

**WHITE BEAR LAKE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS for 2018-2019**

**September 24, 2018**                      **Discussion leader: Bob**

**Les Misérables** : Victor Hugo. 1862. 1042p.

Introducing one of the most famous characters in literature, Jean Valjean—the noble peasant imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread—*Les Misérables* ranks among the greatest novels of all time. In it, Victor Hugo takes readers deep into the Parisian underworld, immerses them in a battle between good and evil, and carries them to the barricades during the uprising of 1832 with a breathtaking realism that is unsurpassed in modern prose.

**October 22, 2018**                      **Discussion leader: Joy**

**The Reporter Who Knew Too Much : The Mysterious Death of *What's My Line* TV Star and Media Icon Dorothy Kilgallen** : Mark Shaw. 2016. 336p.

Was *What's My Line* TV Star, media icon, and crack investigative reporter and journalist Dorothy Kilgallen murdered for writing a tell-all book about the JFK assassination? If so, is the main suspect in her death still at large? These questions and more are answered in former *CNN*, *ESPN*, and *USA Today* legal analyst Mark Shaw's 25th book. Through discovery of never-before-seen videotaped eyewitness interviews with those closest to Kilgallen and secret government documents, Shaw unfolds a "whodunit" murder mystery featuring suspects including Frank Sinatra, J. Edgar Hoover, Mafia Don Carlos Marcello and a "Mystery Man" who may have silenced Kilgallen.

**November 26, 2018**                      **Discussion leader: Rick**

**Something Wonderful: Rodgers and Hammerstein's Broadway Revolution**

Todd S. Purdum 2018. 400p.

They stand at the apex of the great age of songwriting, the creators of the classic Broadway musicals *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, and *The Sound of Music*, whose songs have never lost their popularity or emotional power. Even before they joined forces, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II had written dozens of Broadway shows, but together they pioneered a new art form: the serious musical play. Their songs and dance numbers served to advance the drama and reveal character, a sharp break from the past and the template on which all future musicals would be built. Todd S. Purdum's portrait of these two men, their creative process, and their groundbreaking innovations will captivate lovers of musical theater, lovers of the classic American songbook, and young lovers wherever they are.

**December 17, 2018**                      **Discussion leader: Bonnie**

**Hatchet** : Gary Paulsen. 1987. 208p.

Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson, haunted by his secret knowledge of his mother's infidelity, is traveling by single-engine plane to visit his father for the first time since the divorce. When the plane crashes, killing the pilot, the sole survivor is Brian. He is alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but his clothing, a tattered windbreaker, and the hatchet his mother had given him as a present.

**January 28, 2019 Double Selection                      Discussion Leader : Carolyn**  
**Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge:** Erica Armstrong Dunbar. 2017. 272p.

When George Washington was elected president, he reluctantly left behind his beloved Mount Vernon to serve in Philadelphia, the temporary seat of the nation's capital. In setting up his household he brought along nine slaves, including Ona Judge. As the President grew accustomed to Northern ways, there was one change he couldn't abide: Pennsylvania law required enslaved people be set free after six months of residency in the state. Rather than comply, Washington decided to circumvent the law. Every six months he sent the slaves back down south just as the clock was about to expire.

Though Ona Judge lived a life of relative comfort, she was denied freedom. So, when the opportunity presented itself one clear and pleasant spring day in Philadelphia, Judge left everything she knew to escape to New England.

**Homegoing :** Yaa Gyasi. 2016. 320p. **Discussion Leader : Emma**

The unforgettable *New York Times* best seller begins with the story of two half-sisters, separated by forces beyond their control: one sold into slavery, the other married to a British slaver. Written with tremendous sweep and power, *Homegoing* traces the generations of family who follow, as their destinies lead them through two continents and three hundred years of history, each life indelibly drawn, as the legacy of slavery is fully revealed in light of the present day.

**February 25, 2019                      Discussion leader: Donna**

**Honolulu :** Allen Brennert. 2009. 369p.

*Honolulu* is the rich, unforgettable story of a young "picture bride" who journeys to Hawai'i in 1914 in search of a better life. Instead of the affluent young husband and chance at an education that she has been promised, she is quickly married off to a poor, embittered laborer who takes his frustrations out on his new wife. Renaming herself Jin, she makes her own way in this strange land, finding both opportunity and prejudice. With the help of three of her fellow picture brides, Jin prospers along with her adopted city, now growing from a small territorial capital into the great multicultural city it is today. But paradise has its dark side, whether it's the daily struggle for survival in Honolulu's tenements, or a crime that will become the most infamous in the islands' history.

**March 25, 2019                      Discussion Leader : Lori**

**Educated : A Memoir :** Tara Westover. 2018. 352p.

Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills" bag. In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged metal in her father's junkyard. *Educated* is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty, and of the grief that comes from severing one's closest ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes, and the will to change it.

**April 22, 2019**

**Discussion leader: Karen**

**A Place for Us** : Fatima Mirza. 2018. 400p.

As an Indian wedding gathers a family back together, parents Rafiq and Layla must reckon with the choices their children have made. There is Hadia: their headstrong, eldest daughter, whose marriage is a match of love and not tradition. Huda, the middle child, determined to follow in her sister's footsteps. And lastly, their estranged son, Amar, who returns to the family fold for the first time in three years to take his place as brother of the bride. What secrets and betrayals have caused this close-knit family to fracture? Can Amar find his way back to the people who know and love him best?

**May 20, 2019**

**Discussion leader: Gerry**

**Marcel's Letters : A Font and the Search for One Man's Fate** : Carolyn Porter. 2017. 352p.

Seeking inspiration for a new font design in an antique store in small-town Stillwater, Minnesota, graphic designer Carolyn Porter stumbled across a bundle of letters and was immediately drawn to their beautifully expressive pen-and-ink handwriting. She could not read the letters—they were in French—but she noticed all of them had been signed by a man named Marcel and mailed from Berlin to his family in France during the middle of World War II. *Marcel's Letters* is the incredible story of Carolyn's increasingly desperate search to uncover the mystery of one man's fate during WWII, seeking answers across Germany, France, and the United States.