

League of Women Voters' Book Group 2017

January 19: Moderated by Anita Lytle and Mary Virdeh

Becoming Grandma: The Joys and Science of the New Grandparenting, Leslie Stall, 288 pages, 2016.

After four decades as a reporter, Lesley Stahl's most vivid and transformative experience of her life was not covering the White House, interviewing heads of state, or researching stories at *60 Minutes*. It was becoming a grandmother. She was hit with a jolt of joy so intense and unexpected, she wanted to "investigate" it—as though it were a news flash. And so, using her *60 Minutes* skills, she explored how grandmothering changes a woman's life, interviewing friends like Whoopi Goldberg, colleagues like Diane Sawyer (and grandfathers, including Tom Brokaw), as well as the proverbial woman next door.

February 16: Moderated by Ethyl Schy

War on Science, Who's waging it, Why it matters, What we can do about it, Shawn Lawrence Otto, 514 pages, 2016.

Otto's provocative new book investigates the historical, social, philosophical, political, and emotional reasons for why and how evidence-based politics are in decline and authoritarian politics are once again on the rise, and offers a vision, an argument, and some compelling solutions to bring us to our collective senses, before it's too late.

March 16: Moderated by Lynda Hungerford

The Sellout, Paul Beatty, 289 pages, 2015.

A satiric novel about racism in America. It is the first novel by an American to receive the Man Booker Prize. A biting satire about a young man's isolated upbringing and the race trial that sends him to the Supreme Court, it challenges the sacred tenets of the United States Constitution, urban life, the civil rights movement, the father-son relationship, and the holy grail of racial equality—the black Chinese restaurant.

April 20: Moderated by Jane DeYoung

Strangers In Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right, Arlie Russell Hochschild, 288 pages, 2016.

One of "6 Books to Understand Trump's Win" according to the *New York Times* the day after the election. The renowned sociologist embarks on a thought-provoking journey from her liberal hometown of Berkeley, California, deep into Louisiana bayou country—a stronghold of the conservative right. *Strangers in Their Own Land* goes beyond the commonplace liberal idea that these are people who have been duped into voting against their own interests. Instead, Hochschild finds lives ripped apart by stagnant wages, a loss of home, an elusive American dream—and political choices and views that make sense in the context of their lives.

May 18: Moderated by Carole Sunlight

The Oyster War, a true story of a small farm, big politics and the future of wilderness in America, Summer Brennan, 256 pages, 2015.

Journalist Summer Brennan stumbled onto the Drakes Bay Oyster Company fracas after being hired as a staff writer for the *Point Reyes Light*, a nearby local paper, in 2012. In short order, Brennan, a Point Reyes native who now lives in New York, was embroiled in the controversy, working late nights to discern fact from fiction, and clumsy science from sound policy. *The Oyster War* makes for a fast-paced and dramatic read about a messy situation with no clear-cut “bad guy.”

June 15: Moderated by Carrie Anabo

Just Mercy—a Story of Justice and Redemption, Bryan Stevenson, 368 pages, 2015.

“*Just Mercy* demonstrates, as powerfully as any book on criminal justice that I’ve ever read, the extent to which brutality, unfairness, and racial bias continue to infect criminal law in the United States. You don’t have to read too long to start cheering for this man. Against tremendous odds, Stevenson has worked to free scores of people from wrongful or excessive punishment, arguing five times before the Supreme Court. . . . The book extols not his nobility but that of the cause, and reads like a call to action for all that remains to be done.

July 20: Moderated by Karen Rust

White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America, Nancy Isenberg, 480 pages, 2016.

In her groundbreaking bestselling history of the class system in America, Nancy Isenberg upends history as we know it by taking on our comforting myths about equality and uncovering the crucial legacy of the ever-present, always embarrassing—if occasionally entertaining—poor white trash.

August 17: Moderated by Sukey Robb-Wilder

A Field Guide to Lies: Critical Thinking in the Information Age, David Levitin, 304 pages, 2016.

We are bombarded with more information each day than our brains can process—especially in election season. It's raining bad data, half-truths, and even outright lies. *New York Times* bestselling author Daniel J. Levitin shows how to recognize misleading announcements, statistics, graphs, and written reports revealing the ways lying weasels can use them.

September 21: Moderated by Mary Fricker

The Less You Know, The Better You Sleep: Russia's Road To Dictatorship Under Yeltsin and Putin, David Satter, 240 pages, 2016.

In December 2013, David Satter became the first American journalist to be expelled from Russia since the Cold War. In this book, Satter tells the story of how Boris Yeltsin presided over the criminalization of Russia, why Vladimir Putin was chosen as his successor, and how Putin has suppressed all opposition while retaining the appearance of a pluralist state.

October 19: Moderated by Juanita Roland

Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging, Sebastian Junger. 192 pages, 2016.

Drawing from history, psychology, and anthropology, bestselling author Sebastian Junger shows us just how at odds the structure of modern society is with our tribal instincts, arguing that the difficulties many veterans face upon returning home from war do not stem entirely from the trauma they've suffered, but also from the individualist societies they must reintegrate into.

November 16: Choose our books for 2018.

December 14: No meeting.

OTHER BOOKS WE CONSIDERED

H is for Hawk, Helen Macdonald.
Another Day in the Death of America, a Chronicle of Ten Short Lives, Gary Younge.
Gatekeeper: Missy Lehand & FDR and the Untold Story of the Partnership that Defined a Presidency, Kathryn Smith.
Ghostland, Colin Dickey.
Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis, J.D. Vance.
You Just Don't Understand, Gender and Leadership, Deborah Tannen.
Enough Said, the language of Politics, Mark Thomas.
My Own Words, Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
First Ladies, Susan Swain,
ADHD Nation, Alan Schwarz.
Listen Liberal, Thomas Frank.
The Unwinding, George Packer.
Populist Explosion, John Judis.
Evicted, Poverty and Profit in the American City, Matthew Desmond.
American Warlord, Johnny Dwyer.
Give Us The Ballot, Ari Berman.
Eleanor and Hick, The Love Affair That Shaped a First Lady, Susan Quinn.
Fall of the House of Dixie, The Civil War and The Social Revolution that Transformed the South, Bruce Levine.
Andrew Jackson, Chose a biography.