



FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS



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CHICAGO
www.fawchicago.org

THE FORTNIGHTLY CLUB
OF CHICAGO
120 E. BELLEVUE PLACE

President's Message

CHRISTINE BERN, *President*

Why Do I Read

*"Why do I read?
I just can't help myself.
I read to learn and to grow, to laugh and to
be motivated.
I read to understand things I've never been
exposed to.
I read when I'm crabby, when I've just said
monumentally dumb things to the
people I love.
I read for strength to help me when I feel
broken, discouraged, and afraid.
I read when I'm angry at the whole world.
I read when everything is going right.
I read to find hope.
I read because I'm made up not just of skin and
bones, of sights, feelings, and a deep need for
chocolate, but I'm also made up of words.
Words describe my thoughts and what's
hidden in my heart.
Words are alive--when I've found a story that
I love, I read it again and again, like playing
a favorite song over and over.
Reading isn't passive--I enter the story with
the characters, breathe their air, feel their
frustrations, scream at them to stop when
they're about to do something stupid, cry
with them, laugh with them.
Reading for me, is spending time with a friend.
A book is a friend.
You can never have too many."* 

Gary Paulsen, *Shelf Life: Stories by the Book*

PROGRAM Award-winning Authors to Appear on January 8

ROBERTA GATES, *Program Chair*

Beat the cold-weather-after-Christmas blues by joining us on Wednesday, January 8 when two of our favorite authors, **Thomas Maltman** and **Amina Gautier**, will be with us to discuss their new books.

Thomas Maltman, as you may recall, won FAW's only adult literary prize in 2008. His winning novel, entitled *The Night Birds*, also won an Alex Award and a Spur Award. In addition, it was chosen as an "Outstanding Book for the College Bound" by the American Library Association.

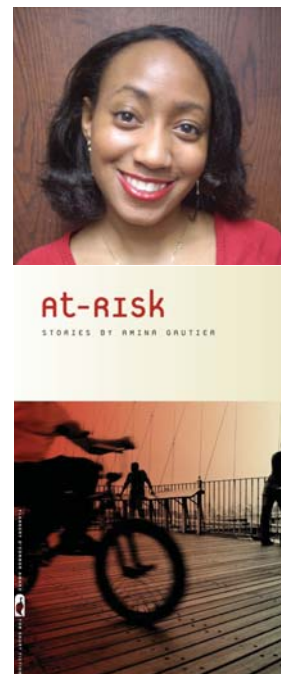
Little Wolves, Maltman's latest book, is also getting critical acclaim, having been chosen as the All Iowa Reads selection for 2014, a Best Adult Book for Teens by *School Library Journal* and a Favorite Mystery of 2013 by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. And no wonder: *Little Wolves* is not only a penetrating portrait of a small town in Minnesota but a powerful murder mystery that will keep you up late at night.

Amina Gautier is another prize-winning author. Her first collection of short stories won the prestigious Flannery O'Connor Award, while *We Will Be Happy*, due out very soon, won the Prairie Schooner Book Prize. Her stories have been widely published by such journals as *Best African American*

▼ Tom Maltman




▼ Amina Gautier



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Fiction, Glimmer Train, Iowa Review, Kenyon Review and *North American Review*. In addition, Gautier has been awarded the Crazyhorse Fiction Prize, the Danahy Prize and the Jack Dyer Prize as well as many other awards. She has also been awarded grants

from the Illinois Arts Council and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

We know you won't want to miss an opportunity to meet these impressive authors and hear them read from their work. So mark your calendars now! 

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Make Your Reservations for the January Luncheon. Reservations for the January luncheon, Wednesday, January 8, 2014, are due **no later than 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 5.** To reserve, please call only Pat Adelbery (847-588-0911 or Lorraine Campione, 773-275-5118. The cost is \$40 payable by check to FAW or cash in the front lobby on the day of the luncheon. If you wish to sit with friends, please inform Pat or Lorraine. If you are reserving for a group, we ask that only one person make the group request to avoid confusion. If you make a reservation and find you cannot attend, you must cancel no later than 6:00 p.m. on the Sunday


preceding the meeting. Reservations not cancelled must be paid for by the member. If you are a regular luncheon attendee, please think about making a standing reservation. It would be very helpful to Pat and Lorraine.

And a Good Time Was Had by All. Accolades to Kathleen Johnston and the wonderful Sounds of Sweetness a capella group from Walter Payton College Prep High School. Their glorious voices filled us all with a spirit of the holidays and sent us away with a smile on our faces and a song

in our hearts. Thank you so much.

FAW Books Donated to Cook Country Department of Corrections. A new program instituted by the Cook County Department of Corrections now provides library services for male and female inmates. Before this library opened, most inmates did not have access to books. The library program allows them to further their education and acquire skills that will serve them when they are released. Since the FAW Literary Committee receives many books every year,

we have begun to donate those not sold at our book sales to the jail libraries. Sheriff Tom Dart and the Inmate Services Department at the Cook County Department of Corrections thank all the who have donated books to the jail libraries. The donated books will directly benefit over 12,600 inmates at the Cook County Department of Corrections. The inmates will be allowed to read in the library and check out books for reading in their cells.

Carol Eshagy, Membership Chair, says that FAW now has 117 members, five of whom are new. They are Isabell Abello-Hon, Victoria Budd, Maria M. Desmond, Kristina Kelleher, Diane Martin, We welcome them to our organization. 

▼ Kathleen Johnston and the Sounds of Sweetness



FEATURE **A Woman's Placed: From Abigail Adams to Hillary Clinton**

In our time, nothing has changed more dramatically than the role of the American woman—from Abigail Adams to Hillary Clinton. I would like to highlight the most important aspects of that evolution for you.

Introduction

A funny thing happened to the American woman on her way through the twentieth century. She changed—not just the length of her skirts, her hairdo, or her caloric intake—she changed her life

style and her point of view. Her story marks a long trip on a slow bus, with a lot of detours along the way. But she persisted, and today, we can almost say, “she has arrived”.

Sometimes the lights all
shinin' on me

Other times I can
barely see,

Lately it occurs to
me—what a long, strange
trip it's been

THE GRATEFUL DEAD

**PART I:
Remember the
Ladies**

On March 31,
1776, America
was on the
verge of issu-
ing *The Declara-
tion of Independence.*

Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams, one of the
Declaration's framers who later became the second
President of the United
States wanted to see that
women were represented
in the document, so she
wrote to her husband: ...
*in the new Code of Laws,
which I suppose it will
be necessary for you to
make, I desire that you
would Remember the
Ladies.*

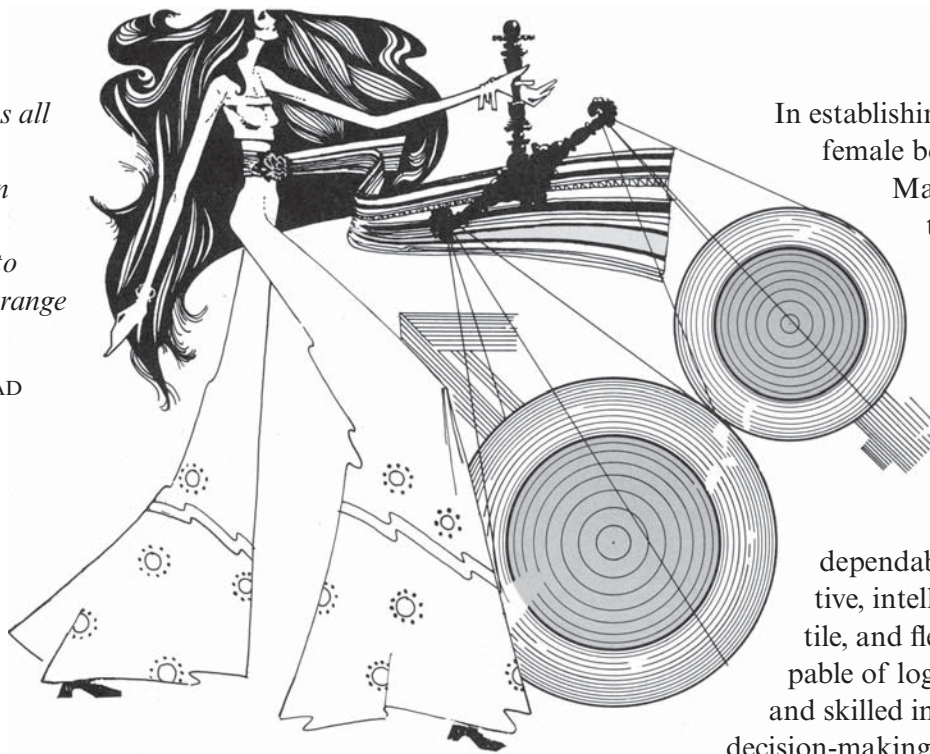


▲ Abigail Adams

John responded... *We know better than to repeal
our masculine systems. In practice, you know, we have
only the Name of Masters, and rather than give up
this, which would completely subject us to the despo-
tism of the petticoat, I hope General Washington and
all our brave heroes would fight.*

....

For much of its history, the ideal American society
was depicted as one in which men functioned as
breadwinners and protectors while women stayed
home, raising the children and managing the house-
hold. It was thought the work world would be too
dangerous for women because it was full of temp-
tations, violence, and trouble. Women would be
victims in that environment.



In establishing male-
female boundaries
Man was iden-
tified as a
“doer” in
social and
intellectual
pursuits:
aggres-
sive,
outgoing,
rugged,
dependable, imagina-
tive, intelligent, versa-
tile, and flexible—ca-
pable of logical thinking
and skilled in the art of
decision-making. Woman, on

the other hand, was regarded as a supporter
of man's actions. She was frail, retiring, indecisive,
emotional, and somewhat deceptive. Together, man
and woman made a perfectly matched pair of op-
posites.

Their proper roles were impressed upon both
sexes, almost from birth. Little boys were set free
outdoors and given miniature weapons, baseball
gloves, and erector sets. The message was clear: go
out, build, and conquer. Male models from Abra-
ham Lincoln to Babe Ruth sent the message that
with ambition and hard work, a boy could grow up
to achieve suc-
cess, greatness,
and even immor-
tality.

Girls, on the
other hand, were
kept indoors and
given dolls, tea
sets, and color-
ing books. They
were taught
proper manners
and housework.
They had one
role model:
Mother, who
stressed that
their purpose

The
American
Woman,
1776:
Keeper of
the Dust
Mop ▼



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in life was to make one man a good wife, raise his children, run his home, and cater to his needs.

In this ideal society women had no rights before the law. If a woman brought property to the marriage, she had to turn that property over to her husband. A woman could not testify in court, sue or be sued. She could not sign contracts, serve on juries,

or act as legal guardian for her children. But the greatest injustice perpetrated against women in those early years was that they had no vote—no say in matters that directly affected their lives. Clearly something had to change.

That change began in the mid-19th century when a few courageous

women demanded equal rights and opportunities. The first to come forward was Elizabeth Cady Stanton, considered to be the founder of the women's rights movement. She spoke out at the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848:

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of men toward woman, having as direct object the establishment of tyranny over her.

Mrs. Stanton protested the economic discrimination against women and urged reform of divorce laws. She also organized a campaign to write a *Woman's Bible* which would dispel the notion that women were weak and inferior. She advocated suffrage as a step toward making woman a self-supporting, equal partner with man in the State, the church, and the home. The bus was on the move. ■■

Next Month: The Seeds of Change—Jane Addams to Rosie the Riveter



▲ Elizabeth Cady Stanton

The Reading Corner

Pathways to the Presidency Pat Egan Gutek

The following review comes from FAW member Mary Margaret Kean Feyerer

I read a fabulous book last week. A year or two ago I bought our classmate Pat Egan Gutek's latest book, *Pathways to the Presidency*, and didn't read it until now. Talk about a great girls' book. After reading this book you will be able to identify these presidents. I'll tease you with some of the gems in it:

- One of our presidents married a married woman whose divorce wasn't final for another two years. So they married again.
- Years after his death, a secret compartment was found in this president's desk with notes from some of the Founding Fathers.
- Parents of this president refused to attend his wedding because the bride's parents owned slaves.
- Then the same president took a pledge not to consume alcohol, but when going through the Panama Canal, one-third of the ship got cholera from drinking contaminated water, but not this oath-

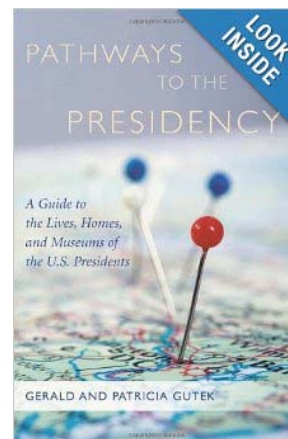
breaker! He had only consumed wine during the trip, not water.

- This same guy visited Lincoln to give him good news about the war so President Lincoln invited him to a play that night. Yes, THAT night. Fortunately for him, he turned Abe down.

- One president married a woman with his same last name, she

was the daughter of a cousin. [Is that legal?]

- One future president's wife found love letters from her social secretary to her husband in his luggage after a trip. Because of his political ambitions they stayed married and he ended the



affair BUT years later the affair reignited and another woman was with him when he died, not his wife.

- The home of a woman in a nursing home was being emptied and a locked closet was opened and 98 love letters from this married president to another woman were discovered. Those letters are kept under lock and key until next July. Then we can read them! Spoiler alert: she was trying to black-mail him.
- This book is about the homes of and lives of past presidents. One of the homes didn't belong to the president but to his wonderful mother the life she led there, offering us a better understanding of this wonderful woman.
- I could go on and on. I'll just say don't miss Gerald Ford's chapter. It's amazing.

Identical **Scott Turow**

Scott Turow is back with another of his page-turning courtroom drama/mystery stories that is a literary gem. Like his other novels, this one takes place in his favorite city, Chicago, which he disguises as Kindle County, but *Identical* was inspired by a Greek myth, the story of Castor and Pollux. In the myth, the identical twins were born after their mother Leda, Queen of Sparta, was raped by Zeus. The only difference between the twins was that

Pollux was immortal, like his father. Castor, like his mother, was not. When Castor was fatally wounded, Pollux could not bear to be separated from his twin, so he asked Zeus to let him share his immortality. Zeus allowed the brothers to alternate time in Hades and on Mount Olympus.

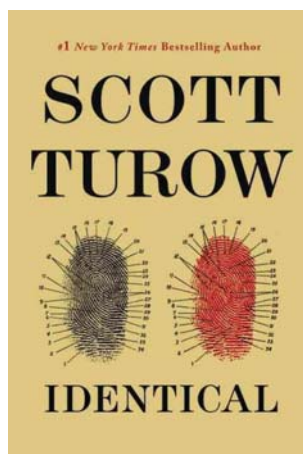
The Paul and Cass Gianis of *Identical* are men whose lives have followed very different paths. Tall, fit, and handsome, Paul is a successful politician, said to be a shoo-in to become Kindle's next mayor. His brother, and mirror image, has spent the last 25 years in prison after pleading guilty to the murder of his fiancée, Dita Kronon, leaving her lying in a trail of blood and glass. Dita's father is the formidable Zeus Kronon, a wealthy and powerful real estate magnate. Initially, the Kronons and the Gianises were friends, but a quarrel over property created a rift that never healed. When his daughter was murdered, Zeus was the driving force behind Cass' conviction. But 25 years later, Zeus is dead—killed in Greece in a fall (or perhaps a push); and his son Hal is determined to prove that Paul, not Cass, really murdered his sister. He hires Evon Miller, his senior vice-president for security to look into the case. She brings in Tim Brodie, an 81-year old private investigator to help. Evon and Tim make an unusual “buddy” team and keep the book suspenseful and lively. Did Cass

commit the murder or didn't he? What role, if any, did Paul play in the incident? When Hal starts making accusations that threaten Paul's campaign, he files suit for defamation—and the story takes off. Turow brings his knowledge of the law, Chicago politics, and DNA testing to play in the book. He also shows his indignation for the effect of big money on American politics, namely Hal's ability to destroy Paul's career through his wealth. As the plot moves along, it becomes more and more complicated with a surprising conclusion. Read it—you'll like it.

Review by SHIRLEY BAUGHER

Hild **Nicola Griffith**

Hild is one of the more interesting characters you will encounter in literary fiction. Her story takes place in seventh century Britain where small kingdoms are toppled and replaced by larger ones and a new religion is taking hold. Hild is destined from birth to be a king's seer—and pronounces herself at the age of three to be the “light of the world”. She grows up to fulfill that promise—becoming seer to king Edwin of Northumbria, who uses every tool at his disposal to become overking of the Angles. Hild, as his seer, is invaluable to him in this quest. She has the power to read signs and predict the future. She advises the king about when to go to war, whom to trust, and where to dispense his favors. She is never wrong. She pits her powers against those of the bishop of Rome—who wants to be the pope's chief emissary



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in Britain, and who wants to be rid of Hild, his chief rival for the king's favors. Hild becomes powerful, rich, and feared. She is also lonely—always looking over her shoulder, for there are many who wish her dead. She sometimes longs to be ordinary and to love the one man she is told she cannot have.

The book is fascinating on many levels. It offers an insight into the Middle Ages that most of us know little about. We find that, like today, it was a time when men sought wealth and power and the few who found it controlled



of fascinating characters—Hild's mysterious mother, Breguswith, a master weaver of cloth and lives; her “twin” and one true love, Cian—who just might be her half-brother; her clever slave, Gwladus who becomes both servant and savior; King Edwin who uses and

the land. Others lived in poverty, at the mercy of the powerful. It was a time when wealth was measured in gold and land and when the chief occupations were farming, hunting, and weaving. It also offers a myriad

disposes of people as they are useful to him; Bishop Paulinus, canny and ruthless; Begu, her *gemaece* (female partner) and one true friend; and a host of lords, kings, and followers. At the heart of them all is Hild, all-seeing, all knowing who must keep her family and her loved ones safe.

At first, the reader is put off by the strange names and unfamiliar language. But Griffith has provided us with a genealogy to keep the people straight and a glossary to help with terminology. Before too long, you will pride yourself on not having to refer to either. Griffith manages to shed light on a time that is often referred to as “dark”. ■■

Review by SHIRLEY BAUGHER