



FRIENDS OF  
AMERICAN WRITERS  
CHICAGO  
BULLETIN

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MAY

2009 NO. 9

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We've had a wonderful year. Membership has stopped slipping, luncheon attendance is up, the Awards Luncheon was a success and a website is finally on the way. Thanks all.

Membership is up this year. The numbers had been going down for the past few years but finally we are starting to gain again. Chris Bern, especially, but others too, are inviting their friends to lunches and encouraging them to join. This is a great sign.

Luncheon attendance is up 28% this year! Members enjoy the food and ambiance of the Fortnightly (thanks to Rosemary Crowley and her committee) as well as the interesting programs that Sean Eshaghy has arranged.

The winning authors spoke eloquently at the Awards Luncheon this year. The two award committees made wonderful selections – we sold 84 books at the program. Thanks to all the work of the Literary Committee headed by Corinne Morrissey and the Juvenile Literary Committee chaired by Lorraine Campione. Thanks to Betty Angelos and the Awards Luncheon Committee for assembling a yummy menu, a pretty table and delightful music.

Lastly, Karen Baker has volunteered to create a website for the club. She is working hard and it will be available soon. This is long overdue and will help the organization in many ways. She deserves a special round of applause.

Vivian Mortensen, President

*THE ELEANOR  
LONEK  
APPRECIATION  
PROGRAM  
MAY 13*

*Barbara Rinella*

*Book Reviewer and Dramatist*

*The Commoner*

**By John B. Schwartz**

**THE COMMONER** by John B. Schwartz is the fictionalized tale of Empress Haruko of Japan, the first commoner to marry into the royal family. Haruko is the beloved only child of a wealthy sake manufacturer and a serious art student. She meets the Crown Prince while playing tennis and its love at first sight. Although her parents are against the match, the Crown Prince perseveres and the couple marries. Soon she realizes what she has given up. She must break all ties with the past including her family and live in an oppressive world of mysterious rules and regulations governed by a mother-in-law from hell. Hearing the book, one will be reminded of the Princess Diana's plight.

## ***SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW***

**B**arbara Rinella, a former teacher, defines herself as an "academic entertainer." For many years she has been celebrating literature and learning through her delightful programs on current books. Ms. Rinella has given book dramatizations several times for FAW and members always request her return.

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

**MAY 13<sup>TH</sup> 11:30 AM**

Each year the final FAW meeting in May is designated the **ANNUAL MEETING**. Starting at 11:30 am, each Board Member is called to read aloud her report summarizing her committee's activities throughout the 2008/2009 year. The Treasurer will also read the upcoming budget at this time. It is important for member to attend this portion of the May program to better understand the events of the past year and learn how the club operates

## **MAY 13 RESERVATIONS**

Please join us for the May 13 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 May 13 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, May 10. *Email reservations are not accepted.*** 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 ELEANOR LONEK APPRECIATION PROGRAM**

September meetings have been traditionally dedicated to Eleanor Lonek: this year the Board has decided that the event honoring her will be changed to the December meeting of each year.

Eleanor was a member of the Friends of American Writers for 23 years, from 1973 to 1996, serving as Chairman of the Juvenile Awards Committee (1983- 1985) and as a Foundation Fund Trustee (1992- 1995). In 1997 FAW was honored to receive a bequest of \$10,000 and the Lonek Appreciation Program was subsequently established in her honor.

## WHAT A SWELL PARTY IT WAS!!

The Annual Awards Luncheon was one of the best in years. The food was especially tasty – I loved the gooey chocolate cake with real whipped cream. The bright pink floral baskets really livened up a cold grey day.

There were five winning authors this year and all were present. FAW was able to give \$7,000 in prize money to these winning authors. The author presentations were very personal and even though there was an extra speech, the program moved right along.

**Jenny Meyerhoff**, winner of the \$400 Juvenile Literary Award for *Third Grade Baby*, said, “Even though I’m middle-aged, I’m really only six months old in my writing.” She thanked her mother-in-law who pushed her into submitting her manuscript and FAW who is encouraging her with this prize.

**Blue Balliett**, winner of a \$1,300 Juvenile Literary Award for *The Calder Game*, told the audience that for the last 25 years, she has spent 24 hours a day around kids – both her students and her family. They had given her their ideas and interests and have sparked her writing.

**Nancy L. Hull**, also won a \$1,300 Juvenile Literary Award for her book *On Rough Seas*. This historical novel for middle students portrays the events at Dunkirk during World War II. Ms Hull talked about using keepsakes from her relatives, such as her mother’s ration book, to help bring history alive.

**Frances Depones Peebles**, winner of a \$2,000 Literary Award for *The Seamstress*, talked about growing up on a farm in northeast Brazil. A doll she owned dressed in a cangaceiros (bandit) costume gave her the inspiration to write the story of sisters, one who marries a doctor and one who becomes a legendary bandit in Brazil.

**Kalisha Buckhanon**, who also won a \$2,000 Literary Award, thanks FAW for giving recognition to *Conception*. Her first novel won an Alex prize and was a success. This book she feels is more powerful and better written. We are the first to honor this tale of a fifteen-year-old girl who becomes pregnant and must decide whether to keep the baby.

### **KUDOS**

Congratulations!



25 Year Member

*Alice Sandberg*

**BOOK SALE**

Bargains galore are waiting for your purchase at the May Luncheon! The two literary award committees are clearing out the books left from the award selections. There is a wide array of books available and the proceeds will benefit next year's awards. What a good way to jump start your summer reading and support FAW. The cost is very minimal. Bring lots of singles and a large tote bag!

## MORE GREAT BOOKS

Members of the Juvenile Literary Committee had a difficult time choosing the winning author for the annual award. The following books were favorites and the committee wanted to share their favorites that did not win.

Phyllis Nickels – *Evolving Planet* by Eric Kelly and Richard Kissel. This is a beautiful, informative book about the earth from its beginning to the present time. Illustrations are wonderful. Great to use as a reference. For young adult to adult.

Margaret Papp – *Third Grade Baby* by Jenny Myerhoff. This is a story of a third grader who still has not lost a single baby tooth. Is there a tooth fairy? Primary grade but especially third graders will love this book and relate to it. (This was a special mention at the Awards Luncheon.)

Rosemary Crowley – *The Adventurous Deeds of Deadwood Jones* by Helen Hemphil. A young black teen, born a freeman, Prometheus Jones, wins a horse with a raffle ticket bought from two rednecks. Knowing they will never let him keep the horse since they consider him a "slave boy", he and his cousin, Omer, leave and join a cattle drive out of Texas heading for Deadwood in the Dakota Territory. This book is based on an actual autobiography. The author's notes state, "More than five thousand African American cowboys went up the trail in the heyday of the Texas cattle drive." "A cowboy's work was dirty and dangerous. It was lonely and boring." "Food could be plentiful or scarce, but water was always a problem. Cattle and men couldn't survive without water, so each day's journey was planned out to the next river or watering hole." This is a great exciting read for both boys and girls. For grade 5 to young adult. Our whole committee recommends this book.

Louise Pavelka – *Hush Little Dragon* by Boni Ashburn. Illustrated by Kelly Murphy. Set to the familiar tune of "Hush Little Baby", this sweet and funny bedtime tale will satisfy even the pickiest of baby dragons. Baby Dragon and Mama Dragon are ready to settle in for the night. Baby can't sleep until he gets a tasty treat. Together they search out a snack in the nearby village. For the pre-reader to beginning reader.

We would like to thank Ada's Famous Deli on Wabash Avenue for allowing us to hold our meetings in their dining room. Great hot Chocolate!

**FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS**

## 2009 / 2010 DUES

**It is time to pay your dues!** Please fill out this form and write a check made payable to Friends of American Writers. You can bring it to the May meeting or you can mail it to our **Treasurer:**

**Eileen McNulty  
4450 North Kostner  
Chicago, Illinois 60630-4102**

If you have any questions, please call Eileen at **773-283-3369**.

Please check the appropriate category:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$40 Regular Member

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20 Non Resident Member

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20 Sustaining Club (group member, rather than individual)

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Are your name, address and phone number listed correctly in the yearbook? \_\_\_\_\_