

One Book launch details Flint water crisis

By Caitlin Taylor

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The fight for clean water is a story well-known by Michiganders.

Experts say what happened to the City of Flint's water supply, which was heavily contaminated after switching water sources, could happen anywhere – even in Monroe County.

That's what makes this year's 14th annual "One Book, One Community" (OBOC) spring book selection a particularly fitting read for the area, according to Suzanne Krueger, OBOC of Monroe County chairperson and community librarian for the Ida Branch Library.

"What the Eyes Don't

See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City," by Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, has been selected as both this



Hanna-Attisha

year's title and the Great Michigan Read Book for 2019-20.

The book tells the story of Flint's children exposed to lead in their tap water, a scientific thriller that highlights the importance of clean water for all communities.

"This is not the first time an American city has had problems with their water supply," Krueger said. "That's something to think about moving forward; how clean is a city's water?"

Customarily, the county's book selection is revealed during fall, giving residents time to read the book in advance of a slate of themed programs to be held throughout the following spring.

This year, the program began a bit differently, with a launch event held Wednesday night at the Ellis Library & Reference Center, rather than a community reveal. Since OBOC has partnered with the Great Michigan Read – which already had announced its title – officials decided there was no reason to keep the book a secret this year, Krueger said.



Suzanne Krueger, One Book, One Community of Monroe County chairperson and community librarian for the Ida Branch Library, speaks about the 2020 community read title with Cheryl Johnston, former committee chair. This year's selection was "What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City" by Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha. [MONROE NEWS PHOTO BY CAITLIN TAYLOR]

Top book club selections

Parents, students and teachers are among those who often pick up a copy of Monroe County's annual "One Book, One Community" (OBOC) spring read selection. But among the most popular readers, according to local librarians, are those who belong to local book clubs. In keeping with that theme, Judy Murray, reference librarian for the Bedford Branch Library and book club leader for the Monroe County Library System, spoke at the OBOC launch about some of her favorite titles to be read as a group.

"I've read every Monroe County One Book, One Community reading selection," Murray said, adding that the

readability of OBOC texts is what makes them ideal for book clubs.

The following are Murray's top picks, organized by genre, for every type of reader or book club. Fiction: "The Story of Arthur Truluv" by Elizabeth Berg. Coming of age: "Where the Crawdads Sing" by Delia Owens. Nonfiction: "The Secrets We Kept: A Novel" by Laura Prescott. Biography: "Educated: A Memoir" by Tara Westover. True crime: "Chaos: Charles Manson, the CIA, and the Secret History of the Sixties" by Dan Piepenbring and Tom O'Neill. Memoir: "Lake of the Ozarks: My Surreal Summers in a Vanishing America" by Bill Geist

"I think we had a good turnout," Krueger said. "Even though they already knew the title, they still came out to learn more about the book."

The OBOC kickoff event is planned for March 11. Hannah-Attisha is expected to speak March 26. A slew of additional accompanying programs are expected to run from March 9 through April 3.

"What the Eyes Don't See" is the story of how author Hanna-Attisha, along with

a team of researchers, parents, friends and community leaders discovered that Flint children were being exposed to lead in their tap water, according to a book synopsis.

Flint's drinking water contamination, now colloquially known as the "Flint water crisis," began in 2014, after Flint changed its water sources from treated Detroit Water and Sewage

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