



FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS

CHICAGO

www.fawchicago.org

May

2010-2011 No. 9

Greetings FROM THE PRESIDENT

We had a very interesting Awards Luncheon at the Casino Club with four very different but informative young authors. The luncheon was a terrific filet with all the trimmings. Now we are looking forward to our May meeting that also will be at the Casino Club with Barbara Rinella as our speaker, something you won't want to miss.

I also need to remind you if you have not paid your membership for the coming year 2011-2012 that \$40.00 is due to Eileen McNulty at 4450 N. Kostner Avenue, Chicago 60630 or it can of course be paid in person at the May Luncheon.

One other reminder: we will have an extra meeting on June 8th at the Fortnightly Club with one of the members of the Club. She will give us the history of the Club that we so dearly enjoy.

Betty O'Toole
FAW President

Note: There will be one more lunch meeting next month on Wednesday, June 8th to highlight The Fortnightly. Club members from the club will talk about its history, its membership and much more. Informal tours will also be available. Watch for the flier!

May Program

*The Eleanor Lonek Appreciation
Program*

May 18 at noon

The Casino club

**Barbara
Rinella**

Book Reviewer and
Dramatist



Claude & Camille:

A Novel of Monet

Join us for a program featuring Stephanie Cowell's novel, *Claude and Camille*, dramatized by Barbara Rinella. The novel offers a fascinating look at nineteenth century Paris, the bohemian lives of its Impressionists and their struggle to create a new way of seeing the world. The story depicts the romantic painter Monet and his love for the beautiful upper-class girl Camille Doncieux who threw away a life of privilege to live in poverty with him.

Another Wonderful Awards Year

The April Awards Luncheon was another successful event. Celebrated this year at the Casino Club, members arrived to a table of autographing authors, complimentary coffee and tea, and lots of winning books to buy. Lunch was an impressive beef filet with asparagus with refreshing sorbet and meringue cookies for dessert.

Juveniles authors presented with prizes include **Rebecca Barnhouse** who received \$1200 for *The Coming of the Dragon* (Random House). Although she was unable to attend, Lorraine Campione, Juvenile Literary Chair read a letter of appreciation from the author.

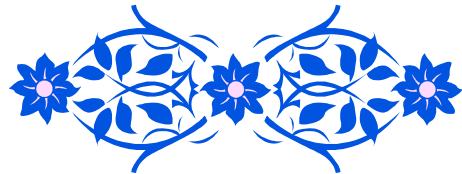
Kat Falls who received \$800 for *Dark Life* (Scholastic Press). This is a deep sea adventure for middle students. She wanted to write a book “that was so fast that a reader would ignore the pings of the IM texting.” She tried to find the creepiest cool animals under the sea. Every animal in the book has been researched and is real. The movie rights have been sold to Disney and the sequel is coming out in August.

Marianne Malone received \$1200 for her juvenile novel, *The Sixty-Eight Rooms* (Scholastic Press), a fantasy about two children who are able to shrink themselves to explore the Thorne Rooms at the Art Institute. Having gone to the museum many times all through her childhood, Ms Malone loved the rooms and this story came to her fully formed. She enjoys writing fiction where “you can write anything you want, like an artist. You can be creative without being necessarily accurate.”

Christie Hodgen won the Fiction Literary Prize and \$2000 for her novel, *Elegies for the Brokenhearted* (Norton). Her book is five elegies introducing people whose lives shaped the main character Mary Murphy including a seedy uncle, an overweight college roommate, and a failed gay composer.. Hodgen, an Alabama

native, recalls such individuals she knew in her youth. She said that she rarely gets feedback from her readers which made this prize so memorable. Roberta Gates, Literary Chair, announced in her introduction that Ms Hodgen just found out that she also won a Guggenheim Prize.

Heather Sellers won the Nonfiction Literary Prize and \$2000 for her memoir, *You Don't Look Like Anyone I Know* (Riverhead Press). Ms Sellers has face blindness, a disorder in which she can't remember what anyone looks like, even her own mother. She can only recognize people by their walk, their clothes, etc. She “worked on this book all my life. I wanted to write about my crazy, chaotic family” including a drunken father and a schizophrenic mother.

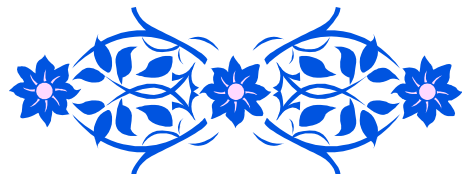


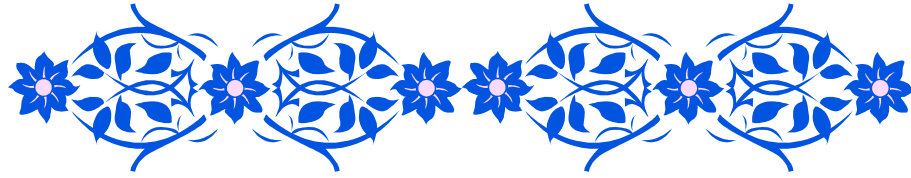
2010/2011 dues

Everyone should have received a dues form with last month's newsletter. The club year runs from May 2010 to April 2011. If you still have not paid, please fill out the form and return with a \$40 check payable to FAW to:

Eileen McNulty
4450 North Kostner
Chicago, IL 60630-4102

Questions? Call Eileen at 773-283-3369.





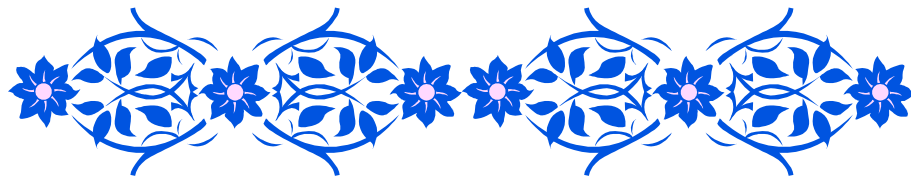
MAY LUNCHEON
WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, at NOON
\$35 PER PERSON

The casino club
195 East Delaware, Chicago, IL

To make reservations, call **Pat Adelberg at 847-588-0911** or **Ruth Ann Brinkman at 773-271-9604**. Vegetarian meals may be requested at the time you make your reservation.

REMEMBER:

- **Reservations (and cancellations) are due before 6 p.m. on Sunday, May 15th.**
- Pay by check (\$35) payable to FAW at the door.
- \$17 parking is available at 200 E. Delaware Place.
- The seating arrangements in the room will be rectangle tables seating six 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.



The Eleanor Lonek Appreciation Program

One meeting per year has been traditionally dedicated to Eleanor Lonek: this year the Board has decided that the event honoring her will be the May meeting.

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.

Looking for Something Good to Read?

This year's adult literary awards committee read almost forty books in its search for the two best books to come out of (or be set in) the Midwest in 2010. Here is the list of top choices. These will keep you busy this summer!

Our winners:

Elegies for the Brokenhearted by Christie Hodgen (Norton): Emphasizing plot over character, this novel-in-stories offers a funny but touching series of reminiscences about five persons who were important to Mary Murphy, the book's young protagonist.

You Don't Look Like Anyone I Know by Heather Sellers (Riverhead Press): This sprightly and generous memoir combines growing up in a dysfunctional family (cross-dressing father, psychotic mother) with the author's struggles to understand and cope with her face blindness.

The short-list:

Get Capone by Jonathon Eig (Simon & Schuster): This well-researched nonfiction book tells the story of mobster Al Capone and the law officers who brought him down.

Freshwater Boys by Adam Schultema (Harpercollins): These coming-of-age stories, set in Michigan, focus on boys who are trying to understand what it means to be men in the absence of good role models.

The Sandbox by David Zimmerman (SoHo): A young soldier in Iraq is caught up in a mystery that forces him to fight against his superiors as well as the enemy.

Currency by Zoe Zolbrod (OV Books): In this colorful novel, a young woman traveling in Southeast Asia gets caught up in a smuggling ring.

Also keep in mind:

Alice I Have Been by Melanie Benjamin (Random House): This novel recreates the life and world of Alice Liddell, the little girl who served as the model for Alice in Wonderland.

Drowned Boy by Jerry Gabriel (Sarabande Books): Set in an impoverished rural area of Ohio, this collection of short stories uses lean diction and a haunting style of prose to seduce the reader.

The Grace of Silence by Michele Norris (Pantheon): This memoir by the NPR journalist looks at the black experience from an engagingly personal perspective.

How to Read the Air by Dinaw Mengestu (Riverhead Books): An Ethiopian immigrant family living in Peoria, Illinois, provides the basis for a fictional examination of storytelling and family history.

The Lost Summer of Louisa May Alcott by Kelly O'Connor McNees (Putnam): This novel tells the story of a romance that might have occurred during an unaccounted-for summer in Alcott's life.

The Nebraska Dispatches by Christopher Cartmill (University of Nebraska): Playwright Cartmill chronicles his quest to discover the true story behind Nebraska's Native American Chief Standing Bear.

Wicked River: The Mississippi River When It Last Ran Wild by Lee Sandlin (Pantheon): As vast as the river it describes, this book has a little something for everybody, including history, geography and legendary storytelling.

The Wilding by Benjamin Percy (Graywolf Press): Although the ending is a bit disappointing, this is a provocative novel about the changing definition of manhood in this technological age.

- Roberta Gates, Literary Awards Chair