



eNews December, 2016

From the Editor:

This was a tough year for many people in the world. In the States, we've suffered through a particularly intense, lengthy, and frightening presidential campaign and election. It was also a year in which we lost many literary giants. I'll highlight a few throughout eNews from this selected list. Let their deaths remind us to get our words out to this troubled world.

Rest In Power:

Leonard Cohen
Gloria Naylor
W.P. Kinsella
Harper Lee
Umberto Eco
Jackie Collins
Ann Rule
E.L. Doctorow
William Trevor

Please accept my wishes for a less fraught New Year, full of inspiration and action.

**Stay in touch,
Sue Katz,
editor eNews
sue.katz @ yahoo.com**

Writers Night Out: Monday December 19

WHAT: There is so much to talk about, not the least the future of freedom of the press, the sense of urgency many writers are feeling about getting out their best work, and what we're going to do about all that turkey we ate. Join us!

WHEN: Monday, December 19 (drop in any time between 6:00 - 8:00 pm)

WHERE: [Christopher's Restaurant & Bar](#), 1920 Mass Ave., Porter Square (Red Line), Cambridge

So How Was November's Writers Night Out?

Our post-election gathering unavoidably tackled the question of how election angst has affected our writing. We exchanged ideas about how to wean oneself from obsessively checking news on the Internet. For some it was all about the accessories: one member wears book earrings that remind her to stay focused on writing while another wears an "Elizabeth Warren 2020" button. One member with Irish ancestry intends to apply for Irish citizenship.

Over healthy comfort food (black bean burgers, quesadillas, grain bowls), we bounced around references to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Aristotle, Nathaniel Philbrick's historical novels and Philip Roth's prescient *The Plot Against America*. Another post-election question was whether soon-to-be-available recreational marijuana in Massachusetts is likely to be 1) a distraction from writing, 2) a creative inspiration, 3) a gateway to dangerous drugs, or 4) an entryway into "the mystical soul of the universe."

NWU Book Party: Save the Date! Sunday, February 5, 2017

WHEN: Sunday, February 5, 2017, 2:00-5:00 pm

WHERE: Durrell Hall in the Cambridge Family Y



Mark your 2017 calendar: Our gala annual Book Party, which draws both members and non-members, will be on Sunday, February 5, 2017 at Durrell Hall in the Cambridge Family YMCA. It's our biggest gathering of the year and will feature a keynote speaker (to be announced in January), a celebration of members' books published in 2016, brief readings by some of the authors we are celebrating, refreshments, a raffle, and book sale tables (with a catchall table for members to

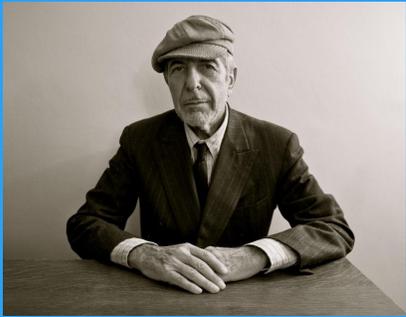
display their pre-2016 books). It's our major literary and social event, and people come from far and wide to join in.

If you published a book in 2016, send its title, publisher, and 50-word description to Barbara Mende (bostonchapter@nwu.org). And then keep an eye out for an all-member email inviting 2016 authors of such books to apply to read at the party. By the way, DO make sure that your membership is current!

How Can You Be Involved in the Book Party?

You can join our volunteer team that oversees greeting/sign-in, refreshments, and book tables, as well as setup and clean up. To be part of that team, email Barbara Beckwith (BeckwithB@aol.com).

We also invite members to become sponsors of the book party by promoting their own book, business, website, or favorite organization. This will be noted in the program and on our website. Interested? Email Barbara Mende at Barbara@moosehill.com



R.I.P.
Leonard Cohen

Poetry is just the evidence of life. If your life is burning well, poetry is just the ash.

REPORTBACK: What Does It Mean to Be White in America?

In collaboration with Porter Square Books (Cambridge) in November, contributors to the 2016 collection, *What Does It Mean to Be White in America? Breaking the White Code of Silence*, provided a sampling of personal narratives. The audience of more than 50 people also heard 2Leaf Press co-editor Sean Forbes describe how he and Gabrielle David culled 82 personal narratives from the 600 submissions.

"I was moved by the stories shared as well as by the serious questions raised by the audience," said Susan Pollack.

[Martha Collins](#) read from "A Blinding Whiteness" about how "'I once was blind but now I see' - not well, not completely, but at least a little better than I did." Barbara Beckwith, reading from "[Aha Moments](#)," described moments of sudden awareness of her unconscious biases and her everyday racial privilege (unasked for, unearned credibility). Jim Kates recounted with candor how he navigated a challenge he faced at a civil rights rally in Harlem, when he was told by three young black men to get out of their neighborhood.

What Our Boston Chapter Accomplished in 2016 By Co-Chair Barbara Beckwith

The year 2016 revealed the power of words: those spoken in rallies, posted on Twitter, revealed by smartphones, distorted by false news gone viral, but also used by responsible journalists (freelance, bloggers, staff) to expose injustice, by covering such movements as Black Lives Matter, Dakota Access oil pipeline protesters, and living wage campaigns. This year's over-the-top, off-color, or cautiously hedged political discourse both infuriated and invigorated wordsmiths like us.

First, a bit of history:

Let's not forget that the Nation Institute's 1981 writers' conference that launched our union was in large part responding to concerns about censorship following the inauguration that year of President Ronald Reagan. The "*Why a Union?*" workshop at Writers' Congress drew an overflow

crowd, after which the plenary of 3,000 writers endorsed the proposal to create a union for writers in all genres to actively press for better pay and treatment and to vigorously oppose Reagan-era threats to free expression. "We need no more heroic individual writers," said keynote speaker Toni Morrison. She called for "an accessible organization that is truly representative of the diverse interests of all writers."
<https://nwu.org/about/history-and-achievements/>

And now to 2016's highlights:

Our Boston Chapter offered professional programs to help our members write for love AND money:

- "Writing about People in Your Life," a workshop led by Charles Coe
- "Query Tutorial," a collaboration with the [Women's National Book Association](#) to pair book writers with one of six literary agents and book authors
- (www.wnbaboston.org)
- "How Your Book is Sold," a panel/dialogue among writers and three booksellers/distributors
- Curated readings at Porter Square Books (Cambridge, MA), one featuring poet Marc Zegans, the other a reading by contributors to a collection on what it means to be white in America
- "Conversation with the Prez," hosted by Charles Coe to allow members to swap ideas and discuss issues with NYC-based NWU President Larry Goldbetter
- Meet & Greet at Smokey Bears in Taunton, by invitation of Authors Without Borders
- Writers Night Out, informal social-networking gatherings held monthly on the third Monday
- NWU Book Party: our gala celebration of members who authored books in the previous 12 months; last year we congratulated 17 authors and heard from Boston Poet Laureate Danielle Legros Georges
- Our chapter "works" because of activists like
 - == eNews editor Sue Katz - who makes sure our 6/x year eNews is a great read
 - == webmaster Barbara Mende who fact-checks eNews, supervised the transition of www.nwuboston.org to the national NWU website (where it can also be found at nwu.org/chapters/boston/), and ensures that [our chapter news](#) is up-to-date
 - == Barbara Mende and Charles Coe who keep nwu-book and nwu-bos listservs on point
 - == Chris Kenneally and Charles Coe who maintain our FB presence www.facebook.com/nwuboston. Chris also arranges for Emerson College's conference room (equipped with speakerphone for distance participation) for our Steering Committee

== John Hodge who reserves our place at Christopher's for Writers Night Out and sometimes hosts the get-togethers; John also keeps up our connection with the [Massachusetts Artists Leaders Coalition](#) (MALC)

== Other WNO hosts include Jim Kates and Barbara Beckwith

== Barbara Brandt sends eNews to members who ask for a printed copy (we'll end this in 2017)

== Jeanne Cosmos who keeps us connected to the UAW Community Action Program (CAP). Thanks to Jeanne Cosmos for serving on our Steering Committee; she stepped down midyear

=== Barry Hock, our long-time former CAP representative, who conceived and conducted the first-ever Boston member survey and produced the subsequent report and analysis of the results

== Shannon O'Connor who stepped up and has joined us on the Steering Committee

I want to thank my fellow co-chair Charles Coe for all he's done for our chapter in 2016: hosting, organizing, presenting, fund-raising, and using his literary connections to find guest speakers, as well as handling various challenges with diplomacy and grace.

R.I.P.

Gloria Naylor

I wrote what I felt I had to write, and I'm willing to put my own sanity and my reputation behind it.



What's next for 2017? And how can you be active?

We will start 2017 with a party just as we started 2016 with a party: add your name to our volunteer team.

We've been brainstorming possible programs for 2017: panel on how librarians work with writers, a workshop on setting up a literary executor, a program on working with (or as) a developmental editor, a Meet the Agent (or Editor) event. We welcome your ideas, as well. To help make them happen, email Charles at Charles52@comcast.net.

We invite you to be considered for the open seat (by appointment) to our 9-person Steering Committee. To find out what's involved, email Barbara at BeckwithB@aol.com.

We invite you to organize a gathering of members and non-member writers wherever you live (e.g., a Western MA gathering). Boston Chapter members live all over New England. Contact Jim at jkates@worldpath.net.



R.I.P.
Ann Rule

Have you ever heard the expression: Walk a mile in my shoes, and then judge me? And write your own books.

Welcome!

WELCOME NEW and RETURNING MEMBERS

Welcome to these four new members. And thank you to Heather Kapplow for introducing yourself!

Melissa Brown: Wilbraham, MA
JeanneE Hand-Boniakowski: Wells, VT
Emily Heath: Exeter, NH
Heather Kapplow: Allston, MA

[Heather Kapplow](#) is an Allston MA based artist, writer, editor and researcher. Her writing is primarily journalistic and/or creative, but then sometimes she writes for purely commercial purposes about things like carpet pile and tax forms. She used to produce audio and video as well, but writing has lower overhead.

UPCOMING MEMBER EVENTS

A chance to support your colleagues and enjoy their work.

Jeannette de Beauvoir is reading at the "C'est Magnifique" Voices of Poetry event on December 11, 3:00pm, at C'est La Vie bakery (Main Street, Hyannis). Lovely ambiance, fantastic food (feel free to bring a bottle of wine!), and a warm way to spend a cold Sunday afternoon.

Jan Krause Greene will be a featured poet at [Wake Up and Smell the Poetry](#) on December 17 at [Hopkinton HCAM Studios](#), 77 Main Street, Hopkinton, MA. The show starts at 10:30 am.

Mary Bonina will be reading from her memoir, *My Father's Eyes*, on Monday, December 5, 2016. The event, which includes a discussion, is

sponsored by the Seven Bridge Writers Collective. It will be held from 6:30 to 8:00pm at the Thayer Memorial Library, 717 Main Street, Lancaster MA.

Sue Katz will be reading from her upcoming novel *Lillian in Love* at [Creating Change](#), the massive LGBTQ annual conference, this year in Philadelphia. The romance takes place between two old women living in senior housing. Say hi if you'll be at the conference.



Priscilla Cogan, novelist turned playwright, was one of two winners of the CTAM (Community Theater Association of Michigan) playwriting contest for her comedic play *The Summer Cottage*. A tale of four generations (two of which are ghosts) asks the questions: What do we owe our ancestors? And what do we owe our descendants?

Cheryl Melody Baskin's book, [Shift of Heart-Paths to Healing and Love](#), was published by I.W.A. Publishing Services in October 2016. Heart-centered, it is designed to increase self-love, inner peace, and promote the art of listening to life's "wisdom-whispers" during chaos and joy. It uses reflections, visualizations, meditations, autobiographical stories, and uplifting song lyrics. Cheryl Melody Baskin is also the featured "Author of the Week" on the [Nonfiction Authors Association's in-depth blog](#).

On October 19, **Sheila Parks** published another article against nuclear power and for clean green renewables. You can read it here on [OpEd News](#).

Ruth Lepson's recent book, *ask anyone* (Pressed Wafer) was reviewed by Kevin Killian on Amazon. You can also get it at [ruthlepson.com](#), where you can hear musical settings of 14 of the poems. Go to Shop and click below the cover.

Gina Ogden's 11th book is available on Amazon-for something just slightly naughty for the holidays. [The ABCs of Love and Sex](#) is an inspirational adult "quickie" to help you expand your alphabet of love and sexual intimacy. A special place in heaven if you write a review.

The contributors to *What Does It Mean to Be White in America? Breaking the White Code of Silence* recently drove to Peterborough, NH, for a reading at Toadstool Books. They welcome suggestions of other venues for readings from this unique anthology. Contact **Barbara Beckwith** at Beckwithb@aol.com.

Charles Coe's "Hill of Dreams" appears in the new anthology from University of Wisconsin Press: *Inspired Journeys: Travel Writers Searching for the Muse*, edited by Brian Bouldrey. Charles was also chosen as a Boston

Artist-in-Residence for 2016/17.

Barbara Brandt was the ghost-writer for *7 Principles for Living with Authenticity: Discovering Your True Self When Going through Life Changes*, published by STPI Press, 2016. It's a self-help book for workaholics and high-achievers that helps the reader get in touch with their authentic self when going through a major life transition, so that the next chapter of their life can be truly satisfying and fulfilling.



**NEW YEAR,
NEW BOOKS!**

Discounts for NWU members

NWU has an agreement with Grub Street & Women's National Book Association that allows members of each organization to attend each other's programs at the member rate

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