

There are plenty of the classic novels to go around

Once heard it said that "talent is temporary, but genius forever." This quote seemed befitting of my thoughts following a long overdue reading of "The Agony and the Ecstasy: A Novel of Michelangelo" by Irving Stone. As perhaps the single worst artist ever to walk the earth, it was easy for me to appreciate the genius of Michelangelo. As a reader, I am encouraged that there are far more pieces of great literature like "The Agony and the Ecstasy" than I will ever be able to read.



Jeff Friesen, Library Link

• Pioneer Memorial Library director

In a day and age where many authors are churning out books like sausage in a sausage factory, the shelf-life of even the most "talented" authors seems to be dwindling. However, it is encouraging to know that there will always be plenty of time-tested classics produced by the literary "geniuses" of our world just waiting to be read. I wonder what contemporary literature we will view as "classics" in 50 years. Then again, perhaps it will take 50 years to see the genius of our contemporary authors.

plete odds with one another. Keating will do what it takes to please his customer and quickly finds success in New York as an architect. Roark, though Keating's equal and much more innovative, has a single-mindedness that is without compromise. His success is, at least initially, quite the opposite of what Keating has achieved. However, through his persistence and his willingness to stay true to himself, Roark is compensated during his architectural career with a reward much more satisfying than money.

Speaking of compensation, what do Bill and Melinda Gates have in common besides a marriage and lots of money? They are both fascinated with the book "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald. How ironic you might think that one of the major themes of "The Great Gatsby" is the corrupting influence of money. Wouldn't it be interesting and maybe a little paradoxical to find out that this book was in some way an inspiration for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the single largest philanthropic entity in

the world. If you missed it in high school, read in this book about the life and tragedy of the mysterious Jay Gatsby.

Just a guess at this point, but my top picks for contemporary giant authors in a few select genres include Stephen King for horror, Tom Clancy for political thrillers, J.K. Rowling for young adult/fantasy, and Stephen Ambrose for historical non-fiction. I'm sure many of you also have an opinion on this matter which I would love to hear. I'm sorry though, that I cannot accept Janet Evanovich or Kitty Kelley as legitimate contenders for giant author of the 21st century.

Read a classic and enjoy your week. Pioneer Memorial Library is located at 375 West Fourth and open seven days a week. Summer hours are as follows: Monday through Wednesday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Thursday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 p.m.-4 p.m. For more information contact the library at 460-4470 or visit our Web site at www.colbylibrary.com. As always, we are here to serve you.

Morning-after pill advocates declare partial victory

WASHINGTON (AP) — Proponents of allowing nonprescription access to the morning-after pill vowed to continue pressing for unrestricted sales of the emergency contraceptive after the government agreed to allow pharmacy sales to women 18 and over without a doctor's order.

Thursday's ruling by the Food and Drug Administration represents a compromise in a three-year battle over easing restrictions on the drug, which has been available only by prescription since 1999. The drug's manufacturer, joined by some lawmakers and medical groups, want the pills made available without a prescription to all ages.

For now, the FDA still will require girls 17 and younger to get a prescription to buy the pills, called Plan B. Beginning later this year, women — and men buying for their partners — who are 18 and older may buy the pill without a prescription.

Advocates long have argued that easier access could halve the nation's 3 million annual unplanned pregnancies, reducing in turn the number of abortions. The compromise decision will hinder that goal, they said.

"While we are glad to know the FDA finally ended its foot-dragging on this issue, Planned Parenthood is troubled by the scientifically baseless restriction imposed on teenagers,"

Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards said. "The U.S. has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy in the Western world. Anything that makes it harder for teenagers to avoid unintended pregnancy is bad medicine and bad public policy."

An estimated 41 countries allow emergency contraceptives to be sold without a prescription, Planned Parenthood said. It wasn't immediately clear how many, if any, have age restrictions.

U.S. opponents worry that greater availability of the pills will increase promiscuity and promote use of the pills by sexual predators.

"If the FDA thinks that enacting an age restriction will work, or that the drug company will enforce it... then they are living in a dream world," said Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America, which led the opposition.

As a condition of approval, the drug's manufacturer, Barr Pharmaceuticals Inc., agreed to use anonymous shoppers and other methods to check whether pharmacists are enforcing the age restriction.

"I'm sure the FDA will follow through on that and make sure these important conditions are established and enforced," said White House spokeswoman Dana Perino.

Barr hasn't said what the non-prescription pills will cost when

they go on sale, perhaps as early as November. They now cost \$25 to \$40 in prescription form.

The pills will be sold only from behind the counter at pharmacies, not at convenience stores or gas stations. Pharmacists will check photo identification.

Plan B contains a concentrated dose of the same drug found in many regular birth control pills.

If a woman takes Plan B within 72 hours of unprotected sex, she can lower the risk of pregnancy by up to 89 percent. Plan B is different from the abortion pill: If a woman already is pregnant, Plan B has no effect.

The FDA's long delay in deciding on Barr's application enshrined President Bush's nominee to head the regulatory agency, Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach. Following the FDA's announcement Thursday, Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., and Patty Murray, D-Wash., said they would lift their block on the nomination, making it likely von Eschenbach will win confirmation as FDA chief, perhaps next month.

That won't settle the drawn-out Plan B controversy. The Center for Reproductive Rights said a lawsuit filed last year to do away with all age restrictions would continue.

Food and Drug Administration: <http://www.fda.gov/>

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