

FAWCHICAGO.ORG
May 2024 NEWSLETTER



FRIDAY May 10, 2024 Program
11:00 AM at the Fortnightly of Chicago

Literature AWARDS Luncheon

**Luncheon reservations and cancellations are due no later than 6:00 PM
Tuesday
April 30th.**

**Call: Pat Adelberg - (847) 588-0911
or Peggy Kuzminski - (cell) (773) 710-8637
for reservations**

PROGRAM – FAW LITERATURE AWARDS



It's time for our annual AWARDS LUNCHEON
Arrive around 11:00 for a complimentary glass of wine and an opportunity to view and
purchase this year's prize-winning books for adults and young people.
The books and their authors are described in the articles below.

This is FAW's big event of the year! Make your reservation ASAP. 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. The
seating is tables of 6 – 8 socially distanced. Proof of vaccination is no longer required.
**Please remember that vegetarian meal requests are a special order, and the
Fortnightly chef only prepares the number of meals that are requested. Do not ask**

the staff for a vegetarian meal at the luncheon if you did not pre-order one at the time of your reservation.

✓ Cost is \$45.00 Pay by check(preferred) payable to FAW at the door. Cash is accepted also.

✓ Vegetarian meals should 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 program you can't attend—otherwise FAW is still charged for your meal and we must charge you.

President's Corner



President's Message May 2024

May will be here soon and with it comes the last FAW luncheon, which is on May 10. At the April luncheon, members approved new FAW officers and enjoyed a lively presentation on the history of women's undergarments.

We also celebrated Pat Adelberg's retirement from taking reservations and arranging tables. The Fortnightly prepared a beautiful and delicious cake for Pat. Those present could write thank you messages to Pat in a memory book. The book will also be available at the May luncheon for those who want to sign it. Pat said that this was a job she thoroughly enjoyed, and we thoroughly enjoyed calling her.

At our May luncheon, we will award 5 authors a total of \$10,000. We have enough in our Awards account because we have leftover funds from previous years, but our donations this year fell short of our \$10,000 goal. If you have not contributed this year, please consider sending Diana Adams a check or contributing online or with Zelle. If you contribute at least \$50, and do this soon, we will make every effort to put your name in the luncheon program.



In closing, I want to say that it has been an honor to be president of FAW these past two years. Thanks to all those who take on tasks to provide lovely luncheons and programs, book awards, scholarships, and to keep FAW running behind the scenes. A special thank you to Carol Eshaghy. As president, I was surprised to learn how much Carol does for our luncheons and our relationship with the Fortnightly. It's more complicated than you think. Have a lovely summer.

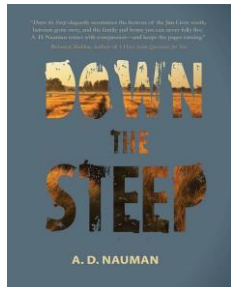
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Adult Literature Award Winners

Adult Literature Committee has selected our prize-winning books for 2024! Thanks to the leadership of Karen Pulver and Carrie Brenner, and the careful efforts of Committee members Tammie Bob, Adrienne Bornstein, Karen Burnett, Mary Robb Clark, Dale Davison, Ida Hagman, Kathy Katz, Diane Miller, Kim Swartz, and Barbara Smith, two outstanding books have emerged as winners. Please plan on attending the Awards Luncheon Friday May 10th to celebrate both the books and their authors.

And the winners are:

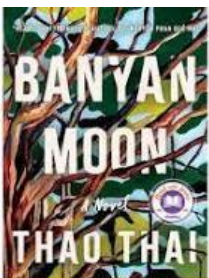
***Down the Steep*, a novel by A. D. Nauman**, tells the story of Willa Mc Coy, a white teenager who grew up in a small town in Virginia in the 1960's. Willa admires her father and wants his esteem. Her father is a klansman (I refuse to capitalize "klan."). Willa would like to be a leader like her dad, and she fully endorses the values of her white community and family of origin until she babysits for the Swansons, who have moved to Willa's town to be a part of the



civil rights movement. At the Swansons', Willa meets Langston Jones, a young black man. Willa and Langston hate each other, but a crack begins to form in Willa's belief in her racist values. How Willa reacts to sociological challenges and conflict in her family creates drama. The book is a page-turner.

A.D. Nauman is an author and educator in Chicago. She has been a member of FAW and even chaired the Awards Committee.

***Banyan Moon* by Thao Thai** is a lyrical, multi-generational saga focusing on three Vietnamese-American women and the push and pull of their relationships. Ann is beautiful, talented, and has a rich boyfriend from an elite family. Ann's mother, Huong, lives with her mother, Minh, in Banyan House, an old decaying home in Florida. While at an elegant party with her prospective in-laws, Ann learns that she is pregnant and that Noah has



cheated on her. Ann then receives the news that her grandmother has died. Ann decides to return to Banyan House, a place she loves, without Noah. In the process of cleaning out Banyan House, Ann uncovers family secrets. Ann and Huong repair their relationship, and Ann finds some clarity on who she

is, who she wants to be and whether she should be with Noah. Here is a quote that illustrates why I liked the book, “The shame of motherhood is that your instincts never leave,” Huong thinks, “even as everyone decides they aren’t needed anymore.”

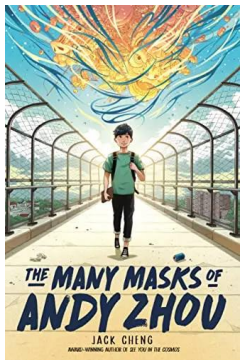
This is Thao Thai’s first novel. Her work has been published in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *WIRED*, *Elle*, *Lit Hub*, and other publications. She lives in central Ohio with her husband and daughter.

YOUNG PEOPLE’S LITERATURE AWARD WINNERS

The Young People’s Literature Awards Committee is proud to announce three amazing winners for 2023-2024:

Our first winner, **Jack Cheng**, wrote *The Many Masks of Andy Zhou* published by Dial Books for Young Readers.

According to his website, “Jack Cheng is a Shanghai-born, Michigan-bred author of critically acclaimed fiction for young readers. His debut children’s novel, *See You in the Cosmos*, won the Golden Kite and Great Lakes, Great Reads awards for Best Middle-Grade Fiction. His latest book, *The Many Masks of Andy Zhou*, is a Kids’ Indie Next and Junior Library Guild selection. Jack has visited schools across the globe speaking with students about finding their paths as writers and artists. He lives in Detroit with his partner Julia and their dog Matisse” (<https://www.jackcheng.com/about/>).



The Many Masks of Andy Zhou is a masterfully written juvenile novel capturing “the story of a middle school boy, Andy Zhou, who has to deal with many challenges. His grandparents come to visit from China and his grandfather is dealing with health issues. His best friend who lives upstairs develops anorexia. Meanwhile, Andy is being bullied by a boy who later becomes a friend. Throughout all of these experiences, Andy is trying to find the right path for his life. The characters are so well developed, and the author gives us a glimpse into Chinese culture as well as the traumas of an adolescent immigrant boy” (Tanya Klasser).

“There are fascinating happenings throughout this book: an art teacher from Andy’s elementary school who’s urging him to flourish on the dance company production crew; there are barbecues and garage sales and similarly typical American outings to share with his parents and grandparents; and there’s Andy’s reacquaintance with the Chinese Cultural Center and his living heritage. *The Many Masks of Andy Zhou* is a beautiful,

unforgettable look into a boy's journey to discover his feelings and how to express them" (Sally Kowalewski).

Our second winner, **Sondra Soderborg**, wrote *Sky Ropes* published by Chronicle Books.

According to her website, *Sky Ropes* is Sondra Soderborg's first published novel at the age of 60. Before becoming a writer, Sondra has "done many different kinds of work,



herding turkeys, working at McDonalds, at a grocery store, cleaning (fired twice), tutoring, being a lawyer, being a teacher at a high school and a prison. All of it has been useful. None of it compares to the sheer joy and wonder of writing for kids"

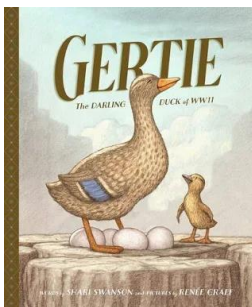
(<https://www.sondrasoderborg.com/bio>). Sondra resides in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Sky Ropes is an intense juvenile novel that centers around the protagonist, Breanna, who "faces the many challenges of a Middle School team building camp -- and particularly the sky ropes challenge that looms in her future. Breanna is convinced that she needs to protect her image as super tough, fearless even, by doing the sky ropes. But memories of almost falling from a window due to an intentional act of abuse by her father make taking on the highest ropes course in the state about as challenging as any challenge could be for her. When Cami, a bully, senses her fear and makes it even harder for her to stand up and say, "The Sky Ropes are not right for me," Breanna feels that she has got to do the sky ropes" (Diana Wendt).

"How Breanna will handle this challenge is the engine that drives this novel, but there are also tender moments with bunkmates, unexpected new friendships and an appreciation for nature. This book is an all-around winner!" (Roberta Gates).

Our third winner, **Shari Swanson**, wrote *Gertie, The Darling Duck of WWII* published by Sleeping Bear Press.

According to her website, "Shari Swanson earned her MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She is an appellate lawyer, with



many published cases, and a former middle school language arts teacher. Her books are *Honey, the Dog Who Saved Abe Lincoln* (HarperCollins 2020) and *Gertie, the Darling Duck of WWII* (SleepingBearPress 2023). She lives in Southern California with her husband, their dog, Honey, and their cat, Marie" (<https://shariswanson.com/about/press-kit/>).

Gertie, The Darling Duck of WWII is a warm-hearted picture book that sheds light on a slice of history in Milwaukee, Wisconsin near the end of World War II. “When war has torn the world apart, a community protecting a mother duck is welcome news, a sign of hope for humanity. For over a month in 1945, Milwaukee residents watched and listened while Gertie, as a newspaperman dubbed her, laid her eggs on a tall post alongside a motorway drawbridge. Then--undeterred by the city’s bustle and noise-- Gertie continued to incubate her clutch high above the river. Swanson documents the hazards facing Gertie and the help she receives from Boy Scouts, bridge tenders, and even a marching band quietening during the Memorial Day parade! Keeping the little family safe, together, and, finally, moving to a local park’s lagoon was a tender tale that was told around the world, boosting troop morale and enchanting children and their families. With illustrations perfectly complementing the era, this picture book will bring pleasure in the retelling of Gertie’s story to a world still looking for hope” (Sally Kowalewski).