

Oct 27, 2023 LWV Marblehead Book Group

1. “Romney, a Reckoning” (2023) by McKay Coppins The story of one politician’s path as his party takes a turn that leaves him behind.
2. “Democracy in Chains: The deep history of the radical right’s stealth plan for America” (2017, 2023) by Nancy MacLean The book describes the secret conspiracy by the ultra- rich to change the Constitution of the US through an Article V Convention, knocking out voting rights, equality, shrinking the federal government and safety-net programs, stacking the Supreme Court, taking over state legislatures to call for the Convention. A libertarian pipe dream comes closer. The book details the author’s search through old files and libraries to find the origin of this undemocratic political philosophy. Riveting and frightening.
3. “Democracy Awakening” (2023) by Heather Cox Richardson. A hopeful book that details how America has historically turned away from emergent fascism tendencies and the curtailing of rights and what lessons can be gleaned for our future.
4. “The Last Kings of Shanghai: The Rival Jewish Dynasties That Helped Create Modern China” (2021) by Jonathan Kaufman This is the story of two remarkable Jewish families, the Sassoons and the Kadoories, who at one time lived in Bagdad, Iraq, and who emigrated to China. The families settled in different places. The Sassoons were very successful, having profited from the opium trade. But their fortune fell. Both paid key roles in modernizing cities in which they lived in China.
5. “The Last Rose of Shanghai” (2021) by Weina Dai Randel A fictionalized story about a penniless Jewish German refugee, Ernest Reismann, who immigrates to Shanghai and finds a way to support himself through music. The story takes place in the 1940s.
6. “Enough” (2023) by Cassidy Hutchinson. At the age of 24, Hutchinson testified before the January 6th Committee, deciding to tell the whole truth about what she saw in the Trump White House. This is the backstory of her upbringing, her struggles to find a lawyer, ultimately moved by the question of whether she would like the person she saw in the mirror. The first in her family to go to college, she tried to connect in with her very dysfunction of her father, a Trump supporter, as she navigated hard choices. Luckily, she did find support from some non-Trump Republicans and drew inspiration from Alexander Butterfield who told the truth in the case of Richard Nixon. Worth reading!
7. “I swear: Politics is messier than my minivan” (2023) by Katie Porter An irreverent look at how a single mother ran and won an election for the House of Representatives against all odds and the struggles along the way. Famous for her white boards and questions to those Titans of industry who appear before the House financial services committee, as a college professor, she believes politics is about educating the public as well as creating policy. She discusses the arcane rules of Congress, growing up on a farm, law school working on a project with Elizabeth Warren, her family, 24/7 fundraising, and the split with her husband. The chapters are interspersed with photos and nuggets of “Katie-isms”. Our reader highly recommends this book.

8. “Cultivate a Curious Palate” (2023) by Jack Zhang and Emmy Zhang A cookbook generated with the consultation of a toddler interested in food. Fun and inspiring for all ages by the authors of *Cooking for Levi*, another book that explores how to have fun exploring food with a child.
9. “Beauty in Bloom: Floral Portraits” (2023) by Debi Shapiro A gorgeous book of floral photographs, by a visual artist.
- 10, “Tyranny of the Minority” (2023) by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, the authors of “How Democracies Die”. The lessons of history are plumbed to explain the motivation for political parties turning against democracy and how our own is vulnerable to attack from within. Scary...but at least we’re talking about it!