

Volunteers & Collaborations

Book Discussion Panel Events

I. **Name the Event/Series/Book Club**

a. Examples:

HREC Diverse Voices Book Club
Diverse Voices Community Reads
Equity & Empathy Book Club
Equity through Empathy – an HREC Book Club
Equity through Empathy – an HREC Community Read
Reading Diverse Books with HREC
HREC Community Reads
Madison Heights Community Reads

b. Other suggestions? Open to ideas

II. **June 2022. Pride Month**

a. **#1 Book Choice: *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennet**

The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Many years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined. What will happen to the next generation, when their own daughters' storylines intersect?

Weaving together multiple strands and generations of this family, from the Deep South to California, from the 1950s to the 1990s, Brit Bennett produces a story that is at once a riveting, emotional family story and a brilliant exploration of the American history of passing. Looking well beyond issues of race, *The Vanishing Half* considers the lasting influence of the past as it shapes a person's decisions, desires, and expectations, and explores some of the multiple reasons and realms in which people sometimes feel pulled to live as something other than their origins. As with her New York Times-bestselling debut *The Mothers*, Brit Bennett offers an engrossing page-turner about family and relationships that is immersive and provocative, compassionate and wise.

b. **Or #2 Book Choice: *Detransition Baby* by Torrey Peters**

Reese almost had it all: a loving relationship with Amy, an apartment in New York City, a job she didn't hate. She had scraped together what previous generations of trans women could only dream of: a life of mundane, bourgeois comforts. The only thing missing was a child. But

then her girlfriend, Amy, detransitioned and became Ames, and everything fell apart. Now Reese is caught in a self-destructive pattern: avoiding her loneliness by sleeping with married men.

Ames isn't happy either. He thought detransitioning to live as a man would make life easier, but that decision cost him his relationship with Reese—and losing her meant losing his only family. Even though their romance is over, he longs to find a way back to her. When Ames's boss and lover, Katrina, reveals that she's pregnant with his baby—and that she's not sure whether she wants to keep it—Ames wonders if this is the chance he's been waiting for. Could the three of them form some kind of unconventional family—and raise the baby together?

This provocative debut is about what happens at the emotional, messy, vulnerable corners of womanhood that platitudes and good intentions can't reach. Torrey Peters brilliantly and fearlessly navigates the most dangerous taboos around gender, sex, and relationships, gifting us a thrillingly original, witty, and deeply moving novel.

c. Steps to Prepare:

- HREC Member Discussion Leader
- Select Date
- Advertise Book Selection
- Seek out Panel Members
- Partner with Library, Friends of the MH Library, MH Women's Club or other community group to purchase copies of the book to make available for the public (for people to keep? Or they can donate to the library when done...)
- Create a reading list to complement and supplement the title, including podcast discussions or summaries of the book. This should include titles for a range of ages and reading levels.

III. November 2022. Native American Heritage Month

a. **#1 Book Choice: *The Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley**

Eighteen-year-old Daunis Fontaine has never quite fit in, both in her hometown and on the nearby Ojibwe reservation. She dreams of a fresh start at college, but when family tragedy strikes, Daunis puts her future on hold to look after her fragile mother. The only bright spot is meeting Jamie, the charming new recruit on her brother Levi's hockey team.

Yet even as Daunis falls for Jamie, she senses the dashing hockey star is hiding something. Everything comes to light when Daunis witnesses a shocking murder, thrusting her into an FBI investigation of a lethal new drug.

Reluctantly, Daunis agrees to go undercover, drawing on her knowledge of chemistry and Ojibwe traditional medicine to track down the source. But the search for truth is more complicated than Daunis imagined, exposing secrets and old scars. At the same time, she grows concerned with an investigation that seems more focused on punishing the offenders than protecting the victims.

Now, as the deceptions—and deaths—keep growing, Daunis must learn what it means to be

a strong Anishinaabe kwe (Ojibwe woman) and how far she'll go for her community, even if it tears apart the only world she's ever known.

b. #2 Book Choice: (I don't have a back-up choice currently...)

c. Steps to Prepare:

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- Advertise Book Selection
- Seek out Panel Members
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- Create a reading list to complement and supplement the title, including podcast discussions or summaries of the book. This should include titles for a range of ages and reading levels.