



FRIENDS OF  
AMERICAN WRITERS  
CHICAGO  
BULLETIN

---

DECEMBER

2008 NO. 4

---

GREETINGS FROM YOUR  
PRESIDENT

DECEMBER 10  
PROGRAM

How can you find good books to read? There are so many titles but not every book is for every reader. Below are a couple tips to help you find something to read. Let me know how you select books to read and I'll include that information in next month's newsletter.

First, find a circle of friends and acquaintances who like the same stuff you do. Figure out what you like – fiction or nonfiction, action or characters, long involving stories or fast reads, mysteries or romances or biographies – and then find people who really read what you read. Talk to them and compare notes.

Second, find some sources. I like People Magazine. It recommends 2–3 books every week that appeal to women – mostly fiction with not too much romance but strong issues, such as divorce, family tragedies, etc. Oprah chooses well – I like some of her choices better than others but all of them are well-written and worth a try. The lists found at bookstores, especially Indie Bestsellers (formerly Book sense) are great. Each title has a brief description so you know what the book is about. These lists can also be found online, <http://www.indiebound.org/indie-bestsellers>.

Have a great holiday season,

Vivian Mortensen, President

*"History of the  
Holidays in Chicago"*  
*Anna Carey*  
*Chicago History Museum*

"In Chicago, as wherever Christmas is celebrated, holiday traditions reflect universal themes and local color, both the spirit of giving and snow-covered State Street. In 1913, Chicago decorated its first civic Christmas tree, while many others arrived on the fabled "Christmas tree ships" of the era. Holiday shoppers crowded the sidewalks in front of stores such as Marshall Field & Company, Santa Claus held the rapt gaze of children, and churches and charities reached out to the needy. So Christmas was then and so it has remained." Join us on the 10th of December as we explore our city's holiday past and the books that pay tribute to it in a program coordinated by Anna Carey of the Chicago Historical Society.

*Books About Christmas in  
Chicago*

**Christmas on State Street, 1940's and  
Beyond** by Robert P. Ledermann

**Historic Photos of Christmas in Chicago** by  
Rosemary Adams



**DECEMBER 10  
RESERVATIONS**

Please join us for the December 10<sup>th</sup> Holiday luncheon and program at the Fortnightly of Chicago, 120 East Bellevue, at 12:00 noon. Complimentary coffee and tea service is available in the front parlor for early arrivals.

To reserve your seating at the December Luncheon call: Pat Adelberg at 847-588-0911 or Rosemary Crowley at 312-856-0009. Pat and / or Rosemary can answer any questions as well as take your reservations. **Please note: reservations as well as cancellations are due before 6:00 pm on the Sunday prior to the luncheon, December 7.** Luncheons ordered but not served must be paid in full. Checks may be sent to Eileen McNulty, 4450 North Kostner, Chicago, IL 60630, phone 773-283-3369.

Seating arrangements in the dining room will be round tables seating eight people. The all-inclusive luncheon price is \$35.00. A vegetarian or fruit plate may be substituted if requested at the time the reservation is made.

**THE CHICAGO  
HISTORY MUSEUM**

The Chicago History Museum is located at the south end of Lincoln Park at 1601 North Clark Street. Visit the website at [www.chicagohistory.org](http://www.chicagohistory.org) for upcoming exhibitions. The museum is a privately endowed, independent institution devoted to collecting, interpreting and presenting the rich multicultural history of Chicago and Illinois. The museum's ability to illuminate the past is a reminder of what really happened, sheds light on the present, and compellingly informs the future.

*Save the Date  
Wednesday  
January 14, 2009*

*"Theater in Chicago"*

Michael Halberstam

Artistic Director and co-founder of  
the Chicago Writers' Theatre



***YEAR END BOOK SALE***

Bargains galore are waiting for your purchase! The two literary awards committees are setting out a selection of books at the December luncheon. What a good way to jump-start the holiday shopping and support the literary awards. The cost is very minimal. Bring lots of singles and a large tote bag!



## HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

### Fiction

**AMERICA, AMERICA** by Ethan Canin. 2008, 480 pages, \$27. A wealthy, politically influential family befriend a young boy from a blue-collar background. As the years go by, he gets increasingly pulled into family politics which are not always above board.

**FORGETFULNESS** by Ward Just. 2006, 320 pages, \$13.95 paper. A former spy for the CIA, Thomas Railles, finds his life turned upside down when his wife Florette is murdered, until he discovers that four Moroccan terrorists have been charged with the crime.

**THE GUERNSEY LITERARY AND POTATO PEEL PIE SOCIETY** by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows, 2008, 278 pages, \$22. Set in the 1950's, an English writer corresponds with a community of readers who tell how they survived the German occupation of the isle of Guernsey.

**THE HA HA** by Dave King. 2006, 340 pages, \$13.99 paper. A brain-injured Vietnam vet is still trying to cope with life 30 years later. When a friend dumps her nine-year-old onto his care, he is forced to reach out to others and come out of his shell. A good book discussion choice.

**THE LACE READER** by Brunonia Barry, 2008, 390 pages \$24.95. A young woman returns to her hometown of Salem, Massachusetts, for rest and relaxation but tranquility in her life is short-lived when her aunt drowns under mysterious circumstances.

### Mystery

**CACTUS HEART** by Jon Talton. 2007, 236 pages, \$14.95 paper. Historian turned Sheriff's Deputy Dave Mapstone literally stumbles into a crime while chasing a fleeing suspect. Dave rushes into an old Phoenix warehouse where he discovers two children's corpses from the 1930s.

**CHRISTINE FALLS** by Benjamin Black. 2007, 352 pages, \$14 paper. Returning to the morgue where he works after an office party, Dublin pathologist Quirke stumbles across a body that should not have been there, a young woman named Christine Falls, as well as his brother-in-law, eminent pediatrician Malachi Griffin, altering a file to cover up the corpse's cause of death.

**HOLD TIGHT** by Harlan Coben. 2008, 416 pages, \$26.95. Concerned about their son, parents add software to his computer so they can spy on him. What they discover is frightening.

**STILL LIFE** by Louise Penny. 2006, 312 pages, \$13.95 paper. A team of Montreal police are called to a small Quebec village to investigate the killing of an artist on the eve of her first exhibition. This is the first of a series of mysteries which have dark plots, but rich settings, lavish descriptions of food and clever who-dun-its.

## Nonfiction

**AMERICAN LION: ANDREW JACKSON IN THE WHITE HOUSE**, by Jon Meacham. 2008, 512 pages, \$30. A thought-provoking (and entertaining) study of Andrew Jackson chronicles the life and career of a self-made man who went on to become a military hero and seventh president of the United States.

**GEORGIANA: DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE** by Amanda Foreman. 1998, 512 pages, \$15.95 paper. Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806) was the most prominent British woman of her day. Whatever she wore became instantly fashionable, and royals, aristocrats and politicians sought her opinion, for she was as influential as she was beautiful. The movie, "The Duchess" is based on this book.

**THE MAYFLOWER** by Nathaniel Philbrick. 2006, 461 pages, \$16 paper. The true story of the Pilgrims is much more than the well-known tale of piety and sacrifice; it is a 55-year epic about survival. The author gives a well-researched, balanced, insightful view of both the pilgrims and the Indians.

**THE RISKS OF SUNBATHING TOPLESS: AND OTHER FUNNY STORIES FROM THE ROAD** by Kate Chynoweth, ed. 2005, 256 pages, \$15.95 paper. A frisky and fun collection of women's essays on the perils of traveling inspired by editor and contributor Chynoweth's desire "to write about the unvarnished truth, with all its freakish strangers, stained shirts and missed connections".

**THE OUTLIERS** by Malcolm Gladwell. 2008, 320 pages, \$27.99. Why are some people more successful than others? The author examines cultural, family, and idiosyncratic factors that shape high achievers in an engaging and often inspiring way.

## *Religious Symbolism of the Twelve Days of Christmas December 25 - January 6*

*A Partridge in a Pear Tree* refers to God

*Two Turtle Doves* refers to the Old and New Testaments

*Three French Hens* refers to Faith, Hope and Charity, the Theological Virtues

*Four Calling Birds* refers to the Four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists

*Five Golden Rings* refers to the first Five Books of the Old Testament

*Six Geese A-laying* refers to the six days of creation

*Seven Swans A-swimming* refers to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments

*Eight Maids A-milking* refers to the eight Beatitudes

*Nine Ladies Dancing* refers to the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit

*Ten Lords A-leaping* refers to the Ten Commandments

*Eleven Pipers Piping* refers to the eleven faithful apostles

*Twelve Drummers Drumming* refers to the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed

