case. Harry is free to offer assistance, but he has firm instructions to stay out of trouble.
Eva’s Eye by Karin Fossum (The first in the Inspector Sejer series)
Investigating the murder of a man who had been missing for months, Inspector Sejer and his team discover that his death is linked to the murder of a prostitute and to Eva, a struggling artist who holds the key to solving both murders.

NON-FICTION

Non-Fiction Suggestions based on identified themes from Norwegian by Night compiled by Jane Granatino, Barrington Public Library

Remembering the Music, Forgetting the Words: Travels with Mom in the Land of Dementia
by Kate Whouley
Kate Whouley is a smart, single woman who faces life head-on. Her mother, Anne, is a strong-minded accidental feminist with a weakness for unreliable men. Their complicated relationship isn’t simplified when Anne exhibits symptoms of organic memory loss. As Kate becomes her mother’s advocate and protector, she will discover that the demon we call Alzheimer’s is also an unlikely teacher— and healer.

Vikings: Life and Legend
This book explores Viking culture from a global perspective, examining the influences of their varied contacts from around the world and how Viking Scandinavia drew from both Christian Europe and the Islamic world. Vikings accompanies a major exhibition developed jointly by the British Museum, the National Museum of Denmark, and the Museum for Prehistory and Early History in Berlin. Edited by the exhibition curators Gareth Williams, Peter Pentz, and Matthias Wemhoff, the book draws on a wealth of Viking objects to provide a rich and vivid account of the impact of Viking expansion throughout the world.

Song of the Vikings: Snorri and The Making of Norse myths
by Nancy Marie Brown
In Song of the Vikings, Brown brings to life the intrigue and power struggles at the court of medieval Reykjavík that a twelfth-century Icelandic chieftain by the name of Snorri Sturluson wrote down. Like Homer, Snorri was a bard, embellishing the folklore and pagan legends of medieval Scandinavia. Drawing on new and original research, her deep knowledge of Icelandic history, and first-hand reading of the original medieval sources, Brown produces a richly textured narrative of a world that continues to fascinate.

Norwegian Folk Art: The Migration of a Tradition, Marion Nelson, ed.
The rich history of these beautiful and functional objects— fanciful wood carvings, tableware and furniture with rosemaling, the snowflake patterns of Norwegian knitting, and costumes with white Hardanger embroidery — dates as far back as the Middle Ages. This is the most comprehensive study of such varied factors as art historical traditions and influences, the social and economic background that encouraged each of these arts, Norwegian symbolism, traditional costume, and emigration to the United States and its influence on the arts.

Edvard Grieg: The Man and The Artist
by Finn Benestad
Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) is known to every music lover for his Peer Gynt suite, piano concerto, and arrangements of folk songs. Edvard Grieg: The Man and the Artist sets the Norwegian composer’s life and career in the context of his times and casts new light on the origin and musical significance of many of his compositions. The text is accompanied by a parallel column of primary materials—documents and musical examples—and is lavishly illustrated.

Voices From the Korean War: Personal Stories of American, Korean, and Chinese Soldiers
by Richard Peters and Xiaobing Li
Unique in gathering war stories from veterans from all sides of the Korean War — American, South Korean, North Korean, and Chinese — this volume creates a vivid and multidimensional portrait of the three-year-long conflict told by those who experienced the ground war firsthand. Richard Peters and Xiaobing Li include a significant introduction that provides a concise history of the Korean conflict, as well as a geographical and a political backdrop for the soldiers’ personal stories.

Blue-Eyed Boy: A Memoir
by Robert Timberg
In January 1967, Robert Timberg was a short-timer, counting down the days until his combat tour ended. He had thirteen days to go before he got to go back home to his wife in Southern California. That homecoming would eventually happen, but not in thirteen days, and not as the person he once was. The moment his vehicle struck a Vietcong land mine divided his life into before and after. He survived, barely, with third-degree burns over his face and much of his body. It would have been easy to give up. Instead, Robert Timberg began an arduous and uncertain struggle back—not just to physical recovery, but to a life of meaning.

Gudrun’s Kitchen: Recipes from a Norwegian Family
by Irene O. Sandvold, Edward O. Sandvold, Quinn E. Sandvold and Ingeborg Hydle Baugh
Part cookbook, part immigrant story, and part family memoir, Gudrun’s Kitchen features hundreds of Gudrun Sandvold’s recipes for comfort food from a time when families and friends gathered at the table and connected with one another every single day. But this book is much more than a guide to Norwegian culinary traditions; it is an important contribution to immigrant history and a vital documentation of our nation’s multicultural heritage.

Photography: The Definitive Visual History
by Tom Ang
From the dawn of photography to the digital age, Photography is a beautiful lavishly illustrated reference book tracing the history of photography from its origins in the 1800s to the global phenomenon of digital photography. Photography celebrates the most iconic photos and profiles more than 50 of the most famous photographers of the past 200 years, showcasing incredible photographs while telling the story of how they came into being.
The Nobel Prize: A History of Genius, Controversy, and Prestige
by Burton Feldman

The Nobel Prizes are the most coveted and most potent awards of our time, trumpeted in the media and conferring immediate prestige on their recipients. Yet the selection process and the reverberations of the awards within their disciplines or in the larger culture have seldom been examined. Independent scholar Feldman fills the gap with his chronicle of the origins and evolution of the annual prizes, asking: Are blue ribbons, no matter how exalted, relevant to intellectual or artistic or even peace work?

The Fellowship of Ghosts: Travels in the Land of Midnight Sun
by Paul Watkins

Certain geographies speak to people. The effect of landscape on human consciousness is at the heart of novelist Paul Watkins’s exhilarating travel story. Long bewitched by the stark beauty of the Scandinavian Alps, Watkins sets off among the ice-clad peaks and dark fjords of the arctic with only a tent and rucksack. On the way, he stops at rustic inns, follows the paths of other solitary travelers, navigates the punishing weather, and confronts the magisterial presence of the past among these mountains—a journey that makes for one of our finest accounts of the life and the land in the frozen north.

FILMS

Compiled by Louise Moulton, Providence Public Library

Kon Tiki, 2012: Legendary explorer Thor Heyerdal’s epic 4,300-mile crossing of the Pacific on a balsa wood raft in 1947, in an effort to prove that it was possible for South Americans to settle in Polynesia in pre-Columbian times.

Directors: Joachim Ronning, Espen Sandberg
PG-13, 118 minutes

Windjammer – The Voyage of the Christian Radich: Windjammer, the first presentation in CINEMIRACLE, is the record of a training cruise of the full-rigged S/S Christian Radich from Oslo across the Atlantic, through the Caribbean, to New York and back home again. 1958

Post-Impressionists – Edward Munch
From Kultur’s Great Artists comes the Post-Impressionists video series. Post-Impressionists: Munch explores the haunting images created by Norwegian painter Edvard Munch. Probably best known for his piece The Scream, Munch’s darkly themed works were largely influenced by the deaths of his mother and sister from tuberculosis. 2001, 50 minutes

VIDEOS

Following the Samm Reindeer Herders in Norway as they follow the effects of the Warming Tundra
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcmASa-OYto

Rick Steve’s Norway’s West: Fjords, Mountains and Bergen;

Rick Steve’s Oslo:
https://www.ricksteves.com/watch-read-listen/video/tv-show/oslo

Travel Guide: Norway’s Top Attractions:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Js5U0yk2bk

The Tangaroa Expedition: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29waAjmbO2w

BOOKS ON RELATED THEMES FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Compiled by Dr. Joan Glazer, Professor Emerita, RI College
October, 2014

Adem’s Cross
by Alice Mead, 1998.

After Adem, an Albanian, sees his sister shot to death for reading a poem against Serbian control of Kosovo, he feels a secret guilt that he might have prevented her death.

After the Rain

Rachel, at fifteen, only gets to really know her blunt and taciturn grandfather after he has been diagnosed with cancer but the relationship brings her to a better understanding of her family.

The Day of the Pelican
by Katherine Paterson, 2009.

Mali, a thirteen-year-old Albanian girl living in Kosovo, is driven with her family from her home by the Serbs, living first in a refugee camp and then immigrating to the United States. Basic background is presented early in the book and historical notes are included at the end.

East of the Sun and West of the Moon: Twenty-one Norwegian Folk Tales edited and illustrated by Ingr and Edgar Parin d’Aulaire, 1969.

The classic tales in this collection were first written down by Norwegian scholars Asbjørnsen and Moe in the mid 19th century, then translated by Dasent, with both editions being used by the d’Aulaires in their retellings.

Girl of Kosovo

When Serbian militiamen kill her father and brothers, Zana, a young Albanian girl, remembers her father’s wish that she not let her heart be filled with hate.

The Graduation of Jake Moon
by Barbara Park, 2000.

Jake responds to his grandfather’s Alzheimer’s disease first with shame, then with guilt over his feelings and finally with acceptance of his conflicting reactions.

Into the Dark: an Echo Falls Mystery
by Peter Abrahams, 2008.

After Grampy is arrested for murder, Ingrid searches for clues to establish his innocence and in the process learns of her grandfather's heroic actions as a soldier in the second World War.
**More About Boy: Roald Dahl’s Tales from Childhood**  
Three chapters in this memoir (Going to Norway, The Magic Island, and A Visit to the Doctor pp. 59-78) focus on memories of childhood summers that Dahl, born in Wales to Norwegian parents, spent in Norway with his mother’s family.

**Norway**  
This non-fiction book, part of the YA Modern World Nations series, includes color maps and illustrations as well as information about the geography, history, economics and history of Norway.

**Shadow on the Mountain**  
by Margi Preus, 2012.
After Norway has been invaded by Nazi Germany, fourteen-year-old Espen joins the Resistance movement, beginning by delivering illegal newspapers and eventually becoming a spy.

**Stand Tall**  
by Joan Bauer, 2002.
Tree finds that his Vietnam veteran grandfather has the wisdom, insight and humor to help him adjust to living in two households after his parents divorce.

**Sun and Moon, Ice and Snow**  
by Jessica Day George, 2008.
In this adapted and expanded traditional Norwegian tale, Lass accepts the offer of a great white bear to live in his ice palace for a year and a day in exchange for wealth for her family, but soon becomes aware of sinister undertones.

Set in 1995, with flashbacks to 1945, fifteen-year-old Tamar, grief stricken over the death of her beloved grandfather, gradually uncovers the secrets of his life in the Dutch resistance and the events that had cast a shadow on his life and that of his family.

**The Troll with No Heart in his Body and Other Tales of Trolls from Norway** retold by Lise Lunge-Larsen, 1999.
Based on the tales collected by Peter Christian Asbjornsen and Jorgen Moe, these nine stories are also accompanied by brief but interesting author notes.

**West of the Moon**  
by Margi Preus, 2014.
Astri, a very capable Norwegian girl in the mid-nineteenth century, escapes from her goatherd captor, retrieves her sister, and heads across fields and mountains in order to emigrate to the United States.

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**Nominate the Next Reading Across Rhode Island Book!**

**Deadline: May 18, 2015**

The general criteria for book selection includes:
• A good story with a universal theme  
• Appealing to a wide range of readers, from age 14 and up  
• Accessible in language and content  
• Available in different formats (i.e., paperback, audio, Braille)  
• Written by an author who is available to visit and speak with Rhode Islanders about the book  
• Over time, the titles selected should reflect diversity in content, culture and genre

**Title & Author:**

__________________________

Or email your book nomination to kate@ribook.org.