

Morsels For the Mind Book Group

Date: September 16, 2019

Book Title: Bettyville by George Hodgman

Hostess: Nancy Schellenberg

Food Served: Dijon Baked Gouda, Artichoke Bean Dip with roasted red peppers, Grandma's cucumber salad, Tomato Zucchini Gratin, Country Club Shrimp Cocktail, Peach-Cherry Brown Betty, and assorted chocolates. Coffee, tea, wine, and soda rounded out the menu.

Book Synopsis: George leaves NYC to care for his mother, Betty, who lives in Paris, Missouri. George, a gay recovering addict, has lost his job, and is an unlikely caregiver. This pair clashes, love each other, and keep lifelong secrets. Betty is strong willed, taciturn, failing, and George has his hands full.

Review: Most of us liked the book. Some disliked that there was no resolution at the end. We agreed that it was both humorous and heart wrenching, and that their relationship was fraught from the start.

Bettyville was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award.

Highlights of Discussion: We viewed the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MOCA) which my mom recently took. I was unable to find recent information about George, but Google informed us that he died by suicide in July, and we were sad to learn that.

Attendance: Everyone! Nancy McQuate missed our discussion but arrived during dessert.

Suggestions/Business: We discussed that we seem to have a pattern of recent books in which family disfunction is a central theme, and agreed to be mindful of that when selecting next year's books.