



MOUNT PLEASANT, Mich., April 17, 2018 — You can only read one book for the rest of your life. Which do you choose? Which book most influenced you? On Tuesday, May 15 at 7 p.m. at City Opera House in Traverse City, WCMU Public Television launches a ground-breaking, multi-platform project with acclaimed author Jerry Dennis and a screening of the new PBS series, *The Great American Read*. The project, implemented locally by WCMU Public Media and its community partners Horizon Books, Traverse Area District Library and National Writers Series, kicks off a national discussion about *what* we love to read and *why*, encouraging everyone to vote for our favorite work of fiction from a list of 100 of America’s most popular books. A reception follows featuring displays and refreshments.

Tickets are free; registration is required at wcmu.org/events or 1-800-727-9268.

Acclaimed author Jerry Dennis will begin the evening with his presentation “Bookish.” He talks about why books matter—maybe now more than ever—and their power to transform lives and the world. He’ll share some of his experiences growing up fishing, boating and playing baseball in rural northern Michigan, with little access to literature, and how everything changed for him when the Bookmobile started coming around on Saturday mornings. From that beginning, he became a passionate reader, and perhaps inevitably, a writer.



Dennis grew up in northern Michigan and has earned his living as an independent writer since 1986. His essays and short fiction have appeared in more than 100 publications, including *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *Audubon*, *Orion*, *American Way* and *Michigan Quarterly Review*. His books, many of them illustrated by artist Glenn Wolff, are widely acclaimed, have won many awards and have been translated into several languages. In 1999, the Michigan Library Association named him the Michigan Author of the Year, and in 2003 the University of Louisville’s School of Arts and Sciences recognized his achievements in literature with its Outstanding Alumnus of the Year Award.

Join WCMU and its community partners, Horizon Books, Traverse Area District Library and National Writers Series, for this kickoff event featuring our guest speaker, a film screening and a reception featuring displays and refreshments.

Hosted by Meredith Vieira and featuring testimonials from notable figures as well as everyday people, *The Great American Read* will reach into the fabric of communities, igniting new ways to discuss and engage with some of the greatest and most popular works of fiction and culminating in the first-ever national vote to choose “America’s Best-Loved Book.” The series broadcast premiere on WCMU Public Television is May 22 at 8 p.m., kicking off a summer of reading and voting. Then in the fall, seven new episodes of the series will air as the quest to find America’s most beloved book moves into high gear. Visit www.pbs.org/the-great-american-read to follow updates.

About WCMU Public Television

A service of Central Michigan University, WCMU Public Media (WCMU) informs and entertains its audience throughout Michigan with programming and services that reflect and respect the cultures of our state and world. CMU Public Television includes WCML Channel 6 Alpena, WCMU Channel 14 Mt. Pleasant, WCMW Channel 21 Manistee and WCMV Channel 27 Cadillac. More information about WCMU is available at wcmu.org, or by following CMU Public TV on Twitter or Facebook.

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