

League of Women Voters' Book Group 2018

January 18: Moderated by Mary Fricker

Astrophysics For People in a Hurry, Neil DeGrasse Tyson, 224 pages, 2017.

America's most approachable astrophysicist distills the past, present, and (theoretical) future of the cosmos into a quick and thoroughly enjoyable read for a general audience.

February 15: Moderated by Carole Sunlight

Quakeland: On the Road to America's Next Devastating Earthquake, Kathryn Miles, 368 pages, 2017.

We have been making enormous changes to subterranean America, and Mother Earth, as always, has been making some of her own. . . . The consequences for our real estate, our civil engineering, and our communities will be huge because they will include earthquakes most of us do not expect and cannot imagine—at least not without reading *Quakeland*. Kathryn Miles descends into mines in the Northwest, dissects Mississippi levee engineering studies, uncovers the horrific risks of an earthquake in the Northeast, and interviews the seismologists, structural engineers, and emergency managers around the country who are addressing this ground shaking threat.

March 15: Moderated by Sukey Robb-Wilder

Creating A World Without Poverty - social business and future of capitalism, Muhammad Yunus, 261 pages, 2017.

Efficiently recounts examples of microcredit and social businesses (organizations designed to help people while turning profits), including Yunus's own Grameen Bank, for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. It reveals the next phase in a worldwide economic and social revolution that is underway to eliminate poverty by unleashing the productive energy of every human being. French food giant Danone's partnership to market yogurt in Bangladesh is described in detail, along with 25 other businesses that operate under the Grameen banner. Infused with entrepreneurial spirit and the excitement of a worthy challenge, this book is the opposite of pessimistic recitals of intractable poverty's horrors.

April 19: Moderated by Karen Rust

Shrill. Notes from a Loud Woman, Lindy West, 264 pages, 2016.

Shrill is an uproarious memoir, a feminist rallying cry in a world that thinks gender politics are tedious and that women, especially feminists, can't be funny. From a painfully shy childhood in which West tried, unsuccessfully, to hide her big body and even bigger opinions; to her public war with stand-up comedians over rape jokes; to her struggle to convince herself, and then the world, that fat people have value; to her accidental activism and never-ending battle royale with Internet trolls, Lindy narrates her life with a blend of humor and pathos that manages to make a trip to the abortion clinic funny and wring tears out of a story about diarrhea.

May 17: Moderated by Lee Lipinski

Ina Coolbrith, The Bittersweet Song of California's First Poet Laureate, Aleta George, 334 pages, 2015.

This book is a biography about a pioneer poet, Oakland's first public librarian and the most popular literary ambassador in the early American West. The book follows the struggles and triumphs of Coolbrith from her birth in 1841 as a niece of Joseph Smith to her death on the eve of the Great Depression as California's most beloved poet. Among her close friends were Bret Harte, Edwin Markham and Mark Twain.

June 21: Moderated by Ethel Schy

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, Yuval Noah Harari, 443 pages, 2015.

Harari recounts how humans have developed from brutes to demigods in the course of their evolutionary history; a grand narrative, one would think, but he perceives it as a comic-tragedy, and details it with mordant humor. „, "Sapiens" is a characteristic work of "Big History" a relatively new field of research that spans everything from the Big Bang to speculations about the future . Harari is a lucid, charming writer, capable of encapsulating difficult concepts and complex stories and spinning them into a masterful synthesis.

July 19: Moderated by Juanita Roland

Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations, Thomas L. Friedman, 497 pages, 2016.

A work of contemporary history that serves as a field manual for how to write and think about this era of accelerations. It's also an argument for "being late"—for pausing to appreciate this amazing historical epoch we're passing through and to reflect on its possibilities and dangers. To amplify this point, Friedman revisits his Minnesota hometown in his moving concluding chapters; there, he explores how communities can create a "topsoil of trust" to anchor their increasingly diverse and digital populations.

August 16: Moderated by Carrie Anabo

Dark Money, Jane Mayer, 380 pages, 2016.

Jane Mayer shows in this meticulously reported history how a network of exceedingly wealthy people with extreme libertarian views bankrolled a systematic, step by step plan to fundamentally alter the American political system. The Koch brothers and some of the richest people on the planet formed a network whose core belief....that taxes are a form of tyranny; that government oversight of business is an assault on freedom...are sincerely held. But these beliefs also advance their personal and corporate interests.

September 20: Moderated by Lynda Hungerford

The Chickenshit Club: Why the Justice Department Fails to Prosecute Executives, by Jesse Eisinger, 330 pages, 2017.

From Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jesse Eisinger, "a fast moving, fly-on-the-wall, disheartening look at the deterioration of the Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission. Why were no bankers put in prison after the financial crisis of 2008? Why do CEOs seem to commit wrongdoing with impunity? *The Chickenshit Club*—an inside reference to prosecutors too scared of failure and too daunted by legal

impediments to do their jobs—explains why in “an absorbing financial history, a monumental work of journalism...a first-rate study of the federal bureaucracy.”

October 18: Moderated by Linda Allen

Beyond the Messy Truth, Van Jones, 256 pages, 2017.

A passionate manifesto that exposes hypocrisy on both sides of the political divide and points a way out of the tribalism that is tearing America apart—by the CNN political contributor and host hailed as “a star of the 2016 campaign.” Tough on Donald Trump but showing respect and empathy for his supporters, Jones takes aim at the failures of both parties before and after Trump’s victory. He urges both sides to abandon the politics of accusation and focus on real solutions. Calling us to a deeper patriotism, he shows us how to get down to the vital business of solving, together, some of our toughest problems

November 15: Choose books for 2019

December 20: No meeting

OTHER BOOKS WE CONSIDERED

Audacity: How Barack Obama Defied His Critics and Created a Legacy That Will Prevail, by Jonathan Chait

The Origin of Others, by Toni Morrison

David and Goliath underdogs, misfits, and the art of battling giants, by Malcolm Gladwell

American Kingpin, by Nick Bilton

Bad Feminist, by Roxane Gay

History Of Wolves, by Emily Fridlund

Love, Africa, by Jeffrey Gettleman

The Evangelicals: The Struggle to shape America, by Frances Fitzgerald

Billionaire at the Barricades, The Populist Revolution from Reagan to Trump, by Laura Ingraham

Rise of the Robots, Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future, by Martin Ford

Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked, by Adam Alter

Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America, by Michael Eric Dyson

Notes on a Foreign Country, by Suzy Hansen

The Oregon Trail, by Rinker Buck

Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Codebreakers of World War II, by Liza Mundy

What Happened, Hillary Clinton

Unbelievable, Katy Tur