

MVAH ZOOM BOOK CLUB

April 9, 2021

Next MVAH ZOOM Book Club May 13th at 3PM

Attendees: Host: Barbara Brennan Cher Terry Betsy Stephens Louise & Robert McLean	Carol Mattaino Norma Brodsky Sarah Tatum Hugh Schwartz
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NOTE: I think in the beginning we decided to limit the books discussed to one or maybe two, but no more. It was suggested to expand a bit more on the book, the author – at least a paragraph about it and why you are recommending it. Thank you!

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1. **Betsy – The Boston Massacre by Serena Zabin. Published 2020, 320 pages.**

A dramatic untold ‘people’s history’ of the storied event that helped trigger the American Revolution.

The story of the Boston Massacre—when on a late winter evening in 1770, British soldiers shot five local men to death—is familiar to generations. But from the very beginning, many accounts have obscured a fascinating truth: The Massacre arose from conflicts that were as personal as they were political.

Professor Serena Zabin draws on original sources and lively stories to follow British troops as they are dispatched from Ireland to Boston in 1768 to subdue the increasingly rebellious colonists. And she reveals a forgotten world hidden in plain sight: the many regimental wives and children who accompanied these armies. We see these families jostling with Bostonians for living space, finding common cause in the search for a lost child, trading barbs and sharing baptisms. Becoming, in other words, neighbors. When soldiers shot unarmed citizens in the street, it was these intensely human, now broken bonds that fueled what quickly became a bitterly fought American Revolution.

Serena Zabin’s *The Boston Massacre* delivers an indelible new slant on iconic American Revolutionary history.

2. **Sarah – My Name is Lucy Barton by Elizabeth Strout. Published 2016. 240 pages.**

Review

“A quiet, sublimely merciful contemporary novel about love, yearning, and resilience in a family damaged beyond words.”—The Boston Globe

“Sensitive, deceptively simple . . . [Elizabeth] Strout captures the pull between the ruthlessness required to write without restraint and the necessity of accepting others’ flaws. It is Lucy’s gentle honesty, complex relationship with her husband, and nuanced response to her mother’s shortcomings that make this novel so subtly powerful. . . . *My Name Is Lucy Barton*—like all of Strout’s fiction—is more complex than it first appears, and all the more emotionally persuasive for it.”—San Francisco Chronicle

“A short novel about love, particularly the complicated love between mothers and daughters, but also simpler, more sudden bonds . . . It evokes these connections in a style so spare, so pure and so profound the book almost seems to be a kind of scripture or sutra.”—Newsday

3. **Cher – Midcentury Boy: My Suburban Childhood: From Ike to the Beatles by David Hoppe. Published 2020. 166 pages.**

A memoir and family saga, *Midcentury Boy* is also a cultural and social meditation on post World War II America, told from a boy's point of view. It was an era of unprecedented middle class prosperity and suburban growth that President John F. Kennedy called a "New Frontier." For author David Hoppe, this frontier was located in Mt. Prospect, Illinois, a burgeoning suburb northwest of Chicago. He describes the history of the place — and the forces that shaped it, from the G.I Bill (not available to many African-American vets) to Sinatra's poetry of loneliness; the Kinsey Report's revelations about sexuality and the Beatles' flipping the script for a new generation. Readers who grew up during the Baby Boom will find much to relate to here. They will also be challenged to think about what made their childhood prosperity possible and whether the seeds of its undoing were there from the start.

4. Carol - Vilhelm Moberg – published 4 books on emigrants.

The *Emigrants* is the collective name of a four-novel suite by the Swedish author Vilhelm Moberg. The novel-series describes the long and strenuous journey for a group of people in Småland, Sweden, as they emigrate to Minnesota, United States, where they settle during the Swedish emigration to North America around the 1850s.

Series also known as:

* *Utvandrarserien*

This is the original numbering of the series which consists of 4 individual books:

1. *The Emigrants* (1949)
2. *Unto a Good Land* (1952)
3. *The Settlers* (1956)
4. *The Last Letter Home* (1959)

5. Louise - *The Beautiful Mystery* by Louise Penny. Published 2012. 384 pages.

No outsiders are ever admitted to the monastery of Saint-Gilbert-Entre-les-Loups, hidden deep in the wilderness of Québec, where two dozen cloistered monks live in peace and prayer. Ironically, for a community that has taken a vow of silence, the monks have become world-famous for their glorious voices, raised in ancient chants whose effect on both singer and listener is so profound it is known as "the beautiful mystery."

But when the renowned choir director is murdered, the lock on the monastery's massive wooden door is drawn back to admit Chief Inspector Armand Gamache and Jean-Guy Beauvoir of the *Sûreté du Québec*. There they discover disquiet beneath the silence, discord in the apparent harmony. But before finding the killer, before restoring peace, the Chief must first consider the divine, the human, and the cracks in between.

6. Norma - A Time for Mercy by John Grisham. Published 2020. 558 pages.

A Time for Mercy, a legal thriller novel by John Grisham, is the sequel to A Time to Kill (his first novel, published in 1989) and Sycamore Row (published in 2013). The latest book features the return of the character Jake Brigance, a small-town Mississippi lawyer who takes on difficult cases. The novel was released on 13 October 2020.[1][2]

Once again, Brigance is the court-appointed lawyer who seeks truth and justice for his client, in this case a sixteen-year-old boy named Drew Gamble, who is charged with murdering a law enforcement officer and faces the death penalty. As Jake digs into the details of the case, he knows he has to find a way to save the boy, even at the risk of his career and his family's safety.

7. Hugh – The Code Breaker by Walter Isaacson. Published 2021. 560 pages.

Genetic destiny is a central theme of The Code Breaker, Isaacson's portrait of the gene-editing pioneer Jennifer Doudna, who, with a small army of other scientists, handed humanity the first really effective tools to shape it. Rufus Watson's reflections encapsulate the ambivalence that many people feel about this. If we had the power to rid future generations of diseases such as schizophrenia, would we? The immoral choice would be not to, surely? What if we could enhance healthy human beings, by editing out imperfections? The nagging worry – which might one day seem laughably luddite, even cruel – is that we would lose something along with those diseases and imperfections, in terms of wisdom, compassion and, in some way that is harder to define, humanity.

8. Barbara - The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon.

Published 2003. 226 pages.

A bestselling modern classic—both poignant and funny—about a boy with autism who sets out to solve the murder of a neighbor's dog and discovers unexpected truths about himself and the world.

Nominated as one of America's best-loved novels by PBS's The Great American Read Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow.

This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.