

2011–12 ¡Adelante! Book Club- St. Louis IBC

January 26, 2012- Reviewer- Teri Brecht

***Secret Daughter* By Shilpi Somaya Gowda**

On the eve of the monsoons in a remote Indian village, Kavita gives birth to a baby girl. In a culture that favors sons, the only way for Kavita to save her daughter's life is to give her away. Halfway around the globe, Somer, an American doctor, decides to adopt the child after learning that she will never have one of her own. Submitted by Nann Blaine Hilyard, AAUW Waukegan Area (IL) Branch

February 23, 2012- Reviewer- Julie Triplett

***Wench* - Dolen Perkins-Valdez**

Situated in Ohio, a free territory, before the Civil War, Tawawa House is an idyllic retreat for Southern white men who vacation there every summer with their enslaved black mistresses. Its secret is open. Lizzie, Reenie and Sweet are regulars at the resort, building strong friendships over the years. But when Mawu, as fearless as she is assured, comes along and starts talking of running away, things change. To run is to leave everything behind, and for some it also means escaping from the emotional and psychological bonds that bind them to their masters. When a fire on the resorts sets off a string of tragedies, the women of Tawawa House soon learn that triumph and dehumanization are inseparable and that love exists even in the most inhuman, brutal of circumstances all while they bear witness to the end of an era.

March 23, 2012- Reviewer- Lynn Roney

***Extraordinary, Ordinary People: A Memoir of Family*- Condoleezza Rice**

Condoleezza Rice has excelled as a diplomat, political scientist, and concert pianist. Her achievements run the gamut from helping to oversee the collapse of communism in Europe and the decline of the Soviet Union, to working to protect the country in the aftermath of 9-11, to becoming only the second woman - and the first black woman ever -- to serve as Secretary of State.

As comfortable describing lighthearted family moments as she is recalling the poignancy of her mother's cancer battle and the heady challenge of going toe-to-toe with Soviet leaders, Rice holds nothing back in this remarkably candid telling. This is the story of Condoleezza Rice that has never been told, not that of an ultra-accomplished world leader, but of a little girl – and a young woman -- trying to find her place in a sometimes hostile world and of two exceptional parents, and an extended family and community, that made all the difference.

April 26, 2012- Reviewer Jayne Kasten or (Grace Poertner)

***Handle with Care*- By Jodi Picoult**

Every expectant parent will say they don't want a perfect child, just a healthy one. So when Charlotte and Sean O'Keefe's daughter is born with a heartbreaking disability, their lives are overwhelmed by what-ifs. What if their child had been born healthy? What if she had never been born at all? Submitted by Jayne Kasten, AAUW Ballwin-Chesterfield (MO) Branch

May 24, 2012- Reviewer- Lorna Anderson

Gardens of Water -Alan Drew

Powerful, emotional, and beautifully written, Alan Drews stunning first novel brings to life two unforgettable families- one Kurdish, one American and the sacrifice and love that bind them together.

In a small town outside Istanbul, Sinan Basioglu, a devout Muslim, and his wife, Nilüfer, are preparing for their nine-year-old sons coming-of-age ceremony. Their headstrong fifteen-year-old daughter, İrem, resents the attention her brother, Ismail, receives from their parents. For her, there was no such festive observance only the wrapping of her head in a dark scarf and strict rules that keep her hidden away from boys and her friends. But even before the night of the celebration, İrem has started to change, to the dismay of her Kurdish father. What Sinan doesn't know is that much of her transformation is due to her secret relationship with their neighbor, Dylan, the seventeen-year-old American son of expatriate teachers.

September 27, 2012- Reviewer- Debbie McWard

In The Garden of Beasts -Erik Larsen

With this new book, I invite you to journey to Berlin during Hitler's first year in power, 1933, in the company of a real-life father and daughter from Chicago who suddenly found themselves transported to the heart of the city. They had no conception of the harrowing days that lay ahead. At the time, nothing was certain Hitler did not yet possess absolute power, and few outsiders expected his government to survive. The family encountered a city suffused with energy and optimism, with some of the most striking, avant-garde buildings in the world. Its theaters, concert halls, and cafés were jammed; the streets teemed with well-dressed attractive people. But my two protagonists were about to begin an education that would change them forever, with ultimately tragic consequences.