

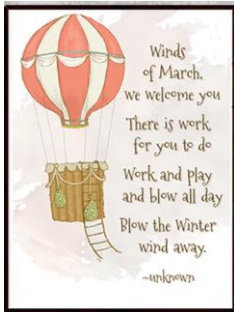
FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS



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

March 1, 2021 - Fawchicago.org

Message from FAW President – *Tammie Bob*



As I write this, there's still many inches of snow piled up, but today the temperature peaked in the sunny 40's and it's clear that Spring is finally approaching. Another sign of progress: many of us have been or are in the process of being vaccinated. We can imagine a time (not this week or next, but foreseeable) when we'll be able to meet, eat, and learn together again.

Meanwhile, on March 10 at noon (on Zoom) we can enjoy a slide-lecture from Cynthia Clampitt, who last year showed us how utterly captivating pigs, and their history with man, can be. This year her topic is "Heartland History," a romp through the Midwest's museums, living history venues, archaeological sites, reenactments, vintage farms, and historic towns

that will put to rest any ideas that our region is mostly about growing corn. Feel free to invite guests and loved ones, making sure to notify Karen Baker of their emails so she can send a link.

March 10th, 2021 Program – Cynthia Clampitt, Destination: Heartland History



You loved her as the pig and pork expert. The 'Pig Lady' is back! We last had travel and food author, Cynthia Clampitt, at our FAW meeting January 2020. Cynthia earned the soubriquet 'The Pig Lady' after her enjoyable program on the history of pigs. Join us March 10 while Cynthia entertains us with a tour of the Midwest.

See and learn about destinations and events across the Greater Midwest that reveal how a region famed for supplying food supplied so much more, including iconic images, legendary individuals, and inventions that would change the world. From prehistory to present, hear the tales and "visit" the museums, living-history venues, archaeological sites, historic towns, vintage farms, reenactments, and even restaurants that make the Midwest's past accessible—and fun.


Cynthia Clampitt is a writer, speaker, and food historian who has pursued her love of history, culture, and food across six continents. She has written about food history for three decades but has also written more traditional history and geography for major educational publishers in the U.S., including the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and National Geographic Learning. In the last few years, her focus has been on the American Midwest, which led to her authoring *Midwest Maize: How Corn Shaped the U.S. Heartland* and now *Pigs, Pork and Heartland Hogs*. She is a member of the Culinary Historians of Chicago, the Society of Women Geographers, the Agricultural History Society, the Midwest History Association, the Association of Food Journalists, and the International Association of Culinary Professionals. She loves the surprises and connections to our lives of food history, and it has become one of her favorite fields of study.

Books by Cynthia Clampitt:


- *Waltzing Australia*, (Nov 2011)
- *Midwest Maize: How Corn Shaped the U.S. Heartland*, (Feb 2015)
- *Pigs, Pork, and Heartland Hogs: From Wild Boar to Baconfest*, (October 2018)

When: March 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. There will be a Q & A opportunity following the presentation. If you do not receive the link email by March 9, you can send a request to 


FAW NEWS

 **March Readers & Reviewers** (Virtual Meeting) Don't forget about the Readers and Reviewers meeting this month. 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. If you're short on time, 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

 **FAW Board Nominating Committee** – Christine Spatara will head the FAW Board Nominating Committee. The following positions will turn over for the 2021-2022 year. Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, Foundation Fund Chair, Literature Awards Chair, Young People's Literature Chair, Revisions Chair, Sustaining Clubs Chair, Yearbook – Awards Program Chair. Please email or call Tammie Bob or Christine Spatara if you have interest in serving on the FAW board next year. We need your help.

 **The (Zoom) February FAW meeting with author Jane Hamilton** was well attended. We welcome visitors to the FAW meetings and hope that they consider joining Friends of American Writers next year. You may view our meeting recordings by searching on YouTube for Friends of American Writers or this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfuB287f8PKMPFierqwYRQw>

 **Literature Awards Committee** - Ida Hagman reported that several good options are currently being reviewed by the committee and a finalist would be identified and is anticipated by the end of March.

 **YP Literature Awards Committee** - Angela Gall reported that their committee is reviewing several good books, especially picture books this year.

FAW Upcoming Programs

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.



Greener Life Choices - Recycling is good but try to buy fewer products in single use plastic. Look for them, they are out there. I tried shampoo and conditioner that came as a bar soap. It was very nice and worked well (brand was Ethique). Buy refills for your hand soap dispenser that comes in a gel packet or dissolvable tablet instead of buying a new plastic soap dispenser. Do you really need to put your grocery store produce in a plastic bag when you pick it out? No! The apples, tomatoes or zucchini will be fine loose in the shopping cart. Request the check-out clerk to not put items into additional plastic bags.

“Cumulatively small decisions, choices, actions, make a very big difference.” – Jane Goodall

Have you very tried a graphic novel? Batman or Marvel Comic book characters come to mind, but a **graphic novel** is a narrative work in which the story is conveyed to the reader using sequential art in either an experimental design or in a traditional comics format. The term is employed in a broad manner, encompassing non-fiction works and thematically linked short stories as well as fictional stories across several genres. It is a very effective means to convey topics that are difficult to talk about. Here are a few with varied topics.

<i>Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?</i>	Roz Chast	Graphic Novel, Ageing Parents, Biography
<i>The Graphic Canon Vol 1 - 4</i>	Russ Kick	Graphic Novel, Literature
<i>My Depression: A Picture Book</i>	Elizabeth Swados	Graphic Novel, Health
<i>This One Summer</i>	Mariko Tamaki and Jillian Tamaki	Graphic Novel, YA, Coming of Age
<i>Poems to See By: A Comic Artist Interprets Great Poetry</i>	Julian Peters	Graphic Novel, Poetry
<i>You Can Only Yell at Me for One Thing at a Time: Rules for Couples</i>	Patricia Marx & Roz Chast	Graphic Novel, Relationships



READING SUGGESTIONS

***Something In The Water* by Catherine Steadman**

Fiction, Thriller

Liked by Karen Baker

I just finished the audio book version of *Something In The Water*. It was read by the author who is British. The reading was a very personal narration. I could imagine I was curled up on the couch with a glass of wine and my BFF as she recounted a personal confession. She even did the voices of other characters. I thoroughly enjoyed the story, even though I could guess where it was going. Catherine Steadman is an actress (she was Mabel Lane Fox in *Downton Abbey*) and this is her first book.

Let me tell you a bit about my friend, Erin, and her story that slowly unwinds in exquisite detail. Erin is a young documentary filmmaker on the brink of a professional breakthrough, soon to be married to Mark, a handsome investment banker with big plans. Even though Mark is fired from his job several weeks before the big day, they embark on a dream honeymoon in Bora Bora. A storm interrupts their near-perfect trip on day five. Then, while scuba diving in the crystal blue sea, they find something in the water that brings into question how much they really know about each other.

***The Shape of Darkness* by Laura Purcell**

Historical Fiction

Once again Laura Purcell gives us perfect winter reading fare with her atmospheric Victorian era Gothic spine chiller set in the filthy, disease ridden, bleak streets of Bath in the late 19th century. Silhouette artist Agnes is struggling to keep her business afloat while still recovering from a serious illness to support her elderly mother and her orphaned nephew Cedric. When one after another of her clients is murdered, she seeks the resources of an 11-year-old albino medium, Pearl, hoping to reach the spirits of the murdered to aid in the identification of their killer. This is dark, sinister, and dramatic read of grief and loss, secrets and deception, filled with Purcell's trademark twists and surprises.

***Stories from Suffragette City* By Various Authors**

Short Stories, Historical Fiction

Stories From Suffragette City is a collection of short stories from the leading voices in historical fiction that all take place on a single day. The day one million women marched for the right to vote in New York City in 1915. A day filled with a million different stories, and a million different voices longing to be heard. Taken together, these stories from writers at the top of their bestselling game become a chorus, stitching together a portrait of a country looking for a fight, and echo into a resounding force strong enough to break even the most stubborn of glass ceilings.

***The Code Breaker: Jennifer Doudna, Gene Editing, and the Future of the Human Race* by Walter Isaacson**

Nonfiction, Science

Journalist and historian Walter Isaacson is best known in literary circles as the writer of magisterial biographies, scholarly and meticulously researched, yet immensely entertaining. He is the bestselling author of *Leonardo da Vinci* and *Steve Jobs*. We welcome his gripping new book about Nobel Prize winner Jennifer Doudna and her colleagues invented the technology to edit DNA. She and her collaborators turned a curiosity of nature into an invention that will transform the human race. Known as CRISPR, it opened a brave new world of medical miracles and moral questions.

Should we use our new evolution-hacking powers to make us less susceptible to viruses? What a wonderful boon that would be! And what about preventing depression? Hmmmm...Should we allow parents, if they can afford it, to enhance the height or muscles or IQ of their kids?

After helping to discover CRISPR, Doudna became a leader in wrestling with these moral issues and, with her collaborator Emmanuelle Charpentier, won the Nobel Prize in 2020. Her story is a thrilling detective tale that involves the most profound wonders of nature, from the origins of life to the future of our species. This would be a fabulous book club discussion.

Great Book Series

Kate Burkholder Mystery Series – Linda Castillo

In the sleepy rural town of Painters Mill, Ohio, the Amish, and “English” residents have lived side by side for two centuries. Sixteen years ago, a series of brutal murders shattered the peaceful farming community. The books follow the exploits of Kate Burkholder, formerly Amish who became a law enforcement agent and returns to Painters Mill as Chief of Police. Follow Kate as she seeks out truth in a society of silence – and face some secrets of her own.

Blanche White Mystery Series – Barbara Neely

Blanche White is a strong and independent African American woman who works as maid and an amateur sleuth. The first book in this series, *Blanche on the Lam*, won the Agatha, Macavity, and Anthony Awards. Critics and fans continued to cheer on the feisty detective as she unraveled conspiracies and scandals in three more mysteries in the series... *Blanche Among the Talented Tenth*, *Blanche Cleans Up* and *Blanche Passes Go*.

Natalie Seachrist Hawaiian Mystery Series - Jeanne Burrows-Johnson

The series features suspense-filled mysteries set in the lush environs of Hawai`i. The unusual puzzles that travel journalist Natalie Seachrist, Miss Una (her fleet-footed feline companion), and retired homicide detective Keoni Hewett explore are revealed by her evocative dreams and visions that move between the present and the past. The series is seasoned with elements of multiculturalism, pan-Pacific history, the paranormal, and subtle romance.

No 1 Ladies Detective Agency - Alexander McCall Smith

I love this series. If you want a series of feel-good books, read these. In this charming series, Mma Ramotswe—with help from her loyal associate, Grace Makutsi—navigates her cases and her personal life with wisdom, good humor, and the occasional cup of tea.

Mars Trilogy – Kim Stanley Robinson

In his most ambitious project to date, award-winning author Kim Stanley Robinson utilizes years of research & cutting-edge science in the 1st of a trilogy chronicling the colonization of Mars and humanity's struggle to survive at its farthest frontier. *Red Mars*, *Green Mars* & *Blue Mars*.

The Easy Rawlins series - Walter Mosley

Walter Mosley’s private detective Easy Rawlins is a compelling character for many reasons. He’s an African American private detective working in the often-racist setting of Los Angeles in the 1940s to the 1960s. Because of this, issues of racism and social justice are just as integral to the storyline as the mysteries Rawlins is solving. Mosley has written 14 novels and a collection of short stories featuring Rawlins, so there are plenty of Rawlins mysteries to get you through the pandemic.

The Wolf Hall series - Hilary Mantel

Wolf Hall chronicles one of the most fascinating moments in British history, the reign of Henry VIII. The novels are told from the perspective of Thomas Cromwell, one of Henry Tudor’s most trusted advisors. Mantel follows Thomas Cromwell’s journey from his humble beginnings, to his rise to a powerful advisor of the court, and finally to his eventual downfall.

<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>Tammie Bob - bobtam410@gmail.com Christine Spatara - chrisspatara@yahoo.com</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>