

**WOC BOOK DISCUSSION FINAL SELECTIONS 2023-2024**  
**7:00 PM on 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays except as noted (December & May)**  
**Warm months = in person at locations TBD**  
**Winter months via Zoom**

**September 25 7PM in person at home of Diana Carlisle 107 Lakeview Terrace, Burlington:**

**This Tender Land: A Novel Hardcover – September 3, 2019 464 pages**

by William Kent Krueger (Author) Kindle, hardcover, audio, paperback, local libraries

**PATTY THOMAS, discussion facilitator**

A magnificent novel about four orphans on a life-changing odyssey during the Great Depression, from the bestselling author of Ordinary Grace.

1932, Minnesota—the Lincoln School is a pitiless place where hundreds of Native American children, forcibly separated from their parents, are sent to be educated. It is also home to an orphan named Odie O'Banion, a lively boy whose exploits earn him the superintendent's wrath. Forced to flee, he and his brother Albert, their best friend Mose, and a brokenhearted little girl named Emmy steal away in a canoe, heading for the mighty Mississippi and a place to call their own.

Over the course of one unforgettable summer, these four orphans will journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds. With the feel of a modern classic, This Tender Land is an enthralling, big-hearted epic that shows how the magnificent American landscape connects us all, haunts our dreams, and makes us whole.

**October 23 7PM in person location TBD:**

**The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives Hardcover – October 17, 2017 (YA book) 320 pages**

by Dashka Slater (Author) Kindle, audio, hardcover, paperback

**NANCY MCCLELLAN discussion facilitator**

One teenager in a skirt.

One teenager with a lighter.

One moment that changes both of their lives forever.

If it weren't for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one.

Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

**November 27 7PM Via Zoom:**

**On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous: A Novel Hardcover – June 4, 2019 256 pages**

by Ocean Vuong (Author) Kindle, audio, hardcover, paperback, local libraries

**DIANNE GRIFFITHS discussion facilitator**

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family's history that began before he was born — a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam — and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known, all of it leading to an unforgettable revelation. At once a witness to the fraught yet undeniable love between a single mother and her son, it is also a brutally honest exploration of race, class, and masculinity. Asking questions central to our American moment, immersed as we are in addiction, violence, and trauma, but undergirded by compassion and tenderness, On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous is as much about the power of telling one's own story as it is about the obliterating silence of not being heard.

With stunning urgency and grace, Ocean Vuong writes of people caught between disparate worlds, and asks how we heal and rescue one another without forsaking who we are. The question of how to survive, and how to make of it a kind of joy, powers the most important debut novel of many years.

**December 18 7PM In person location TBD**

**Annual Holiday Poetry and Short Story Reading; cookie swap**

**January 22 7PM Via Zoom:**

**The Giver of Stars: A Novel – by Jojo Moyes October 8, 2019 hardcover, Kindle, local libraries 400 pages**

**JANICE CLEMENTS discussion facilitator**

From the author of the forthcoming Someone Else's Shoes, a breathtaking story of five extraordinary women and their remarkable journey through the mountains of Kentucky and beyond in Depression-era America

Alice Wright marries handsome American Bennett Van Cleve, hoping to escape her stifling life in England. But small-town Kentucky quickly proves equally claustrophobic, especially living alongside her overbearing father-in-law. So when a call goes out for a team of women to deliver books as part of Eleanor Roosevelt's new traveling library, Alice signs on enthusiastically.

The leader, and soon Alice's greatest ally, is Margery, a smart-talking, self-sufficient woman who's never asked a man's permission for anything. They will be joined by three other singular women who become known as the Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky.

What happens to them--and to the men they love--becomes an unforgettable drama of loyalty, justice, humanity, and passion. These heroic women refuse to be cowed by men or by convention. And though they face all kinds of dangers in a landscape that is at times breathtakingly beautiful, at others brutal, they're committed to their job: bringing books to people who have never had any, arming them with facts that will change their lives.

Based on a true story rooted in America's past, *The Giver of Stars* is unparalleled in its scope and epic in its storytelling. Funny, heartbreaking, enthralling, it is destined to become a modern classic—a richly rewarding novel of women's friendship, of true love, and of what happens when we reach beyond our grasp for the great beyond.

**February 26 7PM Via Zoom:**

**The Secret of Life: Rosalind Franklin, James Watson, Francis Crick, and the Discovery of DNA's Double Helix**

by Howard Markel (Author) Kindle, audio, hardcover, paperback, local libraries, 526 pages

**NANCY MCCLELLAN discussion facilitator**

James Watson and Francis Crick's 1953 discovery of the double helix structure of DNA is the foundation of virtually every advance in our modern understanding of genetics and molecular biology. But how did Watson and Crick do it—and why were they the ones who succeeded?

In truth, the discovery of DNA's structure is the story of five towering minds in pursuit of the advancement of science, and for almost all of them, the prospect of fame and immortality: Watson, Crick, Rosalind Franklin, Maurice Wilkins, and Linus Pauling. Each was fascinating and brilliant, with strong personalities that often clashed. Howard Markel skillfully re-creates the intense intellectual journey, and fraught personal relationships, that ultimately led to a spectacular breakthrough. But it is Rosalind Franklin—fiercely determined, relentless, and an outsider at Cambridge and the University of London in the 1950s, as the lone Jewish woman among young male scientists—who becomes a focal point for Markel.

*The Secret of Life* is a story of genius and perseverance, but also a saga of cronyism, misogyny, anti-Semitism, and misconduct. Drawing on voluminous archival research, including interviews with James Watson and with Franklin's sister, Jenifer Glynn, Markel provides a fascinating look at how science is done, how reputations are undone, and how history is written, and revised. A vibrant evocation of Cambridge in the 1950s, Markel also provides colorful depictions of Watson and Crick—their competitiveness, idiosyncrasies, and youthful immaturity—and compelling portraits of Wilkins, Pauling, and most cogently, Rosalind Franklin. *The Secret of Life* is a lively and sweeping narrative of this landmark discovery, one that finally gives the woman at the center of this drama her due.

**March 25 7PM Via Zoom:**

**When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present Hardcover – October 14, 2009**

by Gail Collins (Author) Kindle, audio, hardcover, paperback, local libraries 480 pages

**PENNY RIELEY discussion facilitator**

*When Everything Changed* begins in 1960, when most American women had to get their husbands' permission to apply for a credit card. It ends in 2008 with Hillary Clinton's historic presidential campaign. This was a time of cataclysmic change, when, after four hundred years, expectations about the lives of American women were smashed in just a generation.

A comprehensive mix of oral history and Gail Collins's keen research -- covering politics, fashion,

popular culture, economics, sex, families, and work -- When Everything Changed is the definitive book on five crucial decades of progress. The enormous strides made since 1960 include the advent of the birth control pill, the end of "Help Wanted -- Male" and "Help Wanted -- Female" ads, and the lifting of quotas for women in admission to medical and law schools. Gail Collins describes what has happened in every realm of women's lives, partly through the testimonies of both those who made history and those who simply made their way.

Picking up where her highly lauded book America's Women left off, When Everything Changed is a dynamic story, told with the down-to-earth, amusing, and agenda-free tone for which this beloved New York Times columnist is known.

Older readers, men and women alike, will be startled as they are reminded of what their lives once were -- Father Knows Best and My Little Margie on TV; daily weigh-ins for stewardesses; few female professors; no women in the Boston marathon, in combat zones, or in the police department. Younger readers will see their history in a rich new way. It has been an era packed with drama and dreams -- some dashed and others realized beyond anyone's imagining.

**April 22 7PM in person location TBD:**

**Horse: A Novel Hardcover – June 14, 2022 416 pages**

by [Geraldine Brooks](#) (Author) Kindle, audio, hardcover, paperback, local libraries

**DONNA LEE discussion facilitator**

A discarded painting in a junk pile, a skeleton in an attic, and the greatest racehorse in American history: from these strands, a Pulitzer Prize winner braids a sweeping story of spirit, obsession, and injustice across American history

Kentucky, 1850. An enslaved groom named Jarret and a bay foal forge a bond of understanding that will carry the horse to record-setting victories across the South. When the nation erupts in civil war, an itinerant young artist who has made his name on paintings of the racehorse takes up arms for the Union. On a perilous night, he reunites with the stallion and his groom, very far from the glamor of any racetrack.

New York City, 1954. Martha Jackson, a gallery owner celebrated for taking risks on edgy contemporary painters, becomes obsessed with a nineteenth-century equestrian oil painting of mysterious provenance.

Washington, DC, 2019. Jess, a Smithsonian scientist from Australia, and Theo, a Nigerian-American art historian, find themselves unexpectedly connected through their shared interest in the horse—one studying the stallion's bones for clues to his power and endurance, the other uncovering the lost history of the unsung Black horsemen who were critical to his racing success.

Based on the remarkable true story of the record-breaking thoroughbred Lexington, Horse is a novel of art and science, love and obsession, and our unfinished reckoning with racism.

**May 20 7PM in person location TBD:**

**The Daughters of Yalta: The Churchills, Roosevelts, and Harrimans: A Story of Love and War** by Catherine Grace Katz (Author) Kindle, audio, hardcover, paperback, local libraries 417 pages

**JANICE CLEMENTS**

The untold story of the three intelligent and glamorous young women who accompanied their famous fathers to the Yalta Conference in February 1945, and of the conference's fateful reverberations in the waning days of World War II.

Tensions during the Yalta Conference in February 1945 threatened to tear apart the wartime alliance among Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin just as victory was close at hand. Catherine Grace Katz uncovers the dramatic story of the three young women who were chosen by their fathers to travel with them to Yalta, each bound by fierce family loyalty, political savvy, and intertwined romances that powerfully colored these crucial days.

Kathleen Harriman was a champion skier, war correspondent, and daughter of U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Averell Harriman. Sarah Churchill, an actress-turned-RAF officer, was devoted to her brilliant father, who depended on her astute political mind. Roosevelt's only daughter, Anna, chosen instead of her mother Eleanor to accompany the president to Yalta, arrived there as keeper of her father's most damaging secrets. Situated in the political maelstrom that marked the transition to a post-war world, *The Daughters of Yalta* is a remarkable story of fathers and daughters whose relationships were tested and strengthened by the history they witnessed and the future they crafted together.

**June 24 5:30 PM Location TBD: Annual Pot Luck and Book Pitch Gathering**