



FRIENDS OF THE PALM SPRINGS LIBRARY

BOOK CLUB

Last Bus to Wisdom
by Ivan Doig, January 2019



David Kelly, with an assist by Ruth Lindemann, led the discussion about Ivan Doig's novel, *The Last Bus to Wisdom*. There were some disputes about the 2015 *New York Times* obituary for the author because it stated the pronunciation of the author's last name as "DOY-guh." Perhaps this is how a New York accent would pronounce it?! In any case, most agreed they enjoyed the story about a boy nearing adolescence in mid-twentieth century western America – a setting of ranch hands, grifters and canasta-playing widows.

The book was published posthumously which led to some discussion about the ending. Was it really written by Doig? It seemed to tie up all the loose ends rather tidily and with an unexpectedly cheery ending that is reminiscent of films that finish with a "The End" graphic over a scenic sunset landscape.

Many of the characters were great at spinning a yarn, which led to a discussion about the fine line between storytelling and lying. Kate Smith and Jack Kerouac? Rites of initiation vs. rites of passage? Clearly there were many memorable, quotable lines in this book, some of them expressed in the protagonist's autograph book.

Doig wrote what one club member described as an “exuberant” story. Another noted it was perhaps his most autobiographical book because of the people, places and things Doig wrote in *The Last Bus to Wisdom*.

