

BGBG - AAUW Morton Branch Book Club Selections for 2017-2018

SEPTEMBER

The Outliers by Malcom Gladwell,
discussion led by **Carolyn Shepherd**,
102 Oak Street, Morton.

A nonfiction book that examines the factors that contribute to high levels of success. Malcolm Gladwell takes us on an intellectual journey through the world of "outliers"--the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. He asks the question: what makes high-achievers different? His answer is that we pay too much attention to what successful people are like, and too little attention to where they are from: that is, their culture, their family, their generation, and the idiosyncratic experiences of their upbringing. Along the way he explains the secrets of software billionaires, what it takes to be a great soccer player, why Asians are good at math, and what made the Beatles the greatest rock band.

OCTOBER

Too Much Happiness by Alice Munro, short stories,
discussion led by **Patti Erwin**,
826 Sunset Road.

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE® IN LITERATURE 2013. Ten superb new stories by one of our most beloved and admired writers. With clarity and ease, Alice Munro once again renders complex, difficult events and emotions into stories about the unpredictable ways in which men and women accommodate and often transcend what happens in their lives.

In the first story a young wife and mother, suffering from the unbearable pain of losing her three children, gains solace from a most surprising source. In another, a young woman, in the aftermath of an unusual and humiliating seduction, reacts in a clever if less-than-admirable fashion. Other tales uncover the "deep-holes" in a marriage, the unsuspected cruelty of children, and, in the long title story, the yearnings of a nineteenth-century female mathematician.

NOVEMBER

Nightingale by Kristen Hannah,
discussion led by **Lynne Walters**,
126 Maple Ridge Drive.

With courage, grace and powerful insight, bestselling author Kristin Hannah captures the epic panorama of World War II and illuminates an intimate part of history seldom seen: the women's war. *The Nightingale*

tells the stories of two sisters, separated by years and experience, by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom in German-occupied, war-torn France—a heartbreakingly beautiful novel that celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the durability of women. It is a novel for everyone, a novel for a lifetime.

DECEMBER

Needs hostess. Discussion of what books we want for Christmas, what books we are giving for Christmas, and young adult/children's books recommendations.

JANUARY

Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood by Trevor Noah, discussion led by **Suzanne Ligon**, 67 Maple Ridge Drive.

Trevor Noah's unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of *The Daily Show* began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents' indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa's tyrannical white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle.

Born a Crime is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life. The stories collected here are by turns hilarious, dramatic, and deeply affecting. Whether subsisting on caterpillars for dinner during hard times, being thrown from a moving car during an attempted kidnapping, or just trying to survive the life-and-death pitfalls of dating in high school, Trevor illuminates his curious world with an incisive wit and unflinching honesty. His stories weave together to form a moving and searingly funny portrait of a boy making his way through a damaged world in a dangerous time, armed only with a keen sense of humor and a mother's unconventional, unconditional love.

FEBRUARY

Blue Horses: Poems, by Mary Oliver, discussion led by **Susan Scott @ Linda Young's**, 138 N. Louisiana.

In this stunning collection of new poems, Mary Oliver returns to the imagery that has defined her life's work, describing with wonder both the everyday and the unaffected beauty of nature. Herons, sparrows, owls, and kingfishers flit across the page in meditations on love, artistry, and impermanence. Whether considering a bird's nest, the seeming patience of oak trees, or the artworks of Franz Marc, Oliver reminds us of the transformative power of attention and how much can be contained within the smallest moments.

At its heart, *Blue Horses* asks what it means to truly belong to this world, to live in it attuned to all its changes. Humorous, gentle, and always honest, Oliver is a visionary of the natural world.

MARCH

Rules of Civility by Amor Towels,
discussion led by **Juel Bennewitz and Roberta Beutal**,
46 Forestview Road.

This “wonderful” (*Chicago Tribune*) and “sharply stylish” (*Boston Globe*) debut novel presents the story of a young woman whose life is on the brink of transformation. On the last night of 1937, twenty-five-year-old Katey Kontent is in a second-rate Greenwich Village jazz bar when Tinker Grey, a handsome banker, happens to sit down at the neighboring table. This chance encounter and its startling consequences propel Katey on a year-long journey into the upper echelons of New York society—where she will have little to rely upon other than a bracing wit and her own brand of cool nerve. With its sparkling depiction of New York's social strata, its intricate imagery and themes, and its immensely appealing characters, *Rules of Civility* won the hearts of readers and critics alike.

APRIL

The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America's Shining Women by Kate Moore,
discussion led by **Judy Griffin**,
231 E. Lakewood Street.

The Curies' newly discovered element of radium makes gleaming headlines across the nation as the fresh face of beauty, and wonder drug of the medical community. From body lotion to tonic water, the popular new element shines bright in the otherwise dark years of the First World War.

Meanwhile, hundreds of girls toil amidst the glowing dust of the radium-dial factories. The glittering chemical covers their bodies from head to toe; they light up the night like industrious fireflies. With such a coveted job, these “shining girls” are the luckiest alive — until they begin to fall mysteriously ill.

But the factories that once offered golden opportunities are now ignoring all claims of the gruesome side effects, and the women's cries of corruption. And as the fatal poison of the radium takes hold, the brave shining girls find themselves embroiled in one of the biggest scandals of America's early 20th century, and in a groundbreaking battle for workers' rights that will echo for centuries to come.

Written with a sparkling voice and breakneck pace, *The Radium Girls* fully illuminates the inspiring young women exposed to the "wonder" substance of radium, and their awe-inspiring strength in the face of almost impossible circumstances. Their courage and tenacity led to life-changing regulations, research into nuclear bombing, and ultimately saved hundreds of thousands of lives...

MAY - Selection of books for the next year.
On the porch of **Susan Scott**, 420 E. Jefferson.

JUNE

A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman
discussion of book and movie led by **Heather Thompson and Linda Young**,
The Villas of Hollybrook, 1709 N. Main Street.

Meet Ove. He's a curmudgeon—the kind of man who points at people he dislikes as if they were burglars caught outside his bedroom window. He has staunch principles, strict routines, and a short fuse. People call him “the bitter neighbor from hell.” But must Ove be bitter just because he doesn't walk around with a smile plastered to his face all the time? Behind the cranky exterior there is a story and a sadness. So when one November morning a chatty young couple with two chatty young daughters move in next door and accidentally flatten Ove's mailbox, it is the lead-in to a comical and heartwarming tale of unkempt cats, unexpected friendship, and the ancient art of backing up a U-Haul. All of which will change one cranky old man and a local residents' association to their very foundations.

A feel-good story, Fredrik Backman's novel about the angry old man next door is a thoughtful exploration of the profound impact one life has on countless others. “If there was an award for ‘Most Charming Book of the Year,’ this first novel by a Swedish blogger-turned-overnight-sensation would win hands down”

Books suggested, but not picked:

What the Dog Saw and David and Goliath by Malcolm Gladwell
My Grandmother told me to tell you I'm Sorry by Fredrik Backman
The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath
The Day the World Came to Town by James De Fede

AAUW MEMBER BOOK

APRIL

Mollie's War by Cyndee Schaffer Illinois writer

The 150,000 women who served in the Women's Army Corps are now seen as the undersung heroes of the Second World War. This memoir describes the life of a WAC enlistee who would serve in England when it came under attack, France immediately after the Allied invasion, and Germany after VE Day. From her experience in basic training in Daytona Beach to the climactic moment when she saw the Statue of Liberty as her ship approached American shores upon her return home, this work provides a glimpse into the life of a woman in uniform during this crucial time in American history.