

Flight club

Novel explores the lives of members of the Women Airforce Service Pilots

by JUDY GELMAN and VICKI LEVY KRUPP

Costco's suggested Book Club read provides insight into a selected novel, as well as an appropriate recipe (or two) to accompany your own book club's discussion.

Audrey Coltrane, the protagonist of Noelle Salazar's first novel, *The Flight Girls*, dreams of owning an airfield. It's an unusual ambition for a young woman born to a wealthy Texas oil family, especially in 1941, but Audrey has always loved to fly.

As a teen she earned a pilot's license and ran crop-dusting missions. When World War II nears America's shores, Audrey applies her skills and bravery to the war effort, eventually securing a place in the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), an elite group of female flyers who test warplanes and ferry them to military bases throughout the country.

Although she has written off marriage and motherhood as too confining, Audrey's blossoming friendship with Lieutenant James Hart, and the separation they endure, test her resolve to avoid love and commitment.

To enhance your discussion of this book, Salazar suggests a 1940s dress-up party, or a hat or accessory party. "Each member could research a different aspect of the era and bring a list of common jobs women held if they—gasp—worked outside the home, what women studied at college, common slang terms, popular names, bathing suit and clothing styles, hairstyles, popular songs and food," she says. "Everyone [should] wear a pearl



Noelle Salazar

SHARICE SALAZAR

necklace or a headscarf or snood."

Salazar goes on to explain that her heroine enjoys the camaraderie of a group of spirited female pilots. At a local restaurant with live music, Audrey orders a gin rickey, "a drink that captures the fun, lively, effervescent feeling I'd want book club members to have while discussing my brave pilots," Salazar tells the *Connection* from her home in the Pacific Northwest.

Salazar suggests serving this classic drink—made with gin, lime juice and club soda—at your book club meeting. She says, "Audrey was surrounded by feisty, fearless women. They would have gabbed while sipping cocktails and munching on easy classics: finger sandwiches, veggies and dips, meatballs or tomato soup." ■

Judy Gelman and Vicki Levy Krupp are behind the website and cookbook *The Book Club Cookbook* (bookclubcookbook.com).

COSTCO CONNECTION

The Flight Girls (Item #1351662; 7/2) is available in most Costco warehouses.



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Gin Rickey

Serve without the gin and you'll have a delicious Lime Rickey.

½ fresh lime
2 oz gin
6 oz club soda

Fill a highball glass with ice cubes. Squeeze lime juice into the glass and drop the lime into the glass. Add gin. Top off with club soda, and stir. Makes 1 cocktail.

To learn more about the Women Airforce Service Pilots, author Noelle Salazar suggests visiting the National WASP WWII Museum (wasmuseum.org), located near the original Avenger Field, home of the WASP program in Sweetwater, Texas, and Seattle's Museum of Flight (museumofflight.org), which inspired *The Flight Girls*.

She also recommends the book *Yankee Doodle Gals*, by Amy Nathan (National Geographic, 2001; not available at Costco).—JG and VLK

