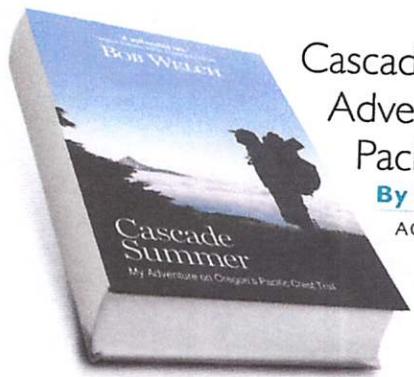


Book Club

BY EMILY GROSVENOR



Cascade Summer: My Adventure on Oregon's Pacific Crest Trail

By Bob Welch

AO CREATIVE, SEPTEMBER 2012

No great life crisis precedes writer Bob Welch's decision to hike the entire Oregon section of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), just a simple question of personal strength, stamina, and fortitude: Can I do it?

The resulting book, *Cascade Summer: My Adventure on Oregon's Pacific Crest Trail*, offers an at times funny and mostly straightforward recounting of the beloved local author's two-week hike through the deep woods and perilous mountains, as well as his tender memories of the state.

Welch, a native Oregonian who has written a column for *The Register-Guard* since 1999 about the people and places of Lane County, was 57 when he embarked upon the swath of the PCT sometimes called the "Green Tunnel" for its long stretches of wooded trails.

"The first lesson of long-distance hiking is to go even when your body says no," Welch writes.

Welch gives *Cascade Summer* its sturdy backbone of great love and admiration for the state by weaving into the travelogue a historical account by Judge John Breckenridge Waldo, an early Oregon environmentalist who helped preserve the Cascade Range. He also immerses himself in trail culture—he and trail companion Glenn dub themselves the Oregon Boys—even while feeling a little old for the forced subculture of it all.

Always self-effacing and gifted with an eye for the comic, Welch shows again and again it doesn't take a superhuman to traverse some of the state's most treacherous backcountry trails, just someone open to the challenge and prepared for the thrills and, more often, the sheer mundanity of a great walk in the woods.

The Orchardist

By Amanda Coplin

HARPER, AUGUST 2012

First-time novelist Amanda Coplin does many things well in her expertly paced, gorgeously evocative debut *The Orchardist*: create a sumptuous setting for tragedy, watch that tragedy play out over many decades, and do it all with deep feeling and understanding for a group of very damaged characters.

Set on an apple and apricot orchard at the turn of the 20th century, *The Orchardist* tells the story of William Talmadge, a quiet middle-aged homesteader with a sad backstory who ekes out a solitary existence marked only by the turning of the seasons. One day, two visibly pregnant teenagers sneaking into his orchard to steal fruit. In resplendent passages that show the way trust builds slowly between strangers, Coplin shows how Talmadge steps in to take care of them. But they are disturbed people, not feral cats. In just a few weeks, as the girls' past catches up with them, one of those teenagers will be dead and Talmadge will be set on a course that creates both chaos and meaning as he is left to care for her child.

Coplin, who grew up on an orchard in Wenatchee, Washington, writes like a dream, moving confidently and wisely between characters as she builds tension across space and time in description so elegant it can make the violence of the book seem almost bearable. She captures the vernacular of the West—its hardscrabble pioneers, solitary horsemen, and derelict villains—while letting each character ripen, or rot, as they are meant to.

Under Wildwood: The Wildwood Chronicles

By Colin Meloy

BALZER + BRAY, SEPTEMBER 2012

Decemberists lead singer Colin Meloy's young adult fantasy *Wildwood* gets even better in the rousing second book of the series, *Under Wildwood*, as he channels his love of Portland culture, gift for storytelling, and a keen sense of global politics.

The series' second book catches up with its heroine, Prue McKeel, newly returned to her humdrum home life but drawn

