

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.

October 25, 2021 - Fawchicago.org

Message from FAW President – *Tammie Bob*

Dear Friends of American Writers,

I just met with the Centennial Committee, who are working hard to plan celebratory events for this year, particularly a gala dinner on May 12, 2022, at the Women's Athletic Club. Please mark your calendars now! As the event is in the evening, it's a great opportunity to bring spouses, relatives, or other guests. Not everything lives 100 years, and we deserve to celebrate!



But we don't have to wait until May to get together. Our luncheons are very much alive as well. October's program was particularly compelling. Diana Martinez, the woman responsible for bringing a world class Frida Kahlo exhibit to a small gallery in suburban Chicago, and her presentation and slide show were riveting. Informative, and entertaining. We have high hopes for November as well, when author Mary Logue, author of dozens of mysteries, enlightens us about what writers do to create historically accurate mystery novels. I hope that as booster vaccines are available you will feel safe to return to the Fortnightly Wednesday Nov. 10th at noon.

Tammie Bob - FAW President

November 10th Program - Writing a Historical Mystery, Author Mary Logue



After writing several mystery series and then writing a biography of her Irish grandmother, Mary Logue decided to join the two. She found how much she loved doing research and how she felt like a detective in exploring the past. She will talk about how inspired she was by trying to imagine what coming to America must have felt like to the Irish immigrants, escaping the potato famine, but also, she wanted to follow the exploring of the west by these same immigrants. She will talk about writing *THE STEEL*, set in Deadwood, SD, and about the next book in the series, *THE BIG SUGAR*, set in Cheyenne, WY. Mary would love to answer any questions about publishing and writing other types of books. And of course, read a few poems to set the mood.

A versatile writer, Mary Logue has established a multi-dimensional presence in the literary world as poet, editor of poetry anthologies, author of mystery novels for adults, and author of children's books that include nonfiction and mystery fiction. She wrote her first mystery when she was in sixth grade, which eventually led to her Claire Watkins mystery series. Although she is best known for her mystery novels for adults, poetry is the foundation of her work. She also has written books for Young Readers and non-fiction works.

Mary was an editor at the *Village Voice*, Graywolf Press, and The Creative Company. Her work has appeared in the *Village Voice*, the *New York Times*, and the *Hungry Mind Review*. Currently Mary is on faculty in the low-residency Children's Literature MFA program at Hamline University in St. Paul. She considers herself a bi-riverbank resident, living on both sides of the Mississippi, with writer Pete Hautman, in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Mary also creates unique hand-hooked rugs that are works of art and are on display at Farnham Galleries at Simpson College.

Luncheon Reservations

Join us for the FAW luncheon on **November 10th, 12:00** noon at The Fortnightly of Chicago.

COVID-19 Information from the Fortnightly

The Fortnightly is very pleased to report that 100% of the Fortnightly staff and managers have been vaccinated. All members of the staff will continue to comply with the City of Chicago masking mandate which has been in place since August 20.

Increased vaccination rates are the strongest preventative measure against COVID-19 currently available. We expect all members and guests to arrive fully vaccinated, if able, and be prepared to wear a mask as mandated by the City and State except when actively eating or drinking.

Luncheon reservations and cancellations are due no later than **6:00 PM Sunday November 7**. No reservations or cancellations will be accepted after 6 PM on the Sunday prior to the scheduled meeting. No exceptions. Luncheon will be served at 12:00 noon in the main floor dining room of the Fortnightly Club of Chicago, 120 E. Bellevue Place. The Fortnightly has COVID-19 safety measures in place. Please come with a face mask as they will require you to wear this when you are not eating or drinking. The seating is tables of 6 – 7 socially distanced.

Call: Pat Adelberg - [\(847\) 588-0911](tel:8475880911) or Peggy Kuzminski - (cell) [\(773\) 710-8637](tel:7737108637) for reservations.

- ✓ **Cost is \$45.00** Pay by check(preferred) payable to FAW at the door. Cash is accepted also.
- ✓ Vegetarian meals may be requested at the time you make your reservation.
- ✓ You must call to cancel your reservation, otherwise you will still be charged.
- ✓ Group reservations - please only have one person make the group request to avoid confusion.
- ✓ You may request a permanent (standing) reservation for all the meetings. You must then call and cancel any meetings you are unable to attend.

FAW NEWS



FAW Membership & Treasurer Report

Karen Burnett and Vivian noted the generosity of members in making contributions.

FAW currently has 88 Paid members, 5 Sustaining Clubs and 2 Honorary members. Our members have been very generous so far this year with \$140 towards the Lawndale Books, \$5007 for the Patron's Fund, \$2,658 for the Centennial Fund. The September program had 44 attendees.



Centennial Committee

Roberta Gates reported that the Centennial Celebration will feature Audrey Niffenegger as the speaker. Audrey is a visual artist and a faculty member at Columbia College in Chicago. She is best known for her debut novel, *The Time Traveler's Wife*. In addition, she trained as a visual artist at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and was a Professor on the faculty of the Columbia College Creative Writing Department. Audrey has also taught for the Newberry Library, Penland School of Craft, Haystack, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and other institutions of higher learning. She lives in Chicago. Don't forget to put this celebration at the elegant Women's Athletic Club of Chicago on your calendar – May 12, 2022.



Literature Awards

Ida Hagman and Karen Pulver reported the committee had their first meeting. About a dozen books have been identified. Board members are encouraged to pass on suggestions as to any books that should be considered.



Young People’s Literature Awards

Patti Smart reported the committee met in September and will be meeting again the last week of October. Angela Gall is continuing to offer committee members the option of attending an outdoor lunch or meeting via Zoom.



Website

Karen Baker reported that the on-line meeting reservation system is progressing. This system should allow members to register for the luncheon meeting via the website.



Yearbooks

Watch for your FAW yearbook. This year we changed printers for the yearbook. This required lots of work to create a new digital copy of everything contained in the yearbook. We hope to distribute the yearbooks at the November luncheon.



Foundation Fund

Roberta Gates reported that \$3,218.51 was received in donations. The current balance in the fund is \$46,604.23. November is the month we award the FAW Scholarship. The scholarship recipient is Laura Hawbaker, a fiction writer at Columbia College Chicago. The faculty member who will be introducing her is Garnett Kilberg-Cohen.



Help Bring Books to Children in Lawndale

FAW is still accepting contributions to bring books to the children at the Lawndale Community Academy. FAW will be celebrating 100 years soon, and this worthy project melds perfectly with the mission of Friends of American Writers. The goal is to gift Lawndale Community Academy with 100 books to bridge their connection to literature.

Currently, the school does not have a librarian or functioning library. Therefore, their kindergarten, first, second and special needs classrooms will receive 25 books each. If you would like to donate to this special project, please send a check to FAW with memo of “Classroom Book Donation” to Vivian Mortensen, 506 Rose Avenue, Des Plaines, IL 60016. A \$20.00 donation will cover the cost of one book purchased from the Book Cellar. Thank you for your generous support.

~ Angela Gall



Readers & Reviewers Report - A Look Back at Our Favorites

Ten of us met before the October luncheon and remembered some winners from the stacks of books FAW has awarded through the years. Here’s the diverse list:

ANYWHERE BUT HERE by Mona Simpson (1988). Simpson's first novel opens with its two heroines, Adele and her daughter Ann, fleeing their provincial hometown in Wisconsin for a fresh start in California. (Novelist citation) Members remember the well-defined characters, the comedy – sometimes slapstick – and the opposing sketches of Wisconsin and Beverly Hills. Members also remember the film (same title) with Susan Sarandon and Natalie Portman (1999).

ART OF FIELDING by Chad Harbach (2012). A baseball star at a small college near Lake Michigan launches a routine throw that goes disastrously off course and inadvertently changes the lives of five people, including the college president, a gay teammate, and the president's daughter. (Novelist) Members recall the vivid Midwestern setting, the captivating plot and memorable characters.

EVERYTHING I NEVER TOLD YOU by Celeste Ng (2015 winner). “A teenage girl goes missing and is later found to have drowned in a nearby lake, and suddenly a once tight-knit family unravels in unexpected ways.” (Booklist) Members like the depiction of the parents who think they know what’s going on in their daughter’s life only to find layers of secrets and little understanding of her inner character.

GRENDL by John Gardner (1972). Gardner demonstrates his agility at juggling metaphysical notions while telling a diverting tale as the monster Grendel expresses his isolation and loneliness in a dark and bleak northern world. (Kirkus) A member comments that although it’s a difficult read, especially for one unfamiliar with Beowulf, this is a stylistically complex and witty novel worthy of the award.

THE NIX by Nathan Hill (2017). Astonished to see the mother who abandoned him in childhood throwing rocks at a presidential candidate, a bored college professor struggles to reconcile the radical media depictions of his mother with his small-town memories and decides to draw her out by penning a tell-all biography. (Novelist) Members adore this big book chock-full of humor, pop culture and lampooning of political elections, advertising and much more.

SAMUEL JOHNSON'S ETERNAL RETURN by Martin Riker (2018 finalist). A father is killed while defending his toddler son, after which his soul inhabits the body of his killer. Fully conscious but unable to affect his host's actions, he is forced away from his son, and as he tries to return, he only finds himself ever farther away, inhabiting a series of different hosts through the decades. Members liked the author's creative plotting and raising a variety of philosophical ideas to mull over.

SEVERANCE by Ling Ma (2019). A survivor of an apocalyptic plague maintains a blog about a decimated Manhattan before joining a motley group of survivors to search for a place to rebuild, a goal that is complicated by an unscrupulous group leader. (Novelist) Members point out the timeliness of this book just prior to the covid pandemic, its use of humor, the author's style and its accessibility to complex ideas.

SHADOW DIVERS: THE TRUE ADVENTURE OF TWO AMERICANS WHO RISKED EVERYTHING TO SOLVE ONE OF THE LAST MYSTERIES OF WORLD WAR II by Robert Kurson (2005). Recounts the discovery of a sunken German U-boat by two scuba divers, tracing how they devoted the following years to researching the identities of the submarine and its crew, correcting historical texts and breaking new ground in the world of diving. (Novelist) Members like the high adventure and skill of the author to take a painstakingly slow investigation of a sunken boat and turn it into a page-turner.

STAGGERFORD by Jon Hassler (1978). Portrays the closely intertwined and often troubled lives of residents in the small town as seen through the eyes of Miles Pruitt, a much-respected high school teacher. (Novelist) Members recall the sharply drawn characters, the bureaucracy of smalltown high schools, and the humorous tone of this old fashioned read.



Celebrating 100 Years—FAW Member Spotlight: Betty O'Toole *By Angela Gall*

In her 90 years, Betty O'Toole, a treasured member of our Friends of American Writers Organization since 2008, has lived her life in accordance with the constant action of both body and mind.

When Lorraine Kulpa, a FAW member since 2005, invited Betty to partake in a luncheon at the Fortnightly, it was a no-brainer. The location was perfect (right down the street), the meal was delicious, the speaker was impressive, and the friendliness of the members sealed the deal.

Soon enough, Betty became a FAW board member—arranging the Author Award Luncheons, and by the next year, she was president! When Lorraine Campione asked Betty to become a reader for the Young People's Literature Awards Committee, she once again said yes, because "you just don't say no to such a great group of people." As an ardent reader, Betty found her niche reading dozens of books a year with thoughtful and careful consideration.

Betty's prolific reading is fueled by the way she engages her physical well-being. Betty's agility and competitive nature spurred her involvement in every intramural sport Penn State offered—lacrosse, swimming, bowling, badminton, volleyball, basketball. Her five-foot frame featured a fierce jump shot. She wanted to learn fencing, but unfortunately, it wasn't available until after she graduated. Many enjoyable evenings were spent going to baseball and football games with her husband.

After obtaining her degree in Food and Nutrition, Betty worked for Stouffer's for 28 years, traveling the country for them.

Before Covid, a day never passed without Betty leaving her house for mini-excursions—a trip to the grocery store, a FAW luncheon, a swim at her local gym, the library, etc. Since Covid, Betty has kept busy with Internet programs, FAW Zoom meetings, tons of reading and phone calls! Betty loves calling people and talking on the phone—local calls, international calls, phone calls to long-lost friends—she treasures engagement at all levels.

"Stay active—do the things you enjoy and converse with all sorts of interesting people." In short, join Friends of American Writers!



FAW 2021
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT
COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

LAURA HAWBAKER
GARNETT KILBERG-COHEN - FACULTY
REPRESENTATIVE

LAURA HAWBAKER WINS THIS YEAR'S \$3,000 SCHOLARSHIP

Friends of American Writers is happy to announce that it will present Laura Hawbaker with a \$3,000 scholarship at our luncheon meeting on November 10.

Laura, who is currently working toward her MFA in fiction writing at Columbia College Chicago has a very impressive resume. She received a BA in fiction writing, also at Columbia, and an MA in linguistics from the University of Illinois Chicago. Originally a Chicago native, she's back in her home city again after living in New Orleans, Hawaii, Poland, and Prague.

Laura is also the managing editor of *MASKS Literary Magazine*, which she founded while serving as the 2020/2021 Artist-in-Residence at the Columbia Library's Aesthetics of Research. In addition, she's the winner of the 2021 *Tusculum Review* Fiction Prize, and her essays have appeared in *Bright Wall/Dark Room*, *PopMatters* and *Time Out Chicago*. She has reported for *The Chicago Tribune* and *NewCity Magazine* as well. Laura is now at work on a linked story collection entitled *25 Roommates*.

We hope you will join us in November so you can congratulate Laura in person. She is a stellar recipient!

FAW Program Schedule 2021-22

Nov. 10, 2021	"Writing a Historical Mystery." Author Mary Logue will talk about her mystery series, <i>The Streeel & The Big Sugar</i> .
Dec. 8, 2021	"Becoming a Bookseller at the Book Cellar." Suzy Takacs shares her experience opening her bookstore in Lincoln Square. Not only does she stock fabulous books, but she also serves wine and treats to patrons. Book suggestions for holiday shopping will be shared. In addition, there will be a holiday grab bag with participants bringing wrapped copies of their favorite books.
Jan. 12, 2022	"Fashion and Feminism of the Victorian Era." Britta Keller Arendt, Senior Collection Manager at the Chicago History Museum, will explain how conventional Victorian fashion paved the way for the dress reform movement.
Feb. 9, 2022	"Madam President: The Secret Presidency of Edith Wilson." Author William Hazelgrove speaks on Edith Wilson and her role at the White House after her husband's stroke.
Mar. 9, 2022	"Teens Are Readers Too!" Chicago Author Adi Alsaid will talk about his prize-winning young adult novels and his approach to writing and publishing. <i>+Readers & Reviewers meeting</i>
Apr. 13, 2022	"Happy Birthday to Us." Join us as we celebrate FAW's 100th anniversary with cake, champagne, and a panel featuring some of our busiest and most dedicated members.
June 3, 2022	FAW Awards Luncheon
May 12, 2022	FAW Centennial Celebration at the elegant Women's Athletic Club of Chicago



The Personal Librarian By Marie Benedict
Reviewed by Carol Eshaghy

This is a fictional account of the life of Belle da Costa Greene, a black woman posing as white, who became the personal librarian to JP Morgan. She built up his library of valuable early manuscripts starting in the early 1900's. She acquired these antiquities in a male dominated art world with her intelligence and tenacity. Though her personality was not always to my liking, it propelled her into becoming the most admired career woman of her age. The history of the era, segregation and racism explored in this novel, makes her ascent even more astounding. Her story is both amazing and historical.

For further reading: *An Illuminated Life: Belle da Costa Greene's Journey From Prejudice to Privilege* by Heidi Ardizzone.

<p>FAW 2020 - 2021 Officers</p>	<p>Committee Chairs</p>
<p>President - <i>Tammie Bob</i>, Vice President - <i>Christine Spatara</i>, Secretary – <i>Patty Smart</i>, Treasurer - <i>Vivian Mortensen</i></p>	<p>Newsletter Editor - <i>Karen Baker</i>, Foundation Fund – <i>Roberta Gates (Chair), Karen Burnett, Dori Roskin</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>Dale Davison</i>, Website Manager - <i>Karen Baker</i> Centennial Committee – <i>Roberta Gates & Karen Pulver</i></p>