

AMSOC ENGLISH BOOK CLUB SELECTIONS FOR 2018
Meetings at 10:00 am every third Thursday of the month except May and December
All books available on Kindle

January 18 - *The Sorrow of War* by Bao Ninh. (1996) 240 pages. Autobiographical novel.

Ninh was in the North Vietnamese Army that was sent South in 1966 as a seventeen-year old in a youth brigade. Of the five hundred men who went to war with the brigade, he is one of only ten who survived to return ten years later at war's end. They either stayed until they won or got killed. It is a very hard read but a terrific book.

February 15 - *Leonardo da Vinci* by Walter Isaacson (2017) 525 pages. Biography.

To read this magnificent biography of Leonardo da Vinci is to take a tour through the life and works of one of the most extraordinary human beings of all time and in the company of the most engaging, informed, and insightful guide imaginable. Walter Isaacson is at once a true scholar and a spellbinding writer.

March 15 - *Made in Acapulco* by Carmen Amato (2013) 109 pages. Fiction.

Amato, who lived in Mexico City before moving to the Washington DC area, is one of the finest mystery writers focusing on Mexico. This collection of five short stories introduces readers to Emilia Cruz, the first female detective on the Acapulco police force. Now there are five standalone novels in the series, which is under option for TV in the USA.

April 19 - *Just Add Water*, by Jinx Schwartz (2011) 430 pages. Fiction.

The first in a series of nine books about sea misadventures of a forty-something single woman named Hetta Coffey. One morning while brunching at the waterfront, Hetta's attention is snagged by a parade of passing yachts and their hunky male skippers. She decides that if she had a boat, she could get a man. Despite her naiveté of all things nautical, Hetta buys her dream boat and sets about learning to sail.

May 10 - *Abraham Lincoln and Mexico: A History of Courage, Intrigue and Unlikely Friendships* by Michael Hogan (2016) 362 pages. Mexican History.

Historian/educator Hogan, who lives in Guadalajara, uses archival documents from Mexico and USA to examine Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican-American War as a freshman congressman and his support as president to help exiled Mexican president Benito Juarez end French occupation of North America. It's been featured in the [Smithsonian Magazine](#), and is in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

June 21 - *Mexican Kaleidoscope: myths, mysteries and mystique* by Tony Burton (2016) 139 pages. Mexican History.

English by birth, now living in Canada, geographer by training, author/lecturer Burton is a veteran observer of Mexican culture and has traveled extensively around Mexico for almost two decades. Here's how *The Guadalajara Reporter* described the book: "*Mexican Kaleidoscope*, the latest book by Tony Burton, takes readers on a delightful romp through Mexican history and culture, spanning 10,000 years from the Pre-Hispanic era to modern times."

July 19 - *The Mission Walker* by Edie Littlefield Sundby (2017) 272 pages. Autobiography.

A true story of how one woman reacted to the stage 4 cancer diagnosis that gave her only three months to live. She refused to accept death without a fight, and after 79 rounds of chemo, 4 major surgeries, and losing her right lung, she survived. In thanksgiving and gratitude - and to heal physically, emotionally, and spiritually - she walked the 1,600-mile El Camino Real mission trail that spans from Loreto, Mexico, to Sonoma, California.

No August meeting

September 20 - ***Little Fires Everywhere*** by Celeste Ng (2017) 352 pages. Fiction.

“Delectable and engrossing...A complex and compulsively readable suburban saga that is deeply invested in mothers and daughters...What Ng has written, in this thoroughly entertaining novel, is a pointed and persuasive social critique, teasing out the myriad forms of privilege and predation that stand between so many people and their achievement of the American dream.”

October 18 - ***The End of Night: Searching for Natural Darkness in an Age of Artificial Light*** by Paul Godard (2013) 336 pages. Non-fiction.

The End of Night takes as its theme the rapid disappearance of darkness in our world or, more accurately, the growing encroachment of light. Night-time as our ancestors knew it, even as recently as the mid-20th century, is under fire. If the lights of the world stage now never quite go out, the question is how does this affect us, its audience, and the other forms of life that share our environment?

November 15 - ***The Lady in Gold*** by Anne-Marie O'Connor (2012) 370 pages. Biography.

This story became a major motion picture, and the book (which is better than the movie) won several awards. The backstory begins with Nazis in Austria who plundered art treasures, including this world-famous portrait, from wealthy Jewish families. But the mesmerizing subplot is how the niece of the woman in the portrait sued the Austrian government to recover the painting, and how O'Connor tracked her down in Los Angeles and got her story. Movie: *Woman in Gold* starring Helen Mirren and Ryan Reynolds. 2015

December 13 - ***Men Without Women*** by Haruki Murakami (2017) 240 pages. Fantasy Fiction.

A dazzling new collection of short stories—the first major new work of fiction from this beloved, internationally acclaimed writer. Across seven tales, Haruki Murakami brings his powers of observation to bear on the lives of men who, in their own ways, find themselves alone. Here are vanishing cats and smoky bars, lonely hearts and mysterious women, baseball and the Beatles, woven together to tell stories that speak to us all.