

PROGRESSIVE BOOK CLUB

The Progressive Book Club, under the auspices of the Office Committee, was formed in September, 2009. The meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Democratic Party of Washington County's office. No meetings are held in November and December. Members of the Washington County Democratic Central Committee are invited to attend.

The books selected for the remainder of 2010 and the moderators are as follows:

June 24 Moderator: Carol Barnett

Michael Pollan. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals.*

Michael Pollan stated, "The way we eat represents our most profound engagement with the natural world." He used a naturalist's approach to examine "our national eating disorder." We are preoccupied with eating healthily, yet most of us do not. Pollan moves up and down the food chain in describing the origin of four meals. The first section discusses industrial farming; the second, organic farming; and the third, hunting and gathering.

July 22 Moderator: Ann Conley

John Perkins. *Hoodwinked: An Economic Human Reveals Why the World Financial Markets Imploded—and What We Need to Do to Remake Them.*

The author of *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* explores why the "mutant capitalism" practiced in the United States contributed to the implosion of the world financial markets. He argues that the great recession was caused by the same capitalism cum corruption that we have shoved down the Third World since World War II. After 9/11, this movement dramatically increased and is currently being used against the people of the United States.

August 26 Moderator: Cheryl Bittle

Jeff Sharlet. *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power.*

Sharlet, a journalist and religion scholar, provides a chilling expose of a Washington-based fundamentalist group living communally in Arlington, Virginia. After visiting a friend's brother at the compound, Sharlet was invited to stay for a while. He learned that he was enmeshed in a network of elite, politically ambitious fundamentalists which had been active since 1935. They are responsible for the prayer meetings for members of Congress and annual National Prayer Breakfasts. Their influence extends to the highest offices in the United States and to some of the most oppressive regimes in the world.

September 22 Moderator: Paul Erickson

Nicholas D. Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn. *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*.

According to an old Chinese saying, “Women hold up half the sky.” Yet, more girls have been killed in the past fifty years just because they are girls than all of the men killed in wars in the twentieth century. Kristof and WuDunn analyze the treatment of women worldwide. They argue that investing in the health and autonomy of women would improve all of our lives.

October 28 Moderator: Naomi Ballard

Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*

Alexis de Tocqueville, a young aristocratic French lawyer, came to America in 1831 to study its penitentiary systems. His nine-month sojourn in our country resulted in the publication of *Democracy in America* (1835-1840). Today it remains one of the most frequently cited books in social science literature. According to rumor, Bill Clinton keeps a copy at his bedside. The strengths and weaknesses of our democracy identified by Tocqueville have as much currency today as they had in 1840.