

**RPCVs of Madison Book Club List
October 2009–October 2010**

Date	Title/Author /Excerpt	Region	Host
10/25/09	<p>No.1 Ladies Detective Agency, Alexander McCall Smith*</p> <p><i>This is the first in a series of gentle mysteries. Precious Ramotswe operates in Botswana, running an agency where the solving of the ‘mystery’ is often secondary to the exploration of family, customs and alternate methods of justice.</i></p>	Botswana	Darlene
11/22/09	<p>A House in Fes: Building a life in the ancient heart of Morocco, Suzanna Clarke</p> <p><i>The Medina -- the Old City -- of Fez is the best-preserved, medieval walled city in the world. Inside this vibrant Moroccan community, internet cafes and mobile phones coexist with a maze of donkey-trod alleyways, thousand-year-old sewer systems, and Arab-style houses, gorgeous with intricate, if often shabby, mosaic work. While vacationing in Morocco, Suzanna Clarke and her husband, Sandy, are inspired to buy a dilapidated, centuries-old riad in Fez with the aim of restoring it to its original splendor, using only traditional craftsmen and handmade materials.</i></p>	Morocco	Char
DECEMBER – WE ARE SKIPPING THIS MONTH DUE TO THE HOLIDAYS			
1/24/10	<p>Dark Star Safari, Paul Theroux</p> <p><i>Dark Star Safari is a rich and insightful book whose itinerary is Africa, from Cairo to Cape Town: down the Nile, through Sudan and Ethiopia, to Kenya, Uganda, and ultimately to the tip of South Africa. Going by train, dugout canoe, "chicken bus," and cattle truck, Theroux passes through some of the most beautiful — and often life-threatening — landscapes on earth.</i></p>	Africa	Helen
2/28/10	<p>Ghengis Khan: The Making of the Modern World, Jack Weatherford</p> <p><i>An interesting, thought-provoking account of the conqueror's life and legacy. From his early years as the son of a widow abandoned by her clan, he showed remarkable ability as a charismatic leader and unifier. In 25 years, his army amassed a greater empire than the Romans had been able to achieve in 400.</i></p>	Mongolia	Clare

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3/21/10	<p>Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes and the greatest race the world has never seen, Christopher McDougall <i>Isolated by the most savage terrain in North America, the reclusive Tarahumara Indians of Mexico's deadly Copper Canyons are custodians of a lost art. For centuries they have practiced techniques that allow them to run hundreds of miles without rest and chase down anything from a deer to an Olympic marathoner while enjoying every mile of it. Their superhuman talent is matched by uncanny health and serenity, leaving the Tarahumara immune to the diseases and strife that plague modern existence. With the help of Caballo Blanco, a mysterious loner who lives among the tribe, the author was able not only to uncover the secrets of the Tarahumara but also to find his own inner ultra-athlete, as he trained for the challenge of a lifetime: a fifty-mile race through the heart of Tarahumara country.</i></p>	Mexico	Char
4/25/10	<p>Persepolis, Marjane Satrapi* <i>Marijane's years as a girl growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution are the focus of this graphic novel. Satrapi's style is minimalist; her young self is charming and defiant.</i></p>	Iran	Mary Ann
5/23/10	<p>Mountains Beyond Mountains, Tracy Kidder <i>As a specialist in infectious diseases, Farmer's goal is nothing less than redressing the "steep gradient of inequality" in medical service to the desperately poor. His work establishing a complex of public health facilities on the central plateau of Haiti forms the keystone to efforts that now encompass initiatives on three continents.</i></p>	Haiti	Judy
6/27/10	<p>River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze River, Peter Hessler <i>In 1996, 26-year-old Peter Hessler arrived in Fuling, a town on China's Yangtze River, to begin a two-year Peace Corps stint as a teacher at the local college. Expecting a calm couple of years, Hessler at first does not realize the social, cultural, and personal implications of being thrust into a such radically different society.</i></p>	China	

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7/25/10	<p>Caravans, James Michener <i>In this romantic adventure of wild Afghanistan, master storyteller James Michener mixes the allure of the past with the dangers of today. After an impetuous American girl, Ellen Jasper, marries a young Afghan engineer, her parents hear no word from her. Although she wants freedom to do as she wishes, not even she is sure what that means.</i></p>	Afghanistan	
8/22/10	<p>American Taboo: A Murder in the Peace Corps, Philip Weiss <i>On October 4, 1976, a brutal murder shocked the tiny island nation of Tonga. A young Peace Corps volunteer had been stabbed 22 times; another volunteer was identified at the scene, but despite the damning evidence against him, Dennis Priven was never convicted of any crime.</i></p>	Tonga	Darlene
9/26/10	<p>The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity, Michael Maren <i>Before you mail another check to Save the Children or join the Peace Corps, read this book. Michael Maren shows that the international aid industry is a big business more concerned with winning its next big government contract than helping needy people. The problem isn't a lack of charity missions in the Third World, but that the best intentions of these idealists are often inadvertently destructive, thanks to a deadly combination of their naiveté and the willingness of native elites to exploit them. Maren spent many years in Africa living this life. This is a splendid, literate, muckraking memoir of his experiences.</i></p>	Worldwide	
10/24/10	<p>The Places in Between, Rory Stewart <i>In January 2002, having just spent 16 months walking across Iran, Pakistan, India, and Nepal, Stewart began a walk across Afghanistan from Herat to Kabul. Although the Taliban had been ousted several weeks earlier, Stewart was launching a journey through a devastated, unsettled, and unsafe landscape. The recounting of that journey makes for an engrossing, surprising, and often deeply moving portrait of the land and the peoples who inhabit it.</i></p>	Afghanistan	

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