

Book Club Selections 2018

January **Book Share**

February **Orphan Train (2013)**
By Christine Kline

Penobscot Indian Molly Ayer is close to “aging out” out of the foster care system. A community service position helping an elderly woman clean out her home is the only thing keeping Molly out of juvie and worse. As she helps Vivian sort through her possessions and memories, Molly learns that she and Vivian aren’t as different as they seem to be. A young Irish immigrant orphaned in New York City, Vivian was put on a train to the Midwest with hundreds of other children whose destinies would be determined by luck and chance. Molly discovers that she has the power to help Vivian find answers to mysteries that have haunted her for her entire life—answers that will ultimately free them both. (amazon.com)

March **Pride and Prejudice (1813)**
By Jane Austen

Set in England in the early 19th century, *Pride and Prejudice* tells the story of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's five unmarried daughters after the rich and eligible Mr. Bingley and his status-conscious friend, Mr. Darcy, have moved into their neighborhood. While Bingley takes an immediate liking to the eldest Bennet daughter, Jane, Darcy has difficulty adapting to local society and repeatedly clashes with the second-eldest Bennet daughter, Elizabeth. Though Austen set the story at the turn of the 19th century, it retains a fascination for modern readers, continuing near the top of lists of "most loved books." (amazon.com)

April **The Road to Serfdom (1944)**
By Frederick Hayek

An unimpeachable classic work in political philosophy, intellectual and cultural history, and economics, *The Road to Serfdom* has inspired and infuriated politicians, scholars, and general readers for half a century. Originally published in 1944—when Eleanor Roosevelt supported the efforts of Stalin, and Albert Einstein subscribed lock, stock, and barrel to the socialist program—*The Road to Serfdom* was seen as heretical for its passionate warning against the dangers of state control over the means of production. For F. A. Hayek, the collectivist idea of empowering government with increasing economic control would lead not to a utopia but to the horrors of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

May **The Underground Railroad (2016)**
By Colson Whitehead

Cora is a young slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. An outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is on the cusp of womanhood—where greater pain awaits. And so when Caesar, a slave who has recently arrived from Virginia, urges her to join him on the Underground Railroad, she seizes the opportunity and escapes with him. In Colson Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor: engineers and conductors operate a secret network of actual tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil. Cora embarks on a harrowing flight from one state to the next, encountering strange yet familiar iterations of her own world at each stop. (amazon.com)

June **The Right Stuff (1979)**
By Tom Wolfe

Men first flew into space in 1961, but until *The Right Stuff* was first published in 1979 few people had a sense of the most engrossing side of that adventure: the perceptions and goals of the astronauts themselves, aloft and during certain remarkable odysseys on earth. It is this, the inner world of the early astronauts, John Glenn, Alan Shepard, Gus Grissom, and their confreres, that Tom Wolfe describes with his extraordinary powers of empathy. He shows us the bidden Olympus to which all ambitious combat and test pilots aspired, the top of the pyramid of the right stuff. And we learn the nature of the ineffable pilot's grace without which all else meant nothing. (Author web site)

July **NO BOOK CLUB**

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September **Empires of Light (2002)**
By Jill Jonnes

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, three brilliant and visionary titans of America's Gilded Age battled bitterly as each vied to create a vast and powerful electrical empire. At the heart of the story are Thomas Alva Edison, the nation's most famous and folksy inventor, creator of the incandescent light bulb and mastermind of the world's first direct current electrical light networks; the Serbian wizard of invention Nikola Tesla, elegant, highly eccentric, a dreamer who revolutionized the generation and delivery of electricity; and the charismatic George Westinghouse, Pittsburgh inventor and tough corporate entrepreneur, an industrial idealist who in the era of gaslight imagined a world powered by cheap and plentiful electricity and worked heart and soul to create it. Edison struggled to introduce his radical new direct current (DC) technology to New York City as Tesla and Westinghouse challenged his dominance with their alternating current (AC). The battlegrounds: Wall Street, the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, Niagara Falls, and, finally, the death chamber. (amazon.com)

October **Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (1979)**
By Douglas Adams

Seconds before the Earth is demolished to make way for a galactic freeway, Arthur Dent is plucked off the planet by his friend Ford Prefect, a researcher for the revised edition of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* who, for the last fifteen years, has been posing as an out-of-work actor. Together this dynamic pair begin a journey through space aided by quotes from *The Hitchhiker's Guide* and a galaxy-full of fellow travelers: Zaphod Beeblebrox—the two-headed, three-armed ex-hippie and totally out-to-lunch president of the galaxy; Trillian, Zaphod's girlfriend (formally Tricia McMillan), whom Arthur tried to pick up at a cocktail party once upon a time zone; Marvin, a paranoid, brilliant, and chronically depressed robot; Veet Voojagig, a former graduate student who is obsessed with the disappearance of all the ballpoint pens he bought over the years. Where are these pens? Why are we born? Why do we die? Why do we spend so much time between wearing digital watches? For all the answers stick your thumb to the stars. (amazon.com)

November **At the Water's Edge (2015)**
By Sarah Gruen

After disgracing themselves at a high society New Year's Eve party in Philadelphia in 1944, Madeline Hyde and her husband, Ellis, are cut off financially by his father, a former army colonel. When Ellis and his best friend decide that the only way to regain the Colonel's favor is to hunt down the famous Loch Ness monster, Maddie reluctantly follows them across the Atlantic. The trio lands in a remote village in the Scottish Highlands where the locals have nothing but contempt for them. Though Maddie is left on her own at the isolated inn, she gradually comes to know the villagers, and the friendships she forms open her up to a larger world than she knew existed. As she embraces a fuller sense of who she might be, Maddie becomes aware of life's beauty and surprising possibilities. (amazon.com)

December **The Death & Life of the Great Lakes (2017)**
By Dan Egan

The Great Lakes hold 20 percent of the world's supply of surface fresh water and provide sustenance, work and recreation for tens of millions of Americans. But they are under threat as never before, and their problems are spreading across the continent. *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes* is prize-winning reporter Dan Egan's portrait of an ecological catastrophe happening right before our eyes, blending the epic story of the lakes with an examination of the perils they face and the ways we can restore and preserve them for generations to come. (amazon.com)