

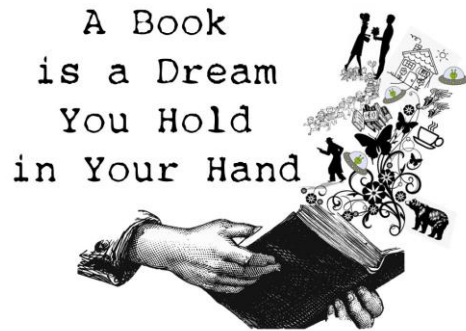
FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS



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

May 1, 2021 - Fawchicago.org

Message from FAW President – *Tammie Bob*



Dear Friends of American Writers,

This month finds us with some things answered and others still uncertain. I am pleased to tell you that both awards committees have completed their mission, and that two Adult Literature Award winners and three Young People's Literature Award winners have been chosen. This year, under lockdown, we had more time to read which was good, because we had more than usual excellent candidates. The committees will present the winners to you in this edition of the newsletter, and next month they'll tell you about the

runners-up that you should also investigate.

The big question that remains is the fate of the June Awards luncheon at the Fortnightly. I am still cautiously optimistic that it will take place but still can't announce it with certainty. For weeks Governor Pritzker has suggested the state might soon move into the next stage of openings, but the Covid-19 levels have still been too high, even as more people are vaccinated. In that stage, the Fortnightly will be able to accommodate fifty guests, with fully vaccinated people not counting in that number. As I believe nearly all FAW members are vaccinated, there would be no problem once we are in the next phase of reopening. We do not have the go-ahead yet. Let's keep our fingers crossed and I will let you know as soon as we have definitive news.

In the meantime, please join us virtually on May 12 at noon to hear author Cindy Crosby, a master gardener, naturalist, conservationist, and author. Once again, thank you for your support during this difficult year.

You may still send a contribution to the Patrons Fund to support the FAW Literature Awards either online at: https://fawchicago.org/donate/donate_patrons.php

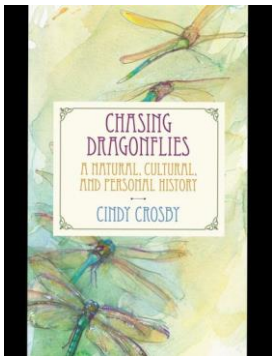
Or by mail:
(check payable to FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS PATRONS FUND)

Friends of American Writers
Vivian Mortenson
506 Rose Ave.
Des Plaines, IL 60016



May 12th, 2021 Program – Cindy Crosby

CHASING DRAGONFLIES: A NATURAL, CULTURAL, AND PERSONAL HISTORY



Cindy Crosby is a master gardener, naturalist, conservationist, and author. She has done extensive study and writing about nature and local natural phenomena. She teaches natural history for the Morton Arboretum, the Sierra Club, and other venues, is a Master Gardener and teaches in the Master Naturalist program. As a prairie steward, she has volunteered countless hours in prairie restoration. Cindy also is an engaging speaker on nature writing, tallgrass prairies, and the subject of her most recent book, *Chasing Dragonflies: A Natural, Cultural, and Personal History* (Northwestern University Press). Drawing on her experiences as a natural history instructor, dragonfly monitor, cancer survivor, grandmother, and steward, Crosby tells the secrets of dragonflies and their inspiration in art and life.

Join us to be entertained and enlightened. You may gain an increased appreciation for these beautiful insects!

When: Wed May 12, 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. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
~~receive the link email by May 11, you can send a request to [\[redacted\]](#)~~

Let's congratulate the FAW Literature Winners!

FAW 2020 - 2021 LITERATURE AWARDS

ADULT AWARDS

- 🌿 TIFFANY MCDANIEL FOR *BETTY: A NOVEL* (KNOFF, AUGUST 18, 2020) \$2,500
- 🌿 ELIZABETH WETMORE FOR *VALENTINE: A NOVEL* (HARPER, MARCH 31, 2020) \$2,500

YOUNG PEOPLE'S AWARDS

- 🌿 LINDSAY CURRIE FOR *SCRITCH SCRATCH* (SOURCEBOOKS YOUNG READERS, SEPTEMBER 1, 2020) \$1,650
- 🌿 CAROLE LINDSTROM FOR *WE ARE WATER PROTECTORS* (ROARING BROOK PRESS, MARCH 17, 2020) \$1,650
- 🌿 LINDSAY H. METCALF FOR *BEATRIX POTTER, SCIENTIST* (ALBERT WHITMAN & COMPANY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2020) &
FARMERS UNITE!: PLANTING A PROTEST FOR FAIR PRICES, (CALKINS CREEK, NOVEMBER 10, 2020) \$1,650

ANNOUNCING THE 2020-2021 FAW LITERATURE AWARD WINNERS

Adult Literature

Each year Friends of American Writers Chicago recognizes emerging Midwestern authors or those whose novels or non-fiction writing are set in the Midwest. This year the Adult Literature Committee read and discussed more than 60 books. We are delighted to announce that *Betty* by Tiffany McDaniel and *Valentine* by Elizabeth Wetmore have been chosen as this year's awards. Each author will receive \$2500 and recognition at a FAW's June 4 luncheon at the Fortnightly Club or a virtual presentation.

Betty is a lyrical coming of age story about a girl's tough childhood in southern Ohio. Betty has a Cherokee father and a white mother. She and her family experience violence, racism, and poverty. As she grows up, she discovers painful secrets about her family. These difficulties are balanced by the loving care and wisdom of her Cherokee father. Her father tells stories that help Betty understand her Cherokee heritage and help her see her own beauty and worth. The book is infused with her father's mystical tales as well as descriptions of the natural beauty of southeast Ohio. Committee members loved Betty's power to endure and prevail. They praised this book for its strong, unique voice. This is a book that members enjoyed rereading, finding something new each time they picked it up.

Tiffany McDaniel is an Ohio native whose writing is inspired by the rolling hills and buckeye woods of the land she knows. She is also a poet and a visual artist. Her debut novel was *The Summer That Melted Everything*.



Valentine by Elizabeth Wetmore tells the story of the aftermath of a brutal crime from the alternating points of view of several women living in Odessa during the west Texas oil boom. Odessa is a tough place to live in the 1970's, especially tough for women. Wetmore describes the physical landscape with searing specificity. The fully realized characters reflect Wetmore's knowledge of the human heart. Committee members admired the reality and strength of these characters as well as Wetmore's extraordinary descriptions of the human and physical landscape of west Texas.

Elizabeth Wetmore is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She is the recipient of a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and fellowships from the Illinois Arts Council. Before devoting herself to writing, Elizabeth variously tended bar, taught English, drove a cab, edited psychology dissertations, painted silos at a petrochemical plant and was a classical music announcer. A native of West Texas, she is most at home in the desert, near the sea, or on the side of a mountain. She lives in Chicago, but she dreams of being bicoastal (Lake Michigan and Lake Travis).

Young People's Literature

Lindsay Currie is the author of spooky middle grade novels, perhaps because her favorite holiday is Halloween. Lindsay enjoys researching her city's forgotten history and learning about the events that shaped the many ghost legends in Chicago. Her titles include *The Peculiar Incident on Shady Street* (2017) and *Scratch Scratch* (2020) and the forthcoming *What Lives in the Woods* (2021) and *Curses of Eastport* (2022). Her books have all sold audio rights and foreign rights, as well as having earned a glowing blurb from the master of children's mystery/horror himself, R.L. Stine. "This is a teeth-chattering, eyes bulging, shuddering-and-shaking, chills-at-the-back-of-your-neck ghost story. I loved it!" —R.L. Stine, author of the Goosebumps series.

Scratch Scratch by Lindsay Currie is more than a ghost story; it is a story about Chicago and its forgotten history. Claire is a young girl struggling with the embarrassment of her father's ghost tour business. Claire doesn't believe in ghosts—she has a scientific mind based on facts and hard evidence. However, when she is obliged to help her dad out one night on one of his bus ghost tours, she cannot deny the fact that a ghost has

followed her home. After several terrorizing days and nights, Claire realizes that she must put her scientific methods to the test and figure out why her ghost is haunting her. With the help of her brother and friends, she soon discovers her ghost died in the sinking of the passenger ship the SS Eastland on the Chicago River on July 24, 1915, claiming at least 844 lives, ranking it one of the worst maritime disasters in American history.



Carole Lindstrom was born and raised in Nebraska, and currently makes her home in Maryland. She is Anishinabe/Metis and is tribally enrolled with the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe. While growing up, you could usually find her at the library lost in the book stacks. It wasn't until she had her son, that she discovered her love of writing for children. Carole's first children's book, *Girls Dance, Boys Fiddle* (2013), was inspired by the fiddle and its importance to her Anishinabe/Metis culture. *We Are Water Protectors* (2020), a picture book inspired by Standing Rock, and all Indigenous Peoples fighting for clean water. *We Are Water Protectors* is the Winner of the 2021 Caldecott Medal and a New York Times Bestseller.

We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom is a powerful picture book that is more than an entertaining story. It is a push for activism even from its young readers. It is a reminder that we must fight for what is right and promise to protect what is beautiful and good in our world. The book focuses on the Indigenous Peoples' battle against the Dakota Access Pipeline that threatened to contaminate the water, making it unfit for healthy usage. With its lyrical writing and breathtaking illustrations, *We Are the Water Protectors* is truly a winner.



Lindsay Metcalf grew up on a Kansas farm, then moved to the city to become a journalist for *The Kansas City Star*. Lindsay later returned to her hometown to raise her two boys and write stories, stating, "My mission is to tell stories that encourage children to appreciate and care for the world and all its creatures." She is the author of *Beatrix Potter, Scientist*, (2020) and *Farmers Unite! Planting a Protest for Fair Prices* (2020) and a co-editor of *No Voice Too Small: Fourteen Young Americans Making History* (2020).

Beatrix Potter, Scientist by Lindsay Metcalf is a nonfiction picture book that focuses on the little-known early life of the beloved creator of the classic children's books, *Peter Rabbit*. Before her writing career even began, Beatrix Potter was a lover of science. She collected nature specimens and intensely researched mushrooms and other fungi which she presented to England's foremost experts. Unfortunately, like many women of her day, she remained unacknowledged by the scientific community. Thankfully, Beatrix Potter didn't allow the limitations of her time to stop her from demonstrating her genius through her creativity and imagination.

Farmers Unite! Planting a Protest for Fair Prices by Lindsay Metcalf is a nonfiction picture book that shares the rarely told story of grassroots perseverance and economic justice. In 1979, US farmers traveled to Washington, DC to protest unfair prices for their products. Farmers wanted fair prices for their products and demanded action from Congress. After police corralled the tractors on the National Mall, the farmers and their tractors stayed through a snowstorm and dug out the city. Americans were now convinced they needed farmers, but the law took longer. Boldly told and highlighted with stunning archival images, this is the story of the struggle and triumph of the American farmer that still resonates today.

FAW NEWS




Help Us Celebrate the Centennial!

Next year Friends of American Writers will be 100 years old, and a committee has already been formed to plan ways we can celebrate this significant milestone.

A gala at the Woman's Athletic Club is being planned for May 2022 that will include cocktails, dinner, and a speaker. We'll also be inviting some of our past winners back during the course of the year so we can catch up with them and their writing careers. A centennial booklet summarizing the club's history is also being prepared.

If you have any ideas or would like to help in some way, please get in touch with Roberta Gates or Karen Pulver who are the co-chairs of the committee. They'd be happy to hear from you!

 You may view our meeting recordings by searching on YouTube for Friends of American Writers or this link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfuB287f8PKMPFierqwYROW>

 **FAW Upcoming Programs**

June 4, 2021 – FAW Literature Awards. (Hoping for in person at the Fortnightly).



READING SUGGESTIONS

***The Last Kings of Shanghai: The Rival Jewish Dynasties That Helped Create Modern China* by Jonathan Kaufman**
Cultural, China

NonFiction, History,

The Sassoons and the Kadoories--two Jewish families from Baghdad--had long been successful in business, politics, and society. Jonathan Kaufman tells the remarkable history of how these families participated in an economic boom that opened China to the world but remained blind to the country's deep inequality and to the political turmoil at their doorsteps. In a story stretching from Baghdad to Hong Kong to Shanghai to London, Kaufman enters the lives and minds of these ambitious men and women to forge a tale of opium smuggling, family rivalry, political intrigue, and survival.

The book is very well-researched, easy to read and fascinating account about China's past and reveals how these two families shaped the history of modern China.

***The Caretakers* by Eliza Maxwell**

Fiction, Mystery

Tessa Shepherd is a documentary film maker that gains notoriety when she helps free a man that she believes has been wrongly convicted of murder only to find out that a year after his release he has killed again. Feeling guilty and her professional reputation destroyed, Tessa needs an escape. That's when she learns of a strange inheritance bequeathed by her mother: a derelict and isolated estate known as Fallbrook, which has not been lived in since a terrible event long ago. The eerie mansion is overseen by two elderly sisters retained as caretakers. They are also guardians of all its mysteries. What unfolds is a dramatic collision between past and the present, as the secrets of Fallbrook are revealed.

***Eternal* By Lisa Scottoline**

Historical Fiction

Eternal is a beautiful story of World War II in Rome, Italy with teenagers Elisabetta, Marco, and Sandro. Despite their differences, they grow up as the best of friends. Elisabetta is a feisty beauty who dreams of becoming a novelist; Marco the brash and athletic son in a family of professional cyclists; and Sandro a Jewish mathematics prodigy, kind-hearted and thoughtful, the son of a lawyer and a doctor. Their friendship and love for each other unfolds over decades, and as they are entering adulthood the paths their lives will take are changed by Mussolini and the Fascists then again by the Nazis. *Eternal* is a tale of loyalty and loss, family and food, love and

war--all set in one of the world's most beautiful cities at its darkest moment. This moving novel will be forever etched in the hearts and minds of readers.

The Lost Apothecary by Sara Penner

Historical Fiction

In the 1790’s, a once reputable apothecary, Nella, has ventured into darker and more dangerous territory of dispensing poisons to liberate women in dire situations due to the men who have damaged or wronged them. She intends that no woman is harmed and has strict rules about how her potions may be used, recording each transaction in a register, the names, including that of the poisoner and the victim. **An unexpected friendship is formed when** twelve-year-old Eliza Fanning is sent to acquire a vial of poison for her mistress. The friendship and a misfortunate string of events jeopardizes Nella’s world and threatens to expose the many women whose names are written in her register.

As the story shifts to the present, aspiring historian Caroline Parcewell spends her tenth wedding anniversary alone, reeling from the discovery of her husband’s infidelity. When she finds an old apothecary vial near the river Thames, she can’t resist investigating, only to realize she’s found a link to the unsolved “apothecary murders” that haunted London over two centuries ago. As she deepens her search, Caroline’s life collides with Nella’s and Eliza’s in a stunning twist of fate—and not everyone will survive.

<p>FAW 2020 - 2021 Officers</p>	<p><u>Committee Chairs</u></p>
<p>President - <i>Tammie Bob</i>, Vice President - <i>Christine Spatara</i>, Secretary - <i>Vacant</i>, Treasurer - <i>Vivian Mortensen</i></p> <p><i>Tammie Bob</i> - bobtam410@gmail.com <i>Christine Spatara</i> - chrisspatara@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Newsletter Editor - <i>Karen Baker</i>, Foundation Fund - <i>Edith Riley, Roberta Gates</i>, Literature Awards - <i>Ida Hagman, Karen Pulver</i>, Young People's Awards - <i>Angela Gall</i>, Luncheon - Social - <i>Carol Eshaghy</i>, Membership - <i>Karen Burnett</i>, Programs - <i>Joan Gordon</i>, Revisions - <i>Pat Schneider</i>, Sustaining Clubs - <i>Diana Adams</i>, Yearbook & Awards Program - <i>Pat Adelberg</i>, Website Manager - <i>Karen Baker</i></p>