



# FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS



MARCH  
2013-2014 NUMBER 7

CHICAGO  
www.fawchicago.org

THE FORTNIGHTLY CLUB  
OF CHICAGO  
120 E. BELLEVUE PLACE

## President's Message

CHRISTINE BERN, *President*

As we await the Literary Committees selections for Adult and Juvenile Awards in April, it is important for me to remind the FAW membership that the award monies distributed are taken from the **Patron's Fund**.

The **Patron's Fund** is funded in three ways: a small portion from the annual dues, proceeds from the sale of books throughout the year, and donations from the membership. A minimum donation of \$25 allows your name to be printed in the Awards Luncheon Program. With less than half the membership contributing at this level last year, the amount of award money exceeded the amount of money that was collected. As you know, this type of accounting does not work for long. I ask that each member donate generously to the Patrons Fund. Donations may also be made as a Memorial or gifted in honor.

The FAW Literary Awards are the most important factor in the pursuit of our mission, which is to encourage high standards and promote literary ideals among American writers. **The Literary Awards** and the **Patrons Fund** are what sets FAW apart from other literary organizations and book clubs. It is what makes FAW unique and special. ■■

## PROGRAM Laura S. Washington To Address Faw Members In March

ROBERTA GATES, *Program Chair*

Please join us on Wednesday, March 12 when journalist Laura S. Washington will be on hand to fill us in on the upcoming Illinois primaries. Washington has been with us before, and, as you know if you've heard her, she's an engaging and knowledgeable pundit when it comes to politics.

Washington, currently a columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, brings more than two decades of experience to her work as a multi-media journalist. In addition to her print journalism, she is also a political analyst for ABC-7 Chicago, as well as a frequent commentator on National Public Radio and Chicago Public Radio. Also, in 1985, she served as the deputy press secretary to Mayor Harold Washington.

Washington earned her Bachelor's and Master's in journalism from Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University and has been honored with more than two dozen local and national awards for her work, including two Chicago Emmys, the Peter Lisagor Award, the Studs Terkel Award for Community Journalism, and the Racial Justice Award from the YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago. In addition, *Newsweek* magazine named her one of the nation's "100 People to Watch" in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

We are honored to have Washington as our next speaker, and we know that whatever your politics you won't want to miss out on what this award-winning journalist has to say about the primary season in Illinois. ■■



▲ Laura Washington

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### Board Candidates, 2014-16

The Friends of American Writers Nominating Committee has announced its candidates for open positions to the Board of Directors. The term is 2014 - 2016.

*Programs / Vice President*

**Roberta Gates**

*Foundation Fund Trustee*

**Corene Anderson**

*Awards Luncheon*

**Marion Sherlock**

*Sustaining Clubs*

**Angie Higginson**

*Luncheon / Social*

**Lee Shinnors**

*Website Manager*

**Karen Baker**

*Membership*

**Sandy Weiss**

### Luncheon Reservations

Reservations for the March 12 luncheon are due **no later than 6:00 p.m.** on Sunday, March 9. Please note, this deadline is firm. We will not be able to accept reservations from those calling after this deadline. To reserve, please call only Pat Adelberg (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 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.

### Kate DiCamillo Wins Second Newbery Medal

Minneapolis writer Kate DiCamillo has won her second John Newbery Medal for *Flora and Ulysses: the Illuminated Adventures*. DiCamillo won the Chicago

Tribune Young Fiction Prize in 2006. This past year, she published two books and was on the long list for the National Award book *Flora and Ulysses*. She was also named a national ambassador for young people's literature by the Library of Congress.

The latest Newbery was particularly gratifying to the author, because she said this is the book that was most like her. *Flora and Ulysses* is about a squirrel that gets sucked up into a vacuum cleaner and is

freed by a sometimes disagreeable ten-year old named Flora. Ulysses is changed by his time in the vacuum cleaner. He comes out with the ability to fly and write poetry. Flora comes to love the squirrel very much and defends him against a powerful archenemy. The Tribune noted that the book was beautifully written and very readable. DiCamillo's earlier Newbery came in 2004 for *The Tale of Despereaux*, which was made a very successful movie four years later.

Friends of American Writers may remember Kate DiCamillo for a different reason. In 2001, she was

the recipient of an FAW Juvenile Literary Award for her book *Because of Winn-Dixie*, the story of a ten-year old girl named Opal who found a scruffy dog wreaking havoc in a Winn-Dixie Supermarket and took him home. Because of Winn-Dixie Opal makes many new friends in her home town of Naomi, Florida: Miss Fanny Block, the librarian who shared stories about her past and about the Civil War; Gloria Dump, thought to be a witch by many children but was really just a little eccentric; and Otis, the pet shop manager who played his guitar for the animals. The story culminates in a grand birthday party attended by nearly the entire town, including Winn-Dixie who received a beautiful new collar as a gift.

After winning the FAW award, *Winn-Dixie* went on to win the Josette Frank Award and the Mark Twain Award. That same year, it won a Newbery Honor distinction. The National Education Association named it one of the Teachers Top 100 Books for Children. It was also made into a family film starring AnnaSophia Robb as Opal, Jeff Daniels, and Eva Marie Saint.

Congratulations to DiCamillo for her win and thanks to Pat Adelberg for bringing this article to my attention. 



**FEATURE**

**F**

**A Woman's Place Part 3: The Feminine Mystique: Fifty Years and Counting**



All That She Can Be ▶

Art by Norman Baugher



◀ Betty Friedan

**Home (Not So) Sweet Home**

When World War II ended, most women did what society expected of them. They went back to their traditionally assigned roles. But something was different. The genie wouldn't go back in the bottle. As one young woman put it, *I've tried everything women are supposed to do: hobbies, gardening, pickling, canning, and being social with my neighbors. I can do all this—and I like it. But it doesn't leave you anything to think about, any feeling of who you are. I feel I have no personality. I'm a server of food, putter on of pants, and a bedmaker. Someone who can be called on when you want something. But who am I?*

Things had to change. But change doesn't just happen. Certain conditions have to be present before an effective protest movement can take place: (1) a point of view around which to organize, (2) a positive response from an aggrieved group, and (3) a social atmosphere conducive to reform. These three elements came together for women in the 1960s. As the civil rights movement gained momentum, feminist leaders came forward to voice their concerns. One of the most articulate was Betty Friedan whose 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique* set the stage for the feminist revival.

Friedan claimed that after World War II,

Helen Gurley Brown, 1964 ▶

American women had been victimized by a feminine mystique that defined female happiness as total involvement in the roles of wife and mother. They were helpless, lost souls confined a “comfortable concentration camp where women were not free to use their minds”. Advertisers and women's magazines manipulated women into believing they could achieve fulfillment by using the latest model vacuum cleaner, bleaching their clothes a purer white, or using instant cake mix as an outlet for creativity; and portraying them as creatures happily content to live in the world of the bedroom and the kitchen surrounded by their husbands and babies. Some psychiatrists went so far as to say that any woman who was not satisfied being a wife and mother was emotionally maladjusted.

Doing a 180 on these notions, Friedan told women that the only way to realize their potential as individuals and gain personal identification essential to healthy family life was through meaningful careers. Helen Gurley Brown, editor of the magazine *Cosmopolitan*, lent a powerful voice to the plight of women in the early 60s. *If you were single with no engagement ring, you might just as well go to the Grand Canyon and throw yourself in. If you were single and having sex, it was time to stick your head in the oven.* In 1962,

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▼ Cosmo Girl



▲ Gateau Victoire



▲ The Mother Look

◀ Julia Child



▲ Betty Crocker



she published *Sex and the Single Girl*, in which she encouraged women to get jobs, enjoy sex, and not rush into marriage. The book sold millions of copies and was made into a hit movie.

Women rallied. They took action by joining women's rights organizations, the best known of which was NOW (National Organization for Women), founded by Ms. Friedan. They advocated for social change through legislation and the courts. They sought changes in divorce laws, abortion laws, tax laws, and educational and employment practices. They set up a Women's Research Center to change the cultural concept of women. They encouraged teen-agers to join the movement. Sisterhood was becoming powerful.

Women interested in the kitchen abandoned Betty Crocker for Julia Child; and boxed brownie mix gave way to Julia's *Gateau Victoire*. Those more interested in the bedroom tossed aside the traditional mother image for that of the Cosmo Girl. The times were definitely changing.

### Getting On the Bandwagon

Politicians responded by becoming more supportive of women's rights. Congress passed Title VII to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which forbade any employer to discriminate against employees on the basis of sex; an Equal Pay Act; and changes in the abortion laws. Serious consideration was given to the addition of an Equal Rights Amendment. But when Congress passed a massive day care program for all working mothers, President Nixon vetoed it saying: "Passage of the bill would commit the vast moral authority of the national government to the side of communal approaches to child rearing. The family is the keystone of our civilization. Enlightened public policy requires that it be strengthened not weakened." Sound familiar?

**Next Time:** *Women in the Media*—Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ann Landers, Abigail Van Buren, Diane Sawyer, Martha Radditz, and Doris Kearns Goodwin ■■

## The Reading Corner

### *The Invention of Wings* Sue Monk Kidd

Reviewed by SHIRLEY BAUGHER

In the past year a number of people in the media have taken on the topic of slavery in America, revealing its brutality and dehumanizing effect on African Americans. First came Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained*, which, though purporting to be a "black comedy", offered graphic descriptions of slave trade in America in the 1800s and the brutal violence of the institution itself. *Twelve Years a Slave*, based on the memoirs of Solomon Northup, a free black man who was kidnapped and sold into slavery, was brought to the screen by popular director Steve McQueen. Starring the British actor Chiwetel Ejiofor the film portrayed the desperate struggles of slaves to survive under the malevolent treatment of many slaveowners and their families. And now, we have Sue Monk Kidd's brilliant novel, *The Invention of Wings*, a story based on the lives of two real life abolitionists, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, and their slave Hetty (Handful). The Grimkes were wealthy plantation owners in the city of Charleston, South Carolina. They were committed to the institution of slavery both for economic reasons and because of Southern tradition.

The story, which begins in 1803, is told through the first person narrations of Sarah and Hetty. Hetty's mother, Charlotte, has filled the young girl's mind with folk tales handed down from

the time before Africans were stolen and sold into slavery. One of the most poignant of these stories concerns the ability of black people to fly through the air as a result of the twin "wings" growing out of their backs. Hetty's imagination is filled with images of her people flying around over her head.

From the time she is born, Charlotte teaches Hetty to be strong-minded and independent. She refuses to accept her condition and knows that one day, she will be free. As a result of her stubbornness, she is the recipient of beatings by the mistress of the plantation and a trip to the dreaded Work House. Charlotte is by far the most interesting character in the book and embodies its spirit. Even though she's whipped, choked, and has her teeth knocked out with a hammer, she never stops trying to escape from those who claim to own her. She is also a gifted seamstress who sews the history of her life and her people into a magnificent quilt that will one day become Hetty's legacy in more ways than one.

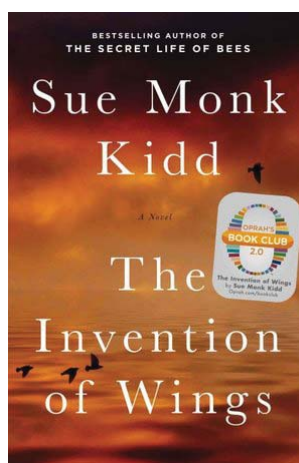
Sarah is equally as stubborn. She educates herself by studying her father's law books in the hope of one day becoming a lawyer—a dream her mother sets about having knocked out of her. Sarah is repulsed by slavery and wants to do away with it, but she is unable to change the condition any more than she can refuse her mother's gift of Hetty as her personal property on her eleventh birthday. She tries to get back at her mother by teaching Hetty to read, a crime for

which they are both severely punished.

Though the Grimkes tend to think of themselves as benevolent, in fact they are not. The worst features of the institution are depicted by the Work House, a place where slave owners send their misbehaving slaves to be punished. Kidd describes the cries coming from the whipping room, as well as the "splitting of ears and removal of teeth; and of a bridge contraption that was locked over a slave's head." In one horrific scene, a mother is lashed to a treadmill with her baby strapped to her back. When the guard whips her, he lashes the baby as well. These images are burned into Hetty's brain, and she vows to retaliate, though at ten years of age, she has no idea how she will do it.

Historical and fictional characters are thrown together. At one point, Hetty aids a slave rebellion led by the infamous Denmark Vesey who fathers a child with Charlotte and helps her escape. Sarah leaves the plantation and goes to live with abolitionists in Philadelphia. She becomes a Quaker further distancing herself from her past. Her younger sister, Nina, also an ardent abolitionist, comes to join her and writes for William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper, *The Liberator*. Both are expelled by the Quakers when they dare to sit in the black section of the church. Interestingly, they are taken in by the family of Frederick Douglass in whose home they continue their abolitionist work.

As the stories build, Hetty expe-

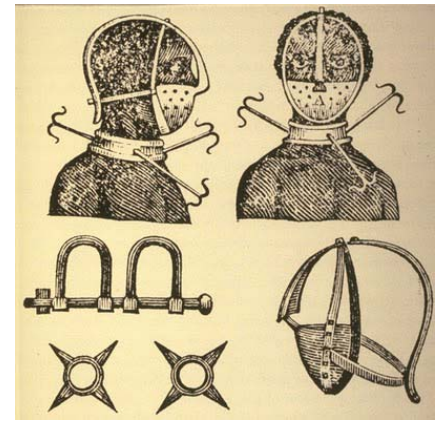


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riences loss and sorrow; Sarah endures lost love, crushed hopes, and betrayal. Both “fly” toward their inevitable fates. With *Wings*, Monk combines exquisite writing with powerful story-telling as she allows us an insight into one of the most devastating practices in American history. Read it. You’ll be glad you did.

Right: After many beatings  
Far right: Instruments of torture ▶

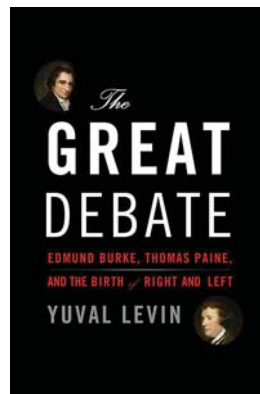


***The Great Debate*  
Edmund Burke,  
Thomas Paine, and the  
Birth of Right and Left**  
Yuval Levin

Reviewed by  
NORMAN BAUGHER

The front flyleaf says that “. . . *The Great Debate* offers a profound examination of what conservatism, progressivism, and the debate between them truly amount to.” And in the preface the author writes, “I am a conservative who is deeply interested in understanding both the left and the right as they truly are, and I strive here to tell their stories in a way that both liberals and conservatives today might recognize as meaningful and true, and from which both might learn something about themselves and their political adversaries.” Sounds good. But reading it so incensed me that it kept me awake at night. I read as far as I could, hoping to find something that satisfied Mr. Levin’s declaration but gave up just past the half-way point and jumped to the “Conclusion.”

I felt Mr. Levin used Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine as straw men to promote his Conservative agenda. His method, quoting ex-



cerpts from various writings by the two men and annotating them at length is repetitive and stylistically uninteresting. From early on I felt he was picking quotations that enabled him to promote his political views and his augmentation seemed suspect. I distrusted it. His translations of Burke were labored and were no clearer than Burke’s text. Paine’s quotes are easier to follow but Mr. Levin’s follow up made a mountain out of Paine’s molehills.

I would have saved nighttime tossing and turning had I paid attention to the author’s affiliations on the back flyleaf and the names of those who wrote the reviews on the back cover. Knowing William Bennett’s and Peggy Noonan’s political positions, I assumed the other reviewers would add balance since that was what the flyleaf promised. And before starting this review I looked them up. Wrong assumption. Robert P. George is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, and is known as America’s “most influential conservative Christian thinker.” According to the Institute for

Policy Studies “Leon Wieseltier does not consider himself a neoconservative, but he has supported the work of various neoconservative-led advocacy groups.”

The author’s affiliations are just as telling: *The Ethics and Public Policy Center* is a politically conservative Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group. *National Affairs, Inc.* publishes *National Affairs* that was run by Irving Kristol and included as board members Henry Kissinger and Jeane Kirkpatrick. *The Weekly Standard* is an American neoconservative opinion magazine founded by News Corporation and has been described as “the neo-con bible”. *National Review* promoted Barry Goldwater heavily during the early 1960s.

These quotes from the “Conclusion” demonstrate his lack of a balanced perspective. “Do we want to fix our health-care system by empowering expert panels armed with the latest effectiveness data to manage the system from the center or by arranging economic incentives to channel consumer knowledge and preferences and address some of the system’s discrete problems? Do we want to alleviate poverty through large national programs that use public dollars to supplement the incomes of the

poor or through efforts to build on the social infrastructure of local civil-society institutions to help build the skills and habits to rise?"

I found it a stretch to conclude that these two men are a significant influence in the establishment of the left/right split in our political system as we see it today. Even as told in this book the argument between these two men developed as a consequence of the French

Revolution after the American Revolution. In democracies and capitalist systems, sides will be drawn. A more reasonable and proximate set of causes is found in the words and documents written by the founders prior to and during the revolution and during the difficult writing of our Constitution. My reading of early American history suggests Locke is more firmly established as an influence

than Burke whose name I rarely saw. Paine was viewed more as a promoter than a developer of early American ideology. Looking back you can envision the split arising from home-grown issues such as fear of inequality between urban and farm cultures, between slave and non-slave states, between large vs. small population states, and between state vs. national sovereignty that persists to this day.



### Friends of American Writers Awards Luncheon

May 9, 2014

- The Fortnightly of Chicago
- 120 Bellevue Place

- 11:00 a.m
- \$45 per person

FAW is proud to celebrate the 84th Annual Awards Luncheon. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet and hear the remarks of our award-winning authors in the ambiance of the Fortnightly. Bring your friends to support and applaud these new authors and share in the fun.

- To reserve early, clip the following reservation form and send with your payment to:  
**Linda Gustafson**  
605 Hidden Lake Drive  
Princeton, IL 61356
- Or, turn in the reservation form and payment at the March or April luncheon meeting.

If you have questions, please contact Linda Gustafson, 815-872-9181 or [rigus@comcast.net](mailto:rigus@comcast.net)  
Deadline for reservations (and cancellations) is Friday, May 2, 2014

#### FAW AWARDS LUNCHEON RESERVATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places at the Awards Luncheon @\$45 per person

Enclosed is my reservation and check payable to FAW Awards Luncheon for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to cover lunch for the following people:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to sit with \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a vegetarian lunch    Yes     No

Please call Linda Gustafson if other food arrangements are needed



THE FORTNIGHTLY CLUB OF CHICAGO  
120 E. Bellevue Place  
Chicago, IL 60611-1112



### **Dear Friends of American Writers Members,**

As we await with anticipation the decisions of the two Literary Committees for their selections for our May Annual Awards program, I would like to remind the membership that our Patron's Fund is fully funded by contributions from our membership. The FAW Annual Award has gained prestige in the literary world and it is what sets FAW apart from other organizations.

In accordance with our by-laws, contributions to the Patron Fund are automatically split between the Adult Literary Awards and the Juvenile Literary awards, 60% / 40% respectively. If you would like your donation applied differently, you may designate how you would like the donation applied to each fund. Although you may contribute to

the Patron's Fund at any time throughout the year, if you would like your name to appear in the Annual Awards Program book as a donor, your contribution must be received by April 4 and be a minimum of \$25. Contributions at a higher level are very much appreciated. Donations may also be made in memoriam or gifted in honor.

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to Friends of American Writers. You may bring your contribution to the March, April or May meeting. Or you can mail your check to: Eileen McNulty, 4450 North Kostner, Chicago, IL 60630.

Thank you for your generosity and support to Friends of American Writers Annual Awards.

CHRISTINE BERN  
*President, March 2014*

