



*Boston Authors Club*

## November 2021 Newsletter

### In This Issue

- **JWH Awards for 2021: Submissions Welcome!**
- **President's Note: Looking Ahead to a Milestone**
- **Yesteryear at BAC: Writing Advice Circa 1915 - The Harder, The Better**
- **Scriptwriting Fellowships at GBH Kids**



### *Julia Ward Howe Awards*

The Boston Authors Club has been awarding the Julia Ward Howe Prizes, named after the Club's first President, to outstanding adult and young reader books for over twenty years. These awards recognize exceptional books by Boston area authors in four separate categories: **Fiction**, **Nonfiction**, **Poetry**, and the **Young Reader** category.

Publishers and authors with 2021 titles meeting the BAC Awards criteria (see below) are encouraged to submit their books to be considered for Julia Ward Howe prizes. To enter the competition, publishers must submit two copies of each eligible title, along with a fee of \$35 dollars per title. Checks should be made out to the Boston Authors Club or the entry fee may be submitted electronically on the BAC website.

***Boston-Area Authors - if your book was published in 2021, ask your publisher to enter it for consideration! You are also welcome to submit your book directly if you wish.***

***The submission deadline for qualified books published in 2021 is January 31, 2022. Please send your books and checks to:***

***Boston Authors Club, Attn. Julie Dobrow, 103 Conant Road, Lincoln, MA, 01773***

Criteria for the Julia Ward Howe award include:

- 1) The books must be published the year prior to the award being given.
- 2) Authors must live or work within 100 miles of Boston the year their books are published.
- 3) Books published in print are eligible unless otherwise noted in the criteria. Edited books, textbooks, and reference books are not qualified. Self-published and digital-only books are not eligible.

**Authors of the winning titles in each category will be honored at the annual Julia Ward Howe Awards event at the Boston Public Library in the Fall of 2022. Additional outstanding books and authors in each category may be designated as Finalists and celebrated at the Awards program.**

## President's Note

A couple of weekends ago the Sunday *New York Times Book Review* section ran a special issue celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. “As we celebrate our 125th anniversary,” the editors wrote on the cover, “join us on a trip through the archives to see some of our spectacular reviews, interviews and essays.” The issue ran original reviews of classic books from when they were published: a review of Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Lost World* from 1912, a review of Edith Wharton’s *The Age of Innocence* from 1920, a review of *The Complete Stories of Flannery O’Connor* from 1964 (written by no less than Alfred Kazin!), a review of Alex Haley’s *Roots* in 1976 written by James Baldwin, and many more. They ran interviews they’d done with authors including Gore Vidal, Isabel Allende and Colson Whitehead, and essays like one with author Meg Wolitzer that explored why novels by women have historically gotten different treatment by the publishing industry in everything from their cover design to their marketing to their award nominations.



It’s a rich issue with so many interesting reprints and articles, lists of former *New York Times* best sellers and covers of the *Book Review* section of the years that I could write a whole essay just recounting a fraction of fascinating articles. But I won’t.

One of the things that this issue did make me think about, at the suggestion of my father, Dr. Alan Dobrow, an almost 92-year old avid reader and BAC member, was that the Boston Authors Club isn’t very far behind the *New York Times Book Review* in longevity. We were founded in 1899, making us 122 at this writing.

And so I offer up a challenge to all of our BAC members: What should the BAC think about doing for our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary? Please send your suggestions to us at [bostonauthorsclub2@gmail.com](mailto:bostonauthorsclub2@gmail.com)

Wishing you all a happy and healthy Thanksgiving holiday!

Julie Dobrow  
BAC President

## Yesteryear at the BAC: Writing Advice Circa 1915

**On Friday, January 15, 1915, George Van Ness Dearborn, pictured here, gave an invited address to the Boston Authors Club titled “Shop-Talk.”**

**The address was later published in the *Journal of Education* under the heading “The Authors’s Stheneuphoric Index: Thesis, The Author’s Efficiency in Part Depends on his Enjoyment of his Work.” George was a neuro-psychiatrist on the faculty of Tufts College and a pioneer in the use of inkblot tests for psychological research so he was no slouch when it came to analyzing the vapors that waft in and out of our emotional state.**



Now you might think that Dearborn’s thesis for authors would be that you do your best writing when you are enjoying the act of writing. But no. The more unpleasant you find the act of writing---or any creative task according to Dearborn---the better will be the result that ends up on the page. When it comes to the science behind this finding, Dearborn says “To set forth the details of this...would take us into

technicalities of physiology and psychology wholly out of place in this jovial company of poets and authors” but if you have any doubts he goes on to say “Common human kindness, as well as a fortunate lack of minutes, compels me to spare you (the details); but our laboratories are wide-open.” Curious, that aside about a lack of minutes.

Herman Rorschach is the person whose name is usually associated with the use of inkblots for psychological testing. Urban lore has it that Rorschach played an inkblot game called klecksography as a child. It’s a game of creating a story out of an inkblot---the better the story, the higher the score---so Rorschach reasoned the game could be used to measure creativity. This was in about 1911.



Dearborn’s use of inkblots for psychological research dates to 1897 just a year after *Gobolinks or Shadow-Pictures for Young and Old* by Ruth Stuart and Albert Bigelow was published. “Drop a little ink on a sheet of white paper. Fold the sheet in the center and press the ink-spots together with the fingers.” It is the symmetry of the resulting inkblot that is the ignition spark of the story.

Boston Authors Club members who are asked the question that is de rigueur in so many author interviews, “How do you do it?” may feel tempted to answer with some variation of the quote variously attributed to Gene Fowler, Ernest Hemingway, and other writers past, to the effect that writing is actually easy. All it takes is to “Put a blank piece of paper in a typewriter and stare at it until blood forms on your forehead.” While that image is just about as unpleasant as any one can imagine the act of writing being, perhaps we would benefit from reading George Dearborn’s 1915 tough love pep talk the next time we confront a blank page or computer screen. Alternatively, let’s all spend more time in in the BAC’s “jovial company of poets and authors.”

By Scott Guthery

## Scripting Fellowship Applications Open at GBH Kids

**The GBH Kids Scriptwriting Fellowship is a program designed to mentor promising, early-career writers from underrepresented communities in writing scripts for a GBH Kids animated series that focuses on STEM learning.**



The goal is to diversify the pipeline of writers for both this show and the greater children’s media industry by providing early-career writers, who are members of underrepresented groups in the greater children’s media industry (including but not limited to individuals of African American, Asian, Latinx/Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander descent) with a hands-on learning experience in television writing for children and an opportunity for their scripts to be produced for a new television series.

The Fellowship program will take place virtually over 10 sessions, with weekly reading and writing assignments between sessions, beginning in late January 2022 through late April 2022, with further mentorship and feedback sessions May 2022 through August 2022. Up to five fellows will be chosen through an application and interview process. The Fellowship will cover all aspects of writing for GBH Kids, providing support on how to write stories that engage children in STEM learning, and ways to further writers’ own career development within the children’s media field. This will be a hands-on, workshop-style program: Fellows are expected to leave the fellowship with a completed script that will be up for consideration to be further developed for a nationally broadcast television series. All scripts will be solely owned by WGBH Educational Foundation.

***Applications will be accepted until Friday, November 12th at 5pm EST.***

More information about the program and application requirements is available at <https://www.wgbh.org/gbhkidsfellowship>

***Become a member for 2022!***

***Membership dues are \$50 annually for the calendar year. You can join and renew online at [bostonauthorsclub.org](https://www.bostonauthorsclub.org) or 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:***

**Nancy Tupper Ling  
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STAY CONNECTED



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