



JANUARY NEWSLETTER
2019-2020 NUMBER 5

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FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS CHICAGO

www.fawchicago.org

President's Message

CHRISTINE SPATARA, *President*

It's a new year—a time of promise of better things to come and a time to reflect on what is truly important in our lives like family and friends who merit our generosity, our thoughtfulness, and our help when neces-

sary. We at FAW have a common interest in helping emerging writers succeed. It is our goal. For this we are grateful for every new member who joins and helps us accomplish that very goal by keeping our organization strong and viable. Our New Year's wish is for 2020 to bring us all good health and happiness. ■■



JANUARY PROGRAM

By TAMMIE BOB
Program Chair

Wild Boar to Baconfest

Pigs in History and Popular Culture

To open the new year, FAW's program speaker is Illinois author **Cynthia Clampitt**, author of "Midwest Maize," which discusses everything you never knew you needed to know about corn, and more recently, "Pigs, Pork, and Heartland Hogs," the subject of her presentation.



Ms. Clampitt has this to say about her program;

Pigs were the first food animals to be domesticated, so they have a history with humans that goes back more than 12,000 years. Antiquity is only one of the reasons, however, that pork is the most commonly eaten meat in the world. This odd, contradictory animal offers a great range of advantages when it comes to feeding large populations, especially urban populations, though historically it has also offered several disadvantages. Pork was virtually the only meat available to most of Europe during the Middle Ages, and if you ask for meat in China, you will get pork. From the invention of blood sausage by the Assyrians to the creation of such

American icons as barbecue and hot dogs, pig has long dominated the menu for all but a few notable people groups. Celebrated at fairs and looked to for medical

research, pigs offer culinary delight and potential promise but also create some challenges. So the topic of pigs is as far-ranging as the pigs themselves.

Some of us love bacon, others of us grew up in a pork-averse religious or cultural setting, and some of us eat no meat at all. Whatever your bias, Cynthia Clampitt is a lively speaker who will inform us about one of our region's big industries, and the place of the pig in past and current culture.

To reserve your luncheon, call **Pat Adelberg** - (847) 588-0911 or **Peggy Kuzminski** - (cell) 1-(773) 710-8637 before 5:00 PM Sunday, Jan. 6th. Better yet, bring a friend or two. ■■



ANNOUNCEMENTS

LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS

Fortnightly of Chicago
120 E. Bellevue Place

The January 2020 meeting of the Friends of American Writers will be held on Wednesday, January 8, 2020. Luncheon reservations for this meeting are due no later than 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 29, 2019. Please note, this deadline is firm. No reservations will be accepted following this date and time. To reserve, please contact **Peggy Kuzminski** (773-775-4540) or **Pat Adelberg** (847-588-0911).

If you wish a permanent reservation, please mention it 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 at 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 that if you make a reservation and you cannot attend, you must cancel no later than 6:00 p.m. on the Sunday preceding the meetings. Reservations not cancelled must be paid for by the member.

Young People's Literature Committee

ANGELA GALL, *Chair*

The Young People's Literature Committee met on November 20th at The Riverside Library. We opened our meeting with another getting-to-know-you activity: Members were asked to choose a theme or life-lesson from a book that they cherish. Here are a few of their responses...

"Beware of expectations." This was a lesson from one of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. The author delivered a Down Syndrome baby and her 'plans' for her child were thrown aside. She learned all the wonderful possibilities this presented and made it her mission to applaud the difference.
~SALLY KOWALEWSKI

From the book, *On Looking: Eleven Walks With Expert Eyes* by Alexandra Horowitz, I learned how to experience all the outings I go on with all five senses—I now look, hear, smell, taste and touch all the places I go!
~JANE FOSTER

Little Women taught me how important family and especially siblings are to each other. I grew up with four sisters who shared many experiences with me.
~COLLEEN KADLEC

Jo March in *Little Women* inspired

me to think I could try being a writer.
~ROBERTA GATES

From Henry James' *The Ambassadors*, I learned, "Live all you can—it's a mistake not to." And from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, "The one unpardonable sin... is to violate the sanctity of the human heart."
~JOAN GORDON

I love the theme from *Sorry For Your Loss* by Jessie Ann Foley. Loss is an ache that never heals, but we have memories that can never be taken away to help dull it.
~PEGGY KUZMINSKI

I value the lesson about love from Lorraine Hansberry's play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, "When do you think is the time to love somebody the most? When they done good and made things easy for everybody? Well then, you ain't through learning - because that ain't the time at all. It's when he's at his lowest..." I have to etch this lesson into my brain when dealing with my son!
~ANGELA GALL

The Riverside Library proved to be a picturesque venue for a delightful discussion of our 32 contending books. Although we ended up crossing many books off our list, there are quite a few that have risen to the top as potential winners!

We look forward to our next meeting on Wednesday, January 15th!

2019 THE TIMES

*Come gather 'round people wherever you roam
And admit that the waters around you have grown
And accept that soon you'll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you is worth savin'
Then you'd better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.*

FEATURE ARTICLE

by SHIRLEY BAUGHER



THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

2019. It was a very good year—or a very bad year, depending on your perspective. In fact, as with all years, it was a little of both. There is a temptation for someone summing up a year to make lists of all the things that happened. I started this article with lists of good and bad moments in mind. Then I stopped short and asked myself, "Who wants to read lists?" I don't. When

I think back on all the things that I remember of this year, it will not be a series of items in a list. It will be moments that were meaningful to me for one reason or another: a happy occurrence, an unusual day, a chance meeting with an old friend, a new sensory experience, an unexpected gift, a singular accomplishment, and yes—unfortunately—sadness. All the things that constituted the days of my life in 2019. Perhaps, and probably, they were a part of yours as well, because we have traveled much of this road together. Let's spend a few moments looking back, shall we?



Changing Woman's Place in the World

Sometimes, we are so self-absorbed we tend to lose sight of the fact that important things are happening to other people, especially women, in other parts of the world. I'm guessing not too many of you read that in India, the Navy welcomed its first woman pilot. In the grand scheme of things that's a pretty big step for a country whose women have not played a big part on the world stage—Indira Ghandi excepted. Austria named its first female chancellor, and the European Commission elected its first female President. Women now lead five of the major parties in Finland's Parliament. And here's a biggie, for the first time, all major pageants were won by women of color. President Donald Trump made history as the first sitting U.S. leader to set foot in North Korea; and Pope Francis became the first pontiff to visit an Arab Gulf State.

Changes at Home

Here at home, big changes were happening as well. The 116th Congress became the most diverse in U.S. history. That group made animal cruelty a federal felony. Chicago elected its first African-American female mayor, and Montgomery, Alabama elected its first black mayor in 200 years. California became the first state to offer health insurance to some undocumented immigrants. The Little Shell Indian Tribe became the newest Native American tribe to receive federal recognition, and the White House honored a military dog for its part in a raid on ISIS.

Let's Hear it for Women's Rights

Indonesia ended child marriage by raising the minimum age for brides. Saudi Arabian women gained the right to travel independently, while Taiwan became the first place in Asia to pass same-sex marriage legislation. (Iranian women were even officially allowed to attend soccer matches for the first time in 40 years.) Northern Ireland and Ecuador followed suit. Botswana got aboard the human rights train by decriminalizing consensual same-sex relations.

Environmental Change

Here are just a few things that happened in 2019 that had a positive impact on the environment. More places are banning single-use plastics, a universal environmental improvement. Iguanas were reintroduced to the Galapagos Island after 184 years, and humpback whales recovered from near-extinction in the South Atlantic. A tortoise believed to be extinct was found after 100 years. NASA declared that the planet is greener today than it was 20 years ago. A rare black leopard was spotted for the first time in 100 years and an albino panda was photographed in the wild for the very first time. Veterinarians harvested eggs from the world's last two northern white rhinos to help save the species; and Canada passed a bill banning placing whales and dolphins in captivity.



On the Alzheimer front, scientists say they may be able to spot the disease as many as 16 years before symptoms begin. And here's a news flash—the World Health Organization stopped classifying transgender people as mentally ill. Advances in the world of medicine made great strides. Malaria was eliminated from both Argentina and Algeria. Two men MAY have been cured of HIV, and a woman with two wombs gave birth twice in less than a month. A woman became the first living HIV positive kidney donor and a new species related to humans was discovered. Just imagine that! Karen Uhlenbeck, an American, became the first woman to win the prestigious Abel Prize, considered to be the mathematics equivalent of a Nobel Prize; and Emma Haruka Owo, a Japanese computer scientist, broke the world record for calculating pi. That achievement deserves a story of its own, which I will share another time.

The Space Age Continues

In 2019, the world got to see the first ever close-range image of the far side of the moon—the Antarctic ozone hole, the smallest on record since the time of its discovery. It boggles the mind—well, my mind anyway. NASA completed its first all-female space walk (let's hear it for the ladies again), and the first-ever photograph of a black hole was captured. Taking space technology even further, water was detected on a planet outside our solar system.

Closer to Home: Achievements in Sports 2019

Strike up a chorus of "Oh Canada!" The Toronto Raptors delivered Canada its first-ever NBA title. And, in a Chicago Cubs moment, the Washington Nationals finally won the World Series. A boost for hard working college athletes came in 2019 when it was announced that NCAA athletes will now be able to profit from the use of their names, images, and likenesses. On the courts, LiNa became the first Asian player to be inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame. And with a heavy heart I write that LeBron James topped Michael Jordan on the NBA all-time scoring list. I'd like to be more laudatory of James achievement, but I am first, last, and always a Jordan fan; and he will forever reign supreme in my pantheon of sports gods.

Elsewhere in sports, the US Women's soccer team won its fourth Women's World Cup title; and Simone Biles became the most decorated gymnast in history. Never think sports doesn't have its fashion side. In 2019, Halima Aden became the first model to wear a hijab and a burkini in the *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue*. Well all right!

Elud Kipchoge, a Kenyan long distance runner, became the first athlete to run a marathon in under two hours. Drew Brees broke the NFL record for all-time passing touchdowns; and James Harden became the first player in NBA history to record back-to-back 50 point games with more than 10 three-pointers.

Let Us Entertain You

The entertainment world had many memorable 2019 moments. Aretha Franklin became the first woman to win a special Pulitzer Award and Citation. More than 50,000 books, films, songs, and other works of art from 1923 became public domain. "Sesame Street" announced that it will launch a new show to help refugee children. Missy Elliott became the first female hi-hop artist to

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be inducted into the Songwriter’s Hall of Fame. “This is America” became the first rap song to win Grammys for song and record of the year.

Moving across the water, in 2019, Britain’s Queen Elizabeth published her first post on Instagram. Imagine!!!

BTS became the first K-Pop band to address the UN. And everyone’s favorites, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex had their first child.

I’ll end this article and this issue by acknowledging those artists and entertainers who have brought richness to our lives and gave us so much pleasure through the years. As 2019 closes we say fare well and thank you to:

Danny Aiello, Juice WRLD, Carol Spinney, John Witherspoon, Diahann Carroll, Eddie Money, Toni Morrison, Harold Prince, Cameron Boyce, Rip Torn, Beth Chapman, Gloria Vanderbilt, Tim Conway, Doris Day, Peggy Lipton, Jim Fowler, Peter Mayhew, John Singleton, Georgia Engel, Seymour Cassel, Nipsey Hussle, Keith Flint, Luke Perry, Karl Lagerfeld, Kristoff St. John, James Ingram, Kevin Barnett, Kaye Ballard, and Jo Andres.

“May flights of angels speed you to your rest.” 

FAW MEETINGS 2019-20

A reminder of the FAW meetings for 2019-20. Be sure to mark your calendars. You won’t want to miss a single one!

September 11, 2019

Rosellen Brown
Award-winning author of
Before and After

October 9, 2019

“Confessions of a Literary Translator: The Prose and the Cons”
Ann Fisher

November 13, 2019

“Flappers, Cocktails, and Temperance: True Stories of Prohibition”
Susanna Caulkins, author of
The Speakeasy Murders

December 11, 2019

Jenny Riddle brings to life
“The Bouvier Sisters”

January 8, 2020

“All About Pork”
Cynthia Clampett

February 12, 2020

“Meet the Vanishing Woman”
Doug Peterson and Ellen Craft

March 11, 2020

“Growing up Jewish and Surviving in Nazi Germany”
Eric Blaustein, Holocaust Survivor

April 1, 2020

Jane Hamilton
Award-winning author of
The Book of Ruth.

May 1, 2020:

Literature Awards Program