



JANUARY NEWSLETTER  
2017-2018 NUMBER 5

*Editor: Shirley Baugher  
Designer: Norman Baugher*

# FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS CHICAGO

[www.fawchicago.org](http://www.fawchicago.org)



## President's Message

ROBERTA GATES, *President*

As we begin a new year, let me take you on a behind-the-scenes tour of our hard-working awards committees.

Thanks to our sponsor, Kathy Katz, both of our awards committees are able to meet at the 119-year-old Woman's Athletic Club of Chicago, which is located at 626 North Michigan. Valet parking is just one of the pluses offered by the WAC; others include the freshly baked cookies which are served along with coffee and tea. And there's also an ample lunch menu from which members can order.

Both committees meet at 11 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month. The young people's literature awards committee meets in the board room to judge

children's and young adult (YA) books, while the literature awards committee, which considers adult-level books, meets in the Mirror Room, a spacious room on the fourth floor which is lined with art deco-style mirrors. All books must have been published in 2017 by an emerging author (no more than two previous books) and have some connection to the Midwest, either because the author is a Midwesterner or the book is set there.

Tammie Bob, who chairs the adult committee, reports receiving a total of 63 books this year, approximately two-thirds of which were passed out at the December 20 meeting. Tammie arrived with a jumbo-sized suitcase (the kind you'd take on a round-the-world trip) but went home with considerably fewer, having distributed an average of five books to each of the twelve members

present. Her goal is to whittle the number of entries to a "long list" of 10 titles in January and then a "short list" of three to five in February, so that voting can take place in March.

Angela Gall, who chairs the young people's committee, says she has received 32 books, but since her committee is smaller, it means her members are reading just as extensively as those on the adult committee.

Nearly 25% of our membership serves on one committee or the other, and without their dedication, FAW would never be able to select the winning authors we honor at our year-end luncheon in May. So let me take this opportunity to thank every FAW member who has been a reader on one of our committees, either now or in the past. Without you, it would be impossible to carry out our mission! ■

## J A N U A R Y P R O G R A M

### **Britta Keller Arend Chicago History Museum Curator Explains Civil War Wear**

by KAREN PULVER, CO-CHAIR

Have you ever wondered about how a museum comes to acquire items, restore and preserve them and use them to create exhibits? These are the inner workings of a museum that the public usually does not see. Britta Arendt, Senior Collection Manager at the Chicago History



Britta Keller Arend

Museum will share her passion for her work at our January luncheon.

Britta Keller Arendt has nearly 20 years of professional experience in

the museum field. She has a Master's Degree in Public History and Museum Studies from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, and a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology from North Central College in Naperville. Britta has worked in a variety of museum environments, including the U.S. Capitol Building; the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum in New York City; the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust in Oak Park; and the Field Museum in Chicago. ■



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Luncheon Reservations

Luncheon reservations for the October 11, 2017 meeting of the Friends of the American writers are due no later than 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 6, 2018. Please note, this deadline is firm. No reservations will be accepted following this date and time. To reserve, please contact only Lorraine Campione (773-275-5118) or Pat Adelberg (847-588-0911). If you wish a permanent reservation, please mention it to Lorraine or Pat when you call. All Board members automatically have permanent reservations. Also, a reminder that no permanent reservations are held over from last year to this year.

Luncheon will be served as 12:00 noon in the main floor dining room of the Fortnightly Club of Chicago, 120 W. Bellevue Place. The cost is \$45 per person, payable by check (preferred) in the front lobby on the day of the meeting. For group reservations, we ask that only one person make the reservation to avoid confusion. Please note, 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.**

### Young People's Literature Committee

ANGELA GALL

In the spirit of gratitude this holiday season and beyond, the members of the Young People's Literature Committee reflected on why we are thankful to be a part of FAW:

FAW is a great organization because "Reading good literature helps young people make sense of the world and rewarding good books encourages authors to write more."

—COLLEEN KADLEC

I like how my involvement with FAW and my work on the Young

People's Committee encourages our youth to "stop using all the electronic devices and open a book to a whole new world." —LORRAINE CAMPIONE

"Being in FAW is helping to widen my world perspective. It makes me happy, and I am able to spread that happiness to other people that I meet!" —DEB HALL-REPPEN

Being a part of FAW helps "develop closer friendships with other members." —Betty O'Toole

"I have found that being part of FAW has enriched my life. I am always in awe of the women who keep this organization going through their hard work!" —Peggy Kuzminski

Furthermore, we are thankful that we now have 32 books to consider for our monetary award. There are several books that are clear contenders, and we are excited to read the new titles we just received.

Finally, we are most thankful, that FAW has enabled us all to do our part in "Being the Change We Wish to See in the World!"

### Membership

IDA HAGMAN, CHAIR

A huge thank you goes to Norman Baugher who did the graphics design for our FAW membership brochure. Norman took a lackluster draft and turned it into an inviting flyer. If you would like copies of the brochure to give to friends or to drop off at your local library, contact me, and I'll get copies to you. My e-mail is iehagman@gmail.com and my phone number is 630 660 3363.

Thanks to all of you who have spread the news about FAW, invited friends to luncheons, and encouraged friends to join. We have three new members this month. Here's some information about them to add to your directory.

### Marcia Flick

1360 N. Sandburg Terrace  
Apt. 305  
Chicago, IL 60610  
312 337 7107

Marcia heard about FAW from an FAW member in a class at the Newberry Library. She is a retired market data analyst. In addition to reading, Marcia's special interests include social justice and movies.

AnnLeola Gervasio  
6532 N. Spokane Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60646  
773 631 3122

AnnLeola is a member of the Renaissance Art Club, where she serves as treasurer. Gloria Nikolet encouraged her to join FAW.

### Meet Your FAW Scholarship Recipient: Jessica Love

Jessica Love is a graduate student at Columbia College who came to Chicago from her home town of Memphis, TN. She chose Columbia because of its amazing faculty and, of course, because of its location: sweet home Chicago.

Jessica is a born storyteller. She used to sit on the roof of the family chicken coop and tell stories to chickens. It is uncertain how much of her gifts they enjoyed or understood. When she was in fifth grade, her proud father submitted one of her essays in a local contest. She won second place. Since then, she has had stories published in many state and national publications.

Winning the FAW scholarship will enable Jessica to give up one of the many side jobs she holds and spend more time writing. It will also allow her to do more teaching, which she thoroughly enjoys. FAW is proud to support this remarkable young woman, and we wish her much success in what we know will be a brilliant future.

# FEATURE ARTICLE

# LETTER TO AN UNKNOWN WOMAN

## AMY KRAUSE ROSENTHAL



I believe the first feature of the new year should be inspirational, and I can think of no more inspirational story than that of Chicago author Amy Krause Rosenthal. If you haven't heard about her, Amy Krause Rosenthal was the amazing woman who, upon learning that she had terminal cancer, decided that she would leave this world not with a whisper, but a bang. And she did just that.

In September of 2015, Amy Krause Rosenthal began experiencing pains on her right side symptomatic of appendicitis. One evening, the pains were sufficiently severe that she and her husband Jason went to the hospital emergency room, fully expecting to be told that Amy's pains would necessitate an appendectomy. After several hours and many tests, that was not the diagnosis they received. Amy had ovarian cancer, and it was terminal. Suddenly her world became a place of "would nots."

She would not take that trip with Jason and her parents to South Africa.  
She would not tour Asia with her mother.

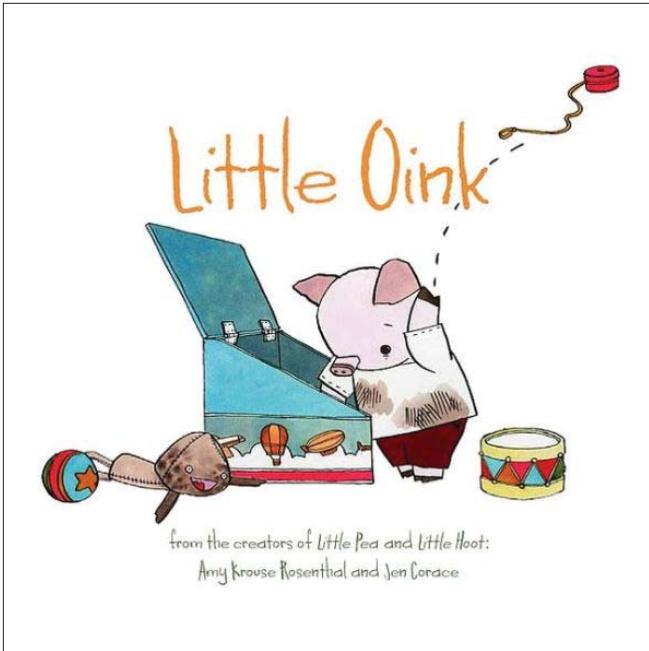
She would not have a writer's residency at any of the exotic locales of which she had dreamed.  
She would not see her children marry and have children of their own.  
She would not grow old with Jason and experience the "best that was yet to be".  
Would not, would not, would not.

Her past had been lived. Her present was limited. There was no future. Of all the things that crowded her mind that fateful evening, the foremost was Jason—her beloved husband of nearly thirty years. She wanted more time to be with him, to look at him, to share the joys and pains of everyday existence with him. She wanted MORE.

### Who Was Amy?

Amy Krause Rosenthal was a Chicago writer, film maker, and radio talk show host. She attended Tufts University and went to work in California after graduation. But Amy was

continued ►

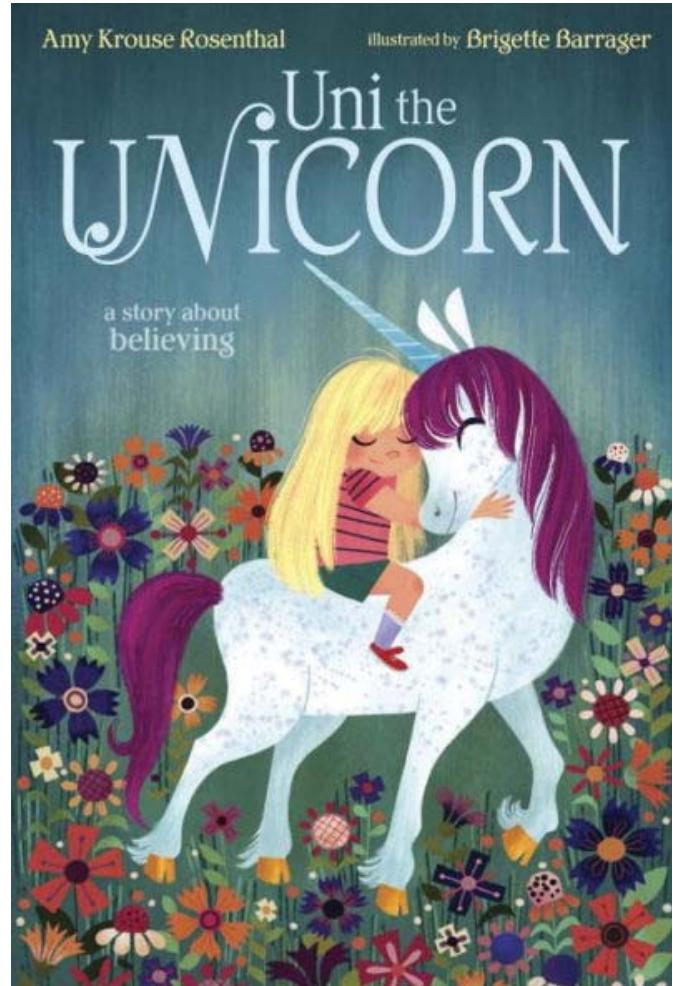


a Midwesterner at heart, and she moved back to Chicago to pursue her writing career. Between 2005 and 2017 (the year of her death), she published more than thirty children's books. Three of her books made the Best Books for Family Literacy in one year.

The *New York Times* called her books terrific. She could take the most mundane subjects and make them uplifting. There is *Little Oink*, the story of a piglet who hates being messy. And *Spoon* about a once-happy little utensil who suddenly comes to feel like life as a spoon just isn't cutting it. He thinks Fork, Knife, and Chopsticks all have it so much better. But do they? In the end Spoon reminds us how important it is to celebrate what makes us each special. *I Wish You More* is a book of many, many good wishes that appeals to readers of all ages: wishes for curiosity and wonder, for friendship and strength, and for laughter and peace. Then there is the magical *Uni the Unicorn*. Uni is like all the other unicorns in so many ways, but dreams of becoming friends with a real, human girl.

Many of Amy's books made the NYT's Best Seller List: *I Wish You More*, *Uni the Unicorn*, *Plant a Kiss*, *Exclamation Mark*, *Cookies*, and *Duck, Rabbit*. (*Duck, Rabbit* was read at President Obama's White House during the Easter Egg Roll.) In addition to bringing magic to lives of children in her books, Amy was a frequent contributor to Chicago's NPR affiliate WBEZ and to the TED (technology, entertainment, design) conference.

In addition to her children's books, Amy wrote two memoirs, both best sellers. *Encyclopedia for an Ordinary Life*, published in 2005, was named one of Amazon's top ten memoirs of the decade. NPR said of it, "What a delight it was to spend time with this "ordinary" person, learning her quirks and hangups, her likes and dislikes, her everyday (and not) adventures, including the inspired way



she attempted to get out of paying a parking ticket—all arranged encyclopedia style from A ("Amy", "Anxious Things That Make Me," "Ayn Rand") to Y ("You"), with appropriate cross references and clever drawings." Her second memoir, a follow-up to the first, was called *Textbook Amy Krause Rosenthal* and was published in 2016. It is the first book to include an interactive text messaging component.

Amy made short films using her iPhone and Flip camera. Some ask viewers to interact, some are social pieces, and some build on each other. Among her films are *17 Things I Made, Today is a Gift, ATM: Always Trust Magic, The Kindness Thought Bubble*, and *The Beckoning of Lovely*. *Beckoning of Lovely* was composed of a series of events held at Chicago's Millennium Park between 2008 and 2011. For the first one, held on August 8, 2008, Rosenthal invited viewers to meet her in the park at 8:00 p.m. to make a thing together. The "thing" was a party. She expected perhaps 30 people; 400 showed up. People sang, danced, exchanged flowers, even fell in love. It was a magical evening.

But all of this is the stuff of biography—and Amy was so much more than biography. She was a joyful spirit about whom her friend John Green (*The Fault in Our*

Stars wrote, "As a parent, a writer, a spouse, and a friend, Amy Krause Rosenthal was what I wanted to be when I grew up." Amy met the love of her life, Jason Brian Rosenthal, on a blind date set up by her uncle in 1989, when they were both 24. For Amy, who initially had "zero expectations" for the date, it was love at first sight. By the end of the evening, she knew she wanted to marry him. It took Jason a year to arrive at the same conclusion. But once he did, they were married and embarked on their "happily ever after" journey. They had three children, two boys and one girl, all grown now. Sadly, "ever after" was shorter than they had hoped.

Following that fateful emergency room visit in 2015, Amy and Jason entered a phase of their lives they called "Plan Be". They lived what remained of her life in the present. She continued to write. He took time from his busy law practice to care for her and be with her. For as long as they could, they did the things both of them loved: they went to concerts, they drank martinis at the Green Mill, and they walked in the park. Amy even got a tattoo suggested by a reader, the word "more." She observed it

was her first spoken word and might well be her last.

Now I come to the part that brought Amy Krause Rosenthal to national attention. Amy wrote an essay that was published in the Sunday New York Times. It was called, "You May Want to Marry My Husband." It was a valentine bouquet that didn't come in a vase. In it, she shared with readers all of the extraordinary qualities of the man to whom she had been married for 26 years in the hope that one very special person would come forward and share with him the years she would not have. She spoke of his style, his intelligence, his love of music, his sense of humor, his whimsy, his ability to cook and fix things around the house, his artistic ability, and his good looks. She noted wistfully how she would miss looking at his handsome face. (If you would like to read the entire piece, here is the link: [www.nytimes.com/2017/03/03/style/modern-love-you-may-want-to-marry-my-husband.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/03/style/modern-love-you-may-want-to-marry-my-husband.html)) Ten days after the essay was published, Amy Krause Rosenthal died.

I called this piece, "Letter to an Unknown Woman," because I am sending this letter posthumously to Amy.

Dear Amy,

*I did not know you, and sadly now, I will never know you. I really wish I had. You seem like the kind of woman with whom I would like to have spent time and shared thoughts. As a writer, I feel a kinship with you. I admire your style—your ability to connect with readers in a very personal way. Your ability to say things with insight and humor. Your optimism and magical thinking. Your generous spirit and loving demeanor. And, if I may borrow from one of my favorite writers, "the pilgrim soul in you." I am sorry they were taken so soon.*

*I loved your generosity in wanting to share your husband's wonderful qualities with another special someone. Sadly, I cannot take you up on your suggestion. Two reasons: I am old enough to be his mother, and I am already married to my own Prince Charming (nearly 50 years.) I wish I could have given you a few of those years—but that was not within my power. I do believe you lived more and felt more in the*

*short time you were here than most people who were granted much longer lives. You had a profession you loved and were good at. You had a husband you adored who felt the same about you. You had children whom I am sure you raised to be decent, caring individuals. You had a sense of wonder few of us will ever experience, and you shared that wonder with the world. Your legacy is rich and powerful. While I know you would trade all of this for more time on this earth with those you loved, know this: you mattered!*

*While I can never get to know the corporal you, I will read and share your books. I will pore over your memoirs. I might even consider a "more" tattoo. I will make your acquaintance, though I can never truly know you. So good-bye, Amy. I wish you could have had more.*

Love,  
Shirley

## The Reading Corner

*I Wish You More*  
Amy Krause Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld

This is a book about endless good wishes. I would like to share a few of them with you. I hope you will find it and take a look at it. The illustrations will bring a smile to your face.

I wish you more ups than downs.  
I wish you more give than take.  
I wish you more hugs than ughs.  
I wish you more snowflakes than tongue.  
I wish you more pause than fast-forward.  
I wish you more umbrella than rain.  
I wish you more bubbles than bath.  
I wish you more stories than stars.  
I wish all of this for you,  
Because you are everything I could wish for...  
And more. ■



SHIRLEY BAUGHER  
1710 N. Crilly Court  
Chicago, IL 60614



Britta Keller Arendt: "How many collections care professionals does it take to safely install a grandfather clock?"

