

# FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS



Our mission shall be to encourage new, talented writers associated with the Midwest and to promote the arts, especially literature, among our members.

Oct 1, 2020 - [Fawchicago.org](http://Fawchicago.org)

## Message from FAW President – *Tammie Bob*



We had our first meeting via Zoom September 25, and the virtual “Awards luncheon” was a success! All five of the prize-winning authors were eloquent, interesting, and honored by their awards. Those of you who attended were able to ask questions and then chat with other members in smaller breakout rooms.

Our October meeting will take place Wednesday, Oct. 21 at noon via Zoom. This is our Scholarship meeting, where Annella Thomas, a student from Columbia College’s creative writing will accept a \$3000 scholarship—this is considerable more than we have previously given out, a sum that is truly meaningful for a struggling student. Ms. Thomas will do a short reading from one of her essays, the first time we will have heard work in progress from a scholarship winner.

Last month I wrote about FAW’s project to provide each student in a first-grade classroom at the Lawndale Community Academy with a copy of *Thank You, Omu* by Oge Mora, a past winner of our Young People’s Literature Award. A \$25.00 donation will buy one book for one child, but we have not yet raised close to enough to fund the project. Please help! Please send donations, marked “Classroom Book Donation” to Vivian Mortensen, 506 Rose Avenue, Des Plaines, IL.


## October 21 Meeting – FAW Scholarship & Columbia College’s MFA Writing Program

Our October meeting will feature the presentation of the FAW Scholarship from our Foundation Fund to Annella Thomas, her adviser, Lisa Fishman and speaker Patricia McNair of Columbia College.

Join us by Zoom on Wednesday, October 21 when Columbia College Chicago will be our focus. Annella Thomas, a MFA student and the winner of this year’s \$3,000 scholarship, will be presented, after which we’ll have an opportunity to hear Patricia Ann McNair, a writer and longtime faculty member, as she speaks to us about the art of writing and her experiences teaching it.

**When:** October 21 at 12:00 Central time

**Where:** Virtual meeting via Zoom. No need to make a reservation. We will send everyone a link to the meeting.

**How:** **\*\*Important - Everyone with an email will be sent a link to join the meeting by email. Watch for your meeting link.** You may forward the link to friends. First install the Zoom app. On October 21 slightly before noon, click on the link to join the meeting. Your camera and microphone will be muted when you join the meeting. If you do not receive the link email by October 20, you can send a request to .

## Annella Thomas – 2020/2021 FAW Scholarship Winner



← Annella Thomas is a poet and essayist who received her BA in poetry at Columbia and is now working on an MFA in nonfiction. She has been a contributing editor for the Columbia Poetry Review, which comes out annually; Punctuate, an online nonfiction magazine; and Hotel Amerika, a literary magazine which specializes in writing that is quirky and unconventional. All are magazines produced by Columbia College Chicago. Ms. Thomas lives in southern Illinois with her parents and her dog, Daisy.



**Patricia McNair**

← Patricia McNair is a well-known Chicago writer who has published both a collection of essays (*And These Are the Good Times*, 2017) and a collection of short stories (*The Temple of Air*, 2011). In addition, she has a new collection of stories entitled *Responsible Adults* which will be out in December of this year. *Booklist* praised *And These Are the Good Times*, saying: “Short story writer McNair [is] an irresistible personal essayist of refreshing candor, vibrant openheartedness, rueful humor, and unassuming wisdom.” And fellow-writer John McNally has this to say about *The Temple of Air*: “It’s a collection of fever-dreams: often haunting, always beautiful. These are lyrical stories that sear themselves into the reader’s subconscious, and we are incredibly lucky that Patricia Ann McNair has written them.”

Ms. McNair, who has managed a gas station, worked on the trading floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and taught aerobics, received her BA from Columbia College Chicago in 1988 and her MFA from the same institution in 1996. Currently an associate professor in the English and Creative Writing department, she is the recipient of an Excellence in Teaching Award and a nomination for the Carnegie Foundation's U.S. Professor of the Year. Ms. McNair lives in Chicago with her husband, the visual artist Philip Hartigan, and “the ghosts of their cats, Pablo and Enrique.”

**FAW News**



← FAW members, Helene Madsen, Diana Adams, Beth Prew, Jennifer Zvi and June Gruner having a Zoom gathering for the FAW Literature Awards. Brilliant idea!



**The September 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of Friends of American Writers** was a landmark with the FAW Literature Awards presented via a Zoom Webinar. The Adult and Young People’s Literature Committees worked together with Brian Johnson from Fuse-tg to produce a wonderful live Zoom event. The authors sent informative video clips which gave the audience an insight into the background and hard work that culminated in their award-winning books. A short, live Q & A session with the authors followed the video clips.

All-in-all a successful event! We have created a YouTube area and posted the recording of the Literature Awards. Please feel free to watch it on YouTube by searching for Friends of American Writers, or clicking this link -

<https://youtu.be/M6QFor6t4sw>



**Membership** – FAW now has 87 membership in total for this year. 83 Regular members, 2 Honorary members, and 2 Sustaining clubs. **Thank you very much** for all your renewals at this difficult time. Every member is important for the continuation of the mission of FAW. Our current sustaining clubs are: Bad Dog Book Club and The Woman’s Reading Club of Riverside. Remember, you can always forward your newsletter or your link to our Zoom programs to friends that might enjoy a FAW membership.

Here is a much-appreciated short message from long-time Sustaining Club member, Mary Ellen Nichols, Ogden Dunes Book Club.

*...Sadly, our book club is now being disbanded due to lack of membership. So, you will have to remove our club from your list along with my information as a contact. However, since the Ogden Dunes Book Club has been a proud supporter of FAW for so many years, we are sending a final donation to FAW.... Your organization does such a wonderful job of recognizing new authors in the Midwest and we applaud you.*



**Foundation Fund** - The Foundation would like to thank everyone who has donated to the fund this year. It is thanks to your generosity that we can give our annual scholarships. We are also grateful to Louis V. Farr of Merrill Lynch

for his pro bono work on our behalf. Thank you to our Foundation Fund donors: Karen Baker, Janis Bray, Karen Burnett, Dale Davidson, Roberta Gates, Peggy Iska, Kathleen Katz, Karen Pulver, Edith Riley, Dori Roskin, Christine Bern, Peggy Iska, Jennifer Miller, Jamie O'Malley, Roberta Schaffner, Patricia Smart, Jamie O'Malley



FAW Meeting agenda – Our programs so far this year are virtual. Here is our lineup so far:

**September 25-** FAW Literature Awards

**October 21-**FAW Scholarship presentation and Columbia College's MFA Writing program

**November 11-** Rex Huppke of Chicago Tribune

**December 9** - A Musical Program, Vocalists Celebrating the season In Song

**January 13** - Leslie Goddard performing Georgia O'Keeffe

We will also have **Readers & Reviewers** November 18 of *The Municipalists* by Seth Fried, led by Joan Gordon and another R&R meeting in March of *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante, led by Roberta Gates.



## Neat Links

Booklist's Shelf Care Interview - Macmillan Library Marketing Team

In this episode of the Shelf Care Interview, Susan Maguire talks to the Macmillan Library Marketing Team, Talia Sherer, Amanda Rountree, Emily Day, and Samantha Slavin, to answer the question: *Who is this team of book-a-holics and why should librarians give a hoot about their recommendations?*

<https://soundcloud.com/shelfcare/shelf-care-interview-macmillan-library-marketing-team>

Do you like Storytelling? Donald Davis is one of the greatest storytellers.

Donald Davis at the National Storytelling Festival

[https://youtu.be/9\\_uaBf35r0A](https://youtu.be/9_uaBf35r0A)

Mozart - String Quartet No.14 in G major K.387 "Spring" (Hagen Quartet)

<https://youtu.be/L9HIwFVU7D0>



## READING SUGGESTIONS

***Charlotte Walsh Likes to Win* by Jo Piazza**

**Fiction, Politics**

An exciting, insightful novel about what happens when a woman wants it all—political power, a happy marriage, and happiness—but isn't sure just how much she's willing to sacrifice to get it. Charlotte Walsh is running for Senate in the most important race in the country during a midterm election that will decide the balance of power in Congress. Still reeling from a presidential election that shocked and divided the country (sounds familiar!) and inspired by the chance to make a difference, she's left behind her high-powered job in Silicon Valley and returned, with her husband Max and their three young daughters, to her downtrodden Pennsylvania hometown to run in the Rust Belt state. A searing, suspenseful story of political ambition, marriage, class, sexual politics, and infidelity, *Charlotte Walsh Likes to Win* is an insightful portrait of what it takes for a woman to run for national office in America today. In a dramatic political moment like no other with more women running for office than ever before, Jo Piazza's novel is timely, engrossing, and perfect for readers on both sides of the aisle.

***Just Us: An American Conversation* by Claudia Rankine**

**Nonfiction, Race**

As everyday white supremacy becomes increasingly vocalized with no clear answers at hand, how best might we approach one another? Claudia Rankine, without telling us what to do, urges us to begin the discussions that might open pathways

through this divisive and stuck moment in American history. *Just Us* is an invitation to discover what it takes to stay in the room together, even and especially in breaching the silence, guilt, and violence that follow direct addresses of whiteness.

***The New Wilderness* by Diane Cook**

**Science Fiction, Dystopia**

A suspenseful second book by Dian Cook that explores a mother-daughter relationship in a world ravaged by climate change and overpopulation. Bea’s five-year-old daughter, Agnes, is slowly wasting away. The smog and pollution of the City is slowly destroying her. Outside the city lies the Wilderness State, the last swath of open, protected land left. Here forests and desert plains are inhabited solely by wildlife. People are forbidden. Until now. Bea, Agnes, and eighteen others volunteer to live in the Wilderness State as part of a study to see if humans can co-exist with nature. Can they be part of the wilderness and not destroy it? Gripping, fierce, terrifying examination of what people are capable of when they want to survive in both the best and worst ways.

***What Alice Forgot* by Liane Moriarty**

**Fiction, Chick lit**

Alice Love is twenty-nine, crazy about her husband, and pregnant with her first child. So imagine Alice’s surprise when she comes to on the floor of a gym and is whisked off to the hospital where she discovers the honeymoon is truly over — she’s getting divorced, she has three kids and she’s actually 39 years old. Alice must reconstruct the events of a lost decade and find out whether it’s possible to reconstruct her life at the same time. Ultimately, Alice must discover whether forgetting is a blessing or a curse, and whether it’s possible to start over.

***Dear Edward* by Ann Napolitano**

**Fiction, Hope**

*What does it mean not just to survive, but to truly live?*

One summer morning, twelve-year-old Edward Adler, his beloved older brother, his parents, and 183 other passengers board a flight in Newark headed for Los Angeles. Among them are a Wall Street wunderkind, a young woman coming to terms with an unexpected pregnancy, an injured veteran returning from Afghanistan, a business tycoon, and a free-spirited woman running away from her controlling husband. Halfway across the country, the plane crashes. Edward is the sole survivor. When you’ve lost everything, how do you find the strength to put one foot in front of the other? How do you learn to feel safe again? How do you find meaning in your life? *Dear Edward*, is at once a transcendent coming-of-age story, a multidimensional portrait of an unforgettable cast of characters, and a breathtaking illustration of all the ways a broken heart learns to love again.

<b>FAW 2020 - 2021 Officers</b>	<b>Committee Chairs</b>
<b>President</b> - Tammie Bob, <b>Vice President</b> - Christine Spatara, <b>Secretary</b> - Dale Davison, <b>Treasurer</b> - Vivian Mortensen	<b>Newsletter Editor</b> - Karen Baker, <b>Foundation Fund</b> - Edith Riley, Roberta Gates, <b>Literature Awards</b> - Ida Hagman, Karen Pulver, <b>Young People's Awards</b> - Angela Gall, <b>Luncheon - Social</b> - Carol Eshaghy, <b>Membership</b> - Karen Burnett, <b>Programs</b> - Joan Gordon, <b>Revisions</b> - Pat Schneider, <b>Sustaining Clubs</b> - Diana Adams, <b>Yearbook &amp; Awards Program</b> - Pat Adelberg, <b>Website Manager</b> - Karen Baker

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