



Boston Authors Club

June-July 2020 News

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Wednesday June 3, 7:00 pm ET
A VIRTUAL READING WITH
THE BOSTON AUTHORS CLUB

Julie Dobrow (mod)
After Emily

Nandini Bajpai
A Match Made in Mehendi

Christina Thompson
Sea People

&
Jennifer Burton

NO TICKETS REQUIRED
VISIT WEBSITE TO RSVP

Telling Their Stories: The Problems and Promise of Writing about Marginalized People

The Boston Authors Club and Brookline Booksmith join together for a night of discussion! Julie Dobrow moderates, with fellow authors Nandini Bajpai, Christina Thompson, and Jennifer Burton. Enjoy a delightful evening with us, and support your local authors and bookstore!

REGISTER ONLINE HERE:

<https://www.crowdcast.io/e/brookline-booksmith-/register>



Five Questions for The Silver Unicorn Bookstore

We continue our series of Q&A with local indie bookstores in Boston and beyond with an interview with Paul Swydan, owner of The Silver Unicorn Bookstore in

You have an unusual name for a bookstore. What's the story behind Silver Unicorn?

There isn't much of a story, unfortunately. When we were nearing open, I did a lot of research on bookstore names, and divided them into three categories—geography/landmark-based (Main St. Books), puns/bookish (The Poisoned Pen) and other. I wanted to be "other." I felt like unicorns were having a cultural moment at the time, but The Unicorn Bookstore didn't sound right to me, it needed another word, and silver is my favorite color!

This isn't your first career, what drew you to opening a bookstore?

I worked in the sports industry for ~15 years. I worked for both the Red Sox and Rockies in various jobs, including editing the Rockies' gameday magazine. Most recently before I opened the store, I was a writer and editor for FanGraphs and The Hardball Times, and wrote freelance for a number of outlets, including The Boston Globe and Boston.com.

The Silver Unicorn is very committed to supporting local/visiting authors with events. How do you feel these events benefit the community?

They are an easy way for people to come together and congregate, and getting out and seeing people is very healthy, at least in the "before" times. Of course, we can't really have that right now because now it isn't healthy, but we'll look forward to a time when we can again.

How can local folks help you in these uncertain times?

If they're able, by shopping with us online, but just as important is reminding friends and family that we need local choice in our communities. Without it, faceless corporations will take over everything, and that is a bleak future I'd like no part of.

What is your favorite childhood book memory?

Probably when my dad let me buy a used copy of "Cujo" at a yard sale. I think I was 12 or 13. He had no idea what the book was about—if he did, he never would have let me buy it—and I had only an inkling. It was my window into Stephen King, who is now one of my favorite authors, and my first real "reading an adult book" memory.

Visit The Silver Unicorn Bookstore online at www.silverunicornbooks.com.

Interview by Helen Kampion



OPEN FOR JUNE SUBMISSION!

***Contest Rules and Submission Form on
the BAC Website***

The first ever BAC Discovery Award now live and accepting applications on the BAC web site. Deadline is June 30.

<http://bostonauthorsclub.org/bac-discovery-award>

President's Note for June

Greetings to all!

I'm very pleased to let you know that we have launched the new BAC website. You will find a new look, new features and better navigability. We have tried to make the website a place where the BAC's venerable history meets the 21st century. Thanks to all who were involved with the design and content, and special thanks to my graduate student, Nick Woolf, who made it all happen. As you'll see elsewhere in this newsletter, we have also launched the first-ever Discovery Contest. Please help us by reaching out to the yet-to-be-discovered children's authors you know and letting them know about this opportunity.

And please join us virtually on June 3, where the BAC has teamed up with the Brookline Booksmith to offer a special program: "Telling Their Stories: The Problems and Promise of

Writing about Marginalized People." Authors Nandini Bajpai, Jennifer Burton and Christina Thompson will discuss the problems and promise of writing about people whose stories aren't usually told. You can register for the event here: <https://www.crowdcast.io/e/brookline-booksmith-/register>

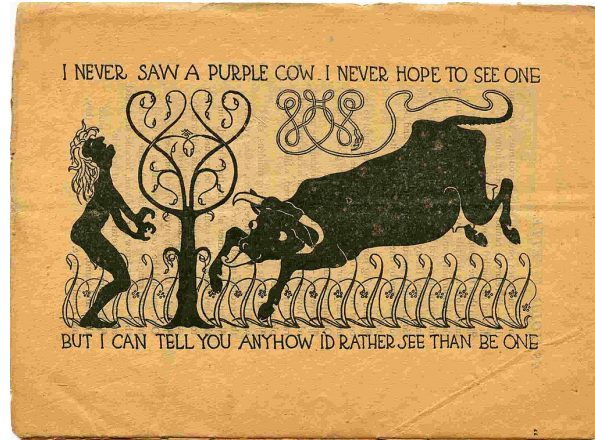
Julie Dobrow, BAC President

Yesteryear at the BAC: Blurb for a Purple Cow

Most of the founders of the Boston Authors Club wrote on topics on the somber and serious side of the literary ledger. Not Gelett Burgess.

Gelett was a self-declared Bohemian of the late 19th and early 20th century, although Mildred Flagg doesn't use that term to describe him in *More Members of the BAC*. What she does say discreetly is "Because of an escapade unpopular with college authorities he was asked to leave his job in 1894."

How could one not want to find out more about Gelett and his writing?
Does the following stir any coals?



*I never saw a purple cow
I never hope to see one
But I can tell you, anyhow,
I'd rather see than be one!*

Much to his eternal dismay, this is the literary work for which Burgess is best known or, as Flagg has it, the "... verbal creature ... never left him for the rest of his life." Burgess published this little scrap of doggerel in 1895 in his own literary journal, *The Lark*. It was tracked back to him so frequently that two years later he was moved to pen *The Revenge of the Purple Cow*:

*Ah, yes, I wrote the "Purple Cow"—
I'm sorry, now I wrote it.
But I can tell you Anyhow
I'll Kill you if you Quote it!*

Of course, once you're on the record as wishing to not be taken seriously it's a little difficult to walk back anything you commit to paper.

It's not that Burgess didn't work to escape the purple cow. He wrote and illustrated a series of books about "a tribe of rubber-limbed, balloon-headed" misbehaving children called the Goops, contributed frequently to several well-known literary magazines (while founding a couple less-well-known magazines himself), published books of history, poetry and romance (all in a Crumbian vein). Along the way, he coined and contributed the words "bromide" and "blurb" to the English language.

That college escapade that Flagg didn't elaborate on was that Gelett toppled a statue of a teetotaler on the Berkeley campus when he was a professor there. He was asked to resign at the time but his reputation has since been air-brushed and his papers are in the Bancroft Library.

But the resolution of one mystery too often leads to another. In his *Toonopedia* write-up on Burgess Don Markstein notes: "He made an early mark on the world by carving his initials, in the form of a monogram based on the Phoenician alphabet, near the top of every church steeple in (Boston)." Which church steeple would you pick to start looking for Burgess' contributions to Boston architecture? Or do you think that Burgess and Markstein are pulling our leg?

By Scott B. Guthery

The BAC newsletter is published the first week of every month except for the summer months. Please send news about upcoming events, awards, and new publications to bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com by 7/29/20 for publication in the AUGUST issue.

STILL TIME TO JOIN US FOR 2020!

BAC membership dues are \$50 annually for the calendar year. You can join and renew online by [clicking here](#). If you would rather pay by check, please make your check out to Boston Authors Club and mail it to the following address:

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Boston Authors Club