

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.

Jan 2, 2021 - Fawchicago.org

Message from FAW President – *Tammie Bob*



There is one upside to the Quarantine: It looks like it will soon be over. We can imagine a near future where we will be able to go places, meet with friends and family, and gather in large groups to dine, to improve ourselves, and to be entertained.

In the meantime, we console ourselves by whatever means available. FAW's monthly Zoom meetings have been bright spots in our schedules, and our Wednesday, February 10th (noon) program promises to continue our streak of good programs. Acclaimed author Jane Hamilton will speak to us about her experiences growing up in Chicago, no doubt striking some familiar notes and introducing us to new ones.

Thank you for your continued membership and support. Soon we'll be able to resume all the activities we enjoy, but meanwhile, see you on Feb. 10th at noon via Zoom.

February 10th, 2021 Program – Author Jane Hamilton



Our Program for February is the prize-winning author, Jane Hamilton. Ms. Hamilton is the author of several highly respected and humane novels, including *A Map of the World* and *The Book of Ruth*, two of the earliest Oprah Book Club selections. Jane Hamilton, a graduate of Oak Park-Lake Forest High School and Carlton College, lives and writes at her Wisconsin apple orchard.

Jane Hamilton will join us to talk about growing up in Oak Park during the initiative to integrate the village. She will tell the story of African American choir director, Norma Raybon, and of how a group reconnected with her after thirty years. Jane will discuss the challenge of writing about race then and now.

Other Books by Jane Hamilton:


- *The Excellent Lombards*, (April 2016)
- *Laura Rider's Masterpiece*, (April 2009)
- *When Madeline Was Young*, (September 2007)
- *Disobedience: A Novel*, (July 2001)

When: February 10, 2021 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. You may sign into the meeting starting at 11:50 by clicking on the link to join the meeting. Your microphone will be muted when you join the meeting. Please leave it muted during the program. If you do not receive the link email by February 9, you can send a request to joan@fawchicago.org

FAW NEWS


 **The (Zoom) January FAW meeting featured Leslie Goddard as Georgia O'Keeffe.** We all felt like Georgia was there with us as she shared her views on nature, her art, her marriage, and personal style. Here is a link to the FAW YouTube area for Leslie's performance. It will be available only by this link after January. You may also view our other meeting recordings by searching on YouTube for Friends of American Writers.
https://youtu.be/s-qkKRa_Y6Q

FAW Upcoming Programs

March 10, 2021 – (Virtual) You loved her as the pig and pork expert; join the Zoom meeting when Cynthia Clampitt returns to talk about her latest scholarly and entertaining work, *Visiting Midwestern History*. As we prepare to travel again, we may be starting slowly and locally, so let's get some suggestions for nearby places to visit. Road trip!

April 14, 2021 – (Virtual) John Scheckter, presenting - Major Fitz-Gerald at Gallipoli: Archive and Empathy. The personal papers of an Australian major in the First World War tell an adventurous story of intelligence and courage. The WWI, eight-month campaign on the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey was one of the bloodiest of the war and the first to involve troops from Australia and New Zealand. The campaign is often considered to be the beginning of Australian and New Zealand national consciousness; 25 April, the anniversary of the landings, is known as Anzac Day, the most significant commemoration of military casualties and veterans in the two countries, surpassing Remembrance Day (Armistice Day). John Scheckter teaches at Long Island University, New York.

May 2021 – FAW Literature Awards. Most likely virtual.


 **March Readers & Reviewers** (Virtual Meeting) Please join us at two o'clock on Wednesday, March 24 when the Readers & Reviewers "book club" will dive into *My Brilliant Friend*, a novel (the first in a four-book series) written by the pseudonymous Elena Ferrante.

Set in a Naples slum during the nineteen-fifties, *My Brilliant Friend* focuses on two little girls, Elena Greco and Lila Cerullo, who meet in primary school where the two of them are top students. Elena, the teacher's pet, is attracted to Lila not just because she's smart but because she's a rebel and a risk-taker. Later, though, Lila will envy Elena when she's permitted to go on to middle school, but Lila isn't. And later still, boys will enter the equation, complicating not just the story but the relationship between the two "frenemies." But regardless of whether they're best friends or rivals (or both at once), the two girls are always in agreement that, no matter what happens, they have to resist the limitations of their neighborhood.

That neighborhood is just as much a character as the two protagonists. Peopled by tradesmen, shopkeepers and the Camorra (the Neapolitan Mafia), it's a gritty and claustrophobic place that the author brings to life with vivid specificity, whether it's the dust of the roads or the pastries in a shopwindow.

But a word of caution here: There are so many characters and they're introduced so quickly that you may find it hard to keep them straight. Fortunately, the book includes a complete list of characters, grouped by families, which is a great help, but I guarantee that before long you'll get the cast of characters down, knowing where they work, to whom they're related, and what nefarious deeds they're suspected of.

If you're short on time, however, and don't have a chance to read *My Brilliant Friend*, you can watch the HBO miniseries which is meticulously faithful to the novel. But either way, I hope you'll join us on March 24 for what should be a stimulating discussion! ~ Roberta Gates

 Letters were sent to every FAW member who contributed money in 2020 to the Patrons Fund, the Foundation Fund and/or the School Book Project. Friends of American Writers is a not for profit 501-C-(3) organization so these contributions are completely tax deductible. Please contact me if you have questions or concerns about the amount listed. I keep records but mistakes can be made. - Vivian Mortensen, Treasurer

DIVERSIONS



Pride and Prejudice Quiz

1. What are the full names of the Bennet sisters in order from youngest to eldest?
2. What is Mrs. Bennet's first name?
3. How old is Mr. Darcy?
4. What is Mr. Darcy's first name?
5. Where were Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner going to take Elizabeth before they decided to go to Derbyshire?
6. What is the name of Lady Catherine De Bourgh's daughter?
7. How much does the chimney piece in the drawing room at Rosings Park cost?
8. What is Mr. Collins' first name?
9. Where was Georgiana Darcy when Wickham tried to elope with her?
10. What is Mr. Gardiner's first name?
11. What are the names of the Bingley sisters?
12. Where do Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner live?
13. Where do the Bingleys live when they go to London?
14. At the end of the book, when Mr. Darcy proposes to Elizabeth, where is Kitty?
15. Which game do Mrs. Philips and her guests play at the party she throws when Mr. Collins comes to Hertfordshire?

See Answers at end of the Newsletter

Book Adaptions to Movies Coming Soon!

- *The Dig* by John Preston (2007) As Britain prepares for war in 1939, archaeologists uncover the grandest Anglo-Saxon trove on a Suffolk farm. **January 15 (select theaters); January 29 (Netflix)**
- *Firefly Lane* by Kristen Hannah (2008) On Netflix as a 10-episode series. Friendship is at the heart of this emotional novel that traces the lives of Tully Hart and Kate Mularkey across three decades. Katherine Heigl and Sarah Chalke star as Tully and Kate, respectively. **February 3, 2021**

- *Death on the Nile* by Agatha Christie (1937) Calling all Hercule Poirot fans. Kenneth Branagh returns as Poirot on what should be a relaxing cruise on the Nile but results in the demise of a beautiful young woman. **September 17, 2021**
- *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah (2015) Another WWII Drama follows two sisters, Vianne and Isabelle, who are trying to survive during the German occupation of France. The leading roles are played by two real-life sisters, Dakota and Elle Fanning. **December 22, 2021**



READING SUGGESTIONS

***AMERICAN DIRT* by Jeanine Cummins**

Fiction

Liked by Vivian Mortensen

After witnessing a mass murder, a Mexican woman and her son flee their home in Acapulco to travel north to the U.S. Even money and education can't prevent Lydia from the horrors of migration. Along the way they meet other migrants with heart-wrenching stories and share many dangers - jumping onto moving trains, dealing with corrupt police, and traveling across the border illegally. The author humanizes the story injecting unbelievable kindness and compassion into a page turner. A must read!

***The Book of Lost Names* by Kristin Harmel**

Historical Fiction

Liked by Karen Baker

Eva Traube Abrams, a semi-retired librarian in Florida, is shelving books when she sees an article in the New York Times that dramatically will change her life. There, a picture of a book she believed had vanished forever, was staring out from a photograph. The article details how the Nazis stole or destroyed priceless books during WW II which a Berlin librarian was trying to reunite with their true owners. That book, *Epitres et Evanglies*, or as she called it, *The Book of Lost Names*, belonged to her in a past secret life, 65 years ago in war-torn France.

As a graduate student in 1942, Eva was forced to flee Paris with her mother after the arrest of her father, a Polish Jew. Eva utilizes her artistic skills to forge new identification papers for her and her mother and find safety in a small mountain town in the Free Zone. In Aurignon, a resistance group that helps Jewish children flee to Switzerland recruits Eva to make new documents for the children and is introduced to a handsome forger named Remy. Her mother claims they are erasing people by assigning these new identities, so Eva and Remy encrypt the names into the *Book of Lost Names* to preserve the real names of the children.

The novel switches between current-time Eva as she travels to Berlin to claim her book, and the unraveling of events that led to the book falling into the hands of the Nazis. This is a fast moving and engrossing WWII novel.

A Swim in a Pond in the Rain: In Which Four Russians

Give a Master Class on Writing, Reading, and Life

By George Saunders

Nonfiction, Writing

From the New York Times bestselling, Booker Prize-winning author of *Lincoln in the Bardo* comes a literary master class on what makes great stories work and what they can tell us about ourselves—and our world today.

For the last twenty years, George Saunders has been teaching a class on the Russian short story to his MFA students at Syracuse University. In *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain*, he shares a version of that class with us,

offering some of what he and his students have discovered together over the years. Paired with iconic short stories by Chekhov, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Gogol, the seven essays in this book are intended for anyone interested in how fiction works and why it's more relevant than ever in these turbulent times.



Books For A Month of Romance

The Amish Marketplace Series by Amy Clipston
The Last Letter from Your Lover by JoJo Moyes
The Happy Ever After Playlist by Abby Jimenez
Indigo by Beverly Jenkins
The Viscount Who Loved Me by Julia Quinn
Open Season by Linda Howard
The Wedding Date by Jasmine Guillory
Virgin River by Robyn Carr

Quiz Answers

1. Lydia, Catherine, Mary, Elizabeth, Jane 2. Fanny 3. 28 4. Fitzwilliam 5. The Lake District 6. Anne 7. 800 £ 8. William 9. Rammgate 10. Edward 11. Caroline Bingley, Louisa Hurst 12. Gracechurch Street, Cheapside, London 13. Grosvenor Street 14. At Home 15. Whist

Contact FAW

Tammie Bob
 474 Stagecoach Run
 Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
 630-858-1582

Newsletter – newsletter@fawchicago.org
 membership – info@fawchicago.org

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