



FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS

CHICAGO

www.fawchicago.com

January

2009-2010 No. 4

GReETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

A few weeks ago I had lunch with a friend who is retiring from the Skokie Public Library at the end of the year. We exchanged book titles we read and loved over the last year. I consider my friend to be on par with me as far as reading ability and knowledge but we vehemently disagreed on several titles.

My favorite of 2009 was *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout. Anyone who knows my reading style would know that it's a natural for me – it's a book of connected short stories centering on a cantankerous older woman. My friend Ricki hated it saying there was no plot, silly characters and very boring. She recommended *The Help* which I found to have an excellent premise but too sappy. We both loved the latest Louise Penny mystery, *The Brutal Telling*, set in a quaint village in Quebec, *South of Broad* by Pat Conroy whose characters travel from Charleston to San Francisco to help a childhood friend and *The Good Soldiers*, an eye-opening nonfiction book by David Finkel about soldiers sent to Iraq in 2007.

It's so fun to book talk with friends, arguing, trading titles to read and sharing a love of books. This new year, try to find time to swap book ideas with friends. And then find time to read some of these titles!

Vivian Mortensen,
Interim President

January Program

Calligraphy in Chicago Design

January 13, 2010

Paul Gehl, Custodian of the John M. Wing Foundation on the History of Printing at the Newberry Library, will show stunning examples of Chicago Christmas cards, magazine covers, book plates that use exquisite calligraphy and hand-lettering unique to Chicago. These commercial "looks" from the first half of the twentieth century not only are beautiful to look at but also define how Chicagoans viewed modernism in art, design, and even literature at that time..

Dr. Gehl has a doctorate from the University of Chicago and has worked at the Newberry for over 25 years. He published *A Moral Art: Grammar, Culture and Society in Trecento Florence* (Cornell University Press) in 1993.

Sean Eshaghy
Program Chair

Get the word out!

FAW is always interested in new members. If you bring guests to the luncheons, tell them about the club and see if they would like to join. If you meet new neighbors in your building, perhaps they are looking for new activities and would like to become an FAW member.

FAW has some half-sheet fliers that publicize the club. Carol Eshaghy and Betty O'Toole have found that if you post these on a community bulletin board in your building, you might spark interest among other residents.

If you'd like some fliers or membership applications, contact Vivian Mortensen at 847-827-8339 or vmortens@comcast.net.



New members

Debbie Hausmann
1649 Markey Lane
Flossmoor, IL 60422
708-799-1755

Marlene Primack
1015 S. S Butternut Circle
Frankfort, IL 60423
815- 464-0401



New phone number

Lyn Ridgeway
312-663-3153

Year of the Kindle & Nook

There is so much press recently about eBooks (electronic books). If you are not quite up to speed about these new formats of books, let me clue you in.

The Amazon Kindle is an electronic book reader made and sold by Amazon.com. It is about the size of a paperback book and weighs only 10 oz. It was introduced in November 2007, at a price of \$399, later lowered to \$259. A large-screen version, optimized to display textbooks and newspapers, was introduced in May 2009 for \$489. The device will hold up to 1,500 books. Books cost \$9.99 apiece from the online company, Amazon, which has an assortment of close to 400,000 titles. Customers go to the Amazon site, choose and pay for their selections and download the titles to their device.

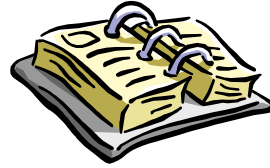
The Nook is the Barnes & Noble brand. It is the same size as the Kindle and also costs \$259. Customers go to the Barnes & Noble computer site or to their stores to select, purchase and download the titles. The Nook will also download free titles from Google (mostly classic titles with no copyrights).

The Sony eBook is the latest electronic book. There are three models from a pocket-sized model at \$199 to a larger size at \$399. You can purchase the Sony at Amazon or Best Buy. Online books can be purchased and downloaded from the Sony site which currently is much smaller than the other two but is quickly catching up.

Bestsellers, nonfiction, children's titles, romances, biographies, literate and general fiction and much more is available in these formats. It's great for traveling or commuting to work when you don't want to lug around a big book. If you buy lots of bestsellers, the price is cheaper than hardcovers. Soon textbooks will be available which will be handy for students.

Vivian Mortensen

NOTE CHANGES IN LUNCHEON SCHEDULE



SAVE
THE
DATE!

The programs for February and March have been changed. Please note the new line up:

February 10, 2010

Marcus Sakey
Chicago Mystery Writer

March 10, 2010

Sherrill Bodine
Author of *A Black Tie Affair*

Annual Awards Luncheon April 21, 2010

It's time to mark your new 2010 calendar for the Annual Awards Luncheon. You will want to be in the Union League Club when we applaud our award-winning authors on Wednesday, April 21st.

Details will follow in next month's Bulletin. Bring friends and join us to celebrate spring and the winning authors.



January LUNCHEON

WEDNESDAY, January 13, at NOON

\$35 PER PERSON

The fortnightly of Chicago
120 Bellevue Place, Chicago, IL

To make reservations, call **Pat Adelberg at 847-588-0911** or **Rosemary Crowley at 312-856-0009**. Vegetarian meals may be requested at the time you make your reservation.

REMEMBER:

- **Reservations (and cancellations) are due before 6 p.m. on Sunday, January 10th.**
- Pay by check (\$35) payable to FAW at the door.
- \$14 parking is available two doors west of the Fortnightly.

- The seating arrangements in the room will be round tables seating eight people. If you wish to sit with your friends and/or guests, please arrive early.
- Complimentary coffee and tea service are available in the parlor prior to the lunch.
- If you make a reservation but cannot come, you must call to cancel. Otherwise you will be charged the \$35. If this happens, send your check to Eileen McNulty, 4450 North Kostner, Chicago, IL 60630-4102.

Ragdale, Chicago's artist retreat

How can writers find time in their busy schedules to write a book? With noisy neighbors, barking dogs, children's activity schedules, grocery shopping, laundry and so much more, it must be hard to find "quality time" to think about literary things. Emerging authors need a retreat, a place to get away from their everyday lives and work on their writing. Ragdale is one of these retreats.

Ragdale is located on the grounds of Arts and Crafts architect Howard Van Doren Shaw's 1897 summer home on Green Bay Road in Lake Forest. The artists' community is situated 30 miles north of Chicago and overlooks 50 acres of prairie. The facility has dorm accommodations for eight writers, 3-4 artists and one composer each session. There are individual rooms, shared living spaces for lounging and dining, and work areas including private desks, art studios and music practice rooms. Participants may stay for sessions lasting two to eight weeks. The cost is a minimal \$25 per day which covers dinner six nights per week and fully stocked refrigerators and kitchens to prepare all the other meals.

People wishing to use the facilities must submit applications and be accepted to the program. Writers, artists, and composers come from around the country and the world to work in a facility where they create, write, experiment, research, plan, compose, rejuvenate, brainstorm, and work. Ragdale's library is filled with books from writers who have been through the program. Jane Smiley, Sara Paretsky and Elizabeth Oness are three FAW winners who participated at Ragdale..

Ragdale has an interesting history. It is the ancestral home of the Shaw Family. Designed by Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw, it was constructed in 1897 in the Arts and Crafts style. An architect and craftsman himself, Shaw had family members who were painters, poets, playwrights and sculptors, as well as subsequent generations that include even more writers and artists across many disciplines. In 1943 the Meadow Studio was built on the prairie as a sculpture studio for Shaw's daughter Sylvia Shaw Judson (1897-1978). Sylvia worked there for 35 years, and many of her pieces feature animals or children. Her most famous sculptures are *Bird Girl*, which was featured on the cover of the novel *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* by John Berendt and *The Little Gardener* which was bought by Jacqueline Kennedy for the Rose Garden at the White House.

Shaw's granddaughter, poet Alice Judson Hayes (1922-2006), created the Ragdale Foundation, a nonprofit artists' community providing a peaceful place for artists to work in

1976. The grounds were expanded in 1980 and the property was added to the National Register for Historic Places. In 1986 the grounds were donated to the City of Lake Forest - the Foundation runs the artist program and tends to the gardens but the City owns the land.

Ragdale runs various programs open to the public. Annually they host “A Novel Affair” which is a fall weekend of activities for authors and the public. Sporadically there are also author readings and tours of the grounds. Check out the website www.ragdale.org for upcoming events.

Vivian Mortensen, Bulletin Editor