

## Bethlehem's February Book-of-the-Month

Bethlehem's February book-of-the-month *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. I skipped from juvenile fiction right to adult fiction at about age 14. Back then, as now, I just want a well written book with an interesting plot and good character development; the thicker the better. Since I discovered the first Harry Potter book, I have enjoyed reading occasional young adult (YA) fiction. If you haven't read any YA books in the last dozen years, I highly recommend you check out the YA section in the public library. You may be surprised by the quality of the writing you find there.

I heard about *The Absolute True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie when he was interviewed on public radio shortly after the release of his book. This National Book Award Winner book is one of the best books I've ever read. The semiautobiographical novel is told in the first person by Arnold Spirit, a fifteen year old boy living on the Spokane Indian reservation. Heads up; it contains some mildly crude content typical of the average fifteen year old male but this language is infrequent and non gratuitous.

The title relates to Arnold's decision to leave the reservation school and attend the neighboring all-white public school. Subjects in the book include family, culture, friendship, alcoholism, basketball, poverty, death, and hope. Arnold's story is told with humor though it doesn't downplay his pain from poverty and the alcoholism around him. I highly recommend this book to students and staff at the NDSCS library where I work. I hope you enjoy it, too. We will discuss this book February 29 at both 2:00pm and 7:30pm.

~ Deb Zachmann, Bethlehem Library Committee